

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TALL TALE GENRE WITH  
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO PHILIPPE d'ALCRIPE'S  
LA NOUVELLE FABRIQUE DES EXCELLENTS TRAITS DE  
VÉRITÉ (CIRCA 1579), TOGETHER WITH AN ANNOTATED  
TRANSLATION OF THE WORK

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

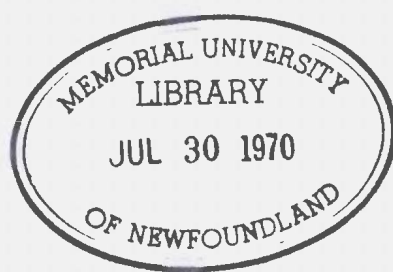
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An Analysis of the Tall Tale Genre  
with Particular Reference to  
Philippe d'Alcricpe's La Nouvelle Fabrique  
des Excellents Traits de Vérité (circa 1579);  
together with an Annotated Translation of  
the Work.



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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to provide a detailed analysis of various aspects of one minor genre in oral folk narrative, the tall tale. The analysis refers particularly to Philippe d'Alcricpe's La Nouvelle Fabrique des Excellents Traits de Vérité (ca. 1579), a rare and important collection of sixteenth century French tall tales with many international parallels. Because of its scarcity, the work has been translated and annotated.

Previously defined largely on the basis of its content of lies and exaggerations, a new definition of this humorous anecdotal genre, based for the most part on the analysis of American source material, includes as criteria the contexts and functions of the tall tale. The genre is characterised by certain formal patterns such as the "lying contest" between two liars. Tall tales tend to gather around noted raconteurs who are the heroes or protagonists of their own or others' tales. Such heroes seem to thrive in a limited number of professional contexts and generally enjoy a regional fame alone, unless commercially exploited. It has been possible to confirm the existence in French tradition of patterns of tall tale telling similar to those found in North America.

The presence of lying motifs or the common notion of impossibility in other genres has necessitated an analysis of the differences between the tall tale and Märchen, saint's legend, giant lore, nonsense tale, lying song and aspects of children's lore and folk speech.

Against this background, an analysis of the content of the tales in La Nouvelle Fabrique supports the argument that Philippe d'Alcricpe's collection is a body of traditional oral narrative collected in a traditional context with an accuracy approaching modern standards.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is twofold: on the one hand, to provide an annotated English translation of a rare and important collection of sixteenth century French tall tales; and on the other, to provide a somewhat detailed analysis of various aspects of one minor genre, the tall tale, not for itself, but in order to place La Nouvelle Fabrique and its author, Philippe d'Alcricpe, in their true perspective, as representative examples of an old, rich and thriving tradition.

La Nouvelle Fabrique des Excellents Traits de Verité, or The New Fabrication of Some Excellent Truths, was written under the pseudonym of Philippe d'Alcricpe. Authorities agree that the work was first published in Paris in 1579, with subsequent editions appearing in Rouen between 1579 and 1640, in Rouen in 1732 and the latest edition in Paris in 1853. To the original edition which had 99 tales, the eighteenth century editor added another eleven. P.A. Gratet-Duplessis, who based his anonymously edited 1853 version on that of 1732, brought three new humorous pieces to the work: a short poem containing a lying motif, a letter purporting to describe a conversation between two birds, and a long, conflated version of the medieval Letter from Prester John. These additions, and the prefatory material contributed by successive editors, have been included in my translation.

There are several reasons for feeling that an annotated English translation would be of scholarly interest. La Nouvelle Fabrique is a large collection of French tall tales now nearly four hundred years old, with many international parallels. A modern translation would thus make the work more accessible to students of the tall tale and offer a new perspective of the tall tale as an international genre. It is hoped that the introductory essay and annotation will add to an understanding of the genre as a whole.

Furthermore, a partisan approach would deplore the lack of recognition given to an essentially French collection; there has been so much collecting and publication of tall tales in North America that the tall tale has been popularly considered a peculiarly American genre. La Nouvelle Fabrique seems to have been completely neglected by modern folklorists in any recently published studies of the tall tale. This is all the more surprising since La Nouvelle Fabrique had been referred to by a distinguished group of nineteenth century European scholars. Paul Sébillot, Eugène Rolland, Lazare Sainéan and Joseph Bédier in France, Carl Müller-Fraureuth in Germany and Arturo Graf in Italy were all concerned, to a greater or lesser degree, with the work as a source of parallels to other motifs in folk literature. Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka also made references to it in their Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm.

The only twentieth scholar to publish a reference to La Nouvelle Fabrique was the late Paul Delarue in France, while Luc Lacourcière in Québec and Archer Taylor in California also know the work but have not, so far as I know, made any reference to it. One of Archer Taylor's students, a Miss Bartelmez, brought together a number of lying tale themes, using as sources not only material from the great jestbook tradition, as typified by Pauli's Schimpf und Ernst and Bebel's Facetiae, but also tales from La Nouvelle Fabrique. Knowing of Herbert Halpert's interest in the tall tale, Archer Taylor lent him a copy of the Bartelmez manuscript, in which Halpert found references to La Nouvelle Fabrique; he was later able to obtain a copy of the 1853 edition of the work.

It was Halpert who first called my attention to La Nouvelle Fabrique, proposing a translation on the grounds that it would be of extreme interest to modern folktale specialists; he, too, suggested that I prepare an annotated edition.

Any future French edition of the work would have to consider problems which are not apparent in this translation. I have tried to maintain throughout Philippe d'Alcricpe's highly colloquial style, a style which is arguably typical of oral storytellers; indeed, his ability to reproduce an oral style is only one of the arguments to support my theory that Philippe d'Alcricpe was a true folklore collector. The apparently uncontrolled syntax of the tales in La Nouvelle Fabrique might lead modern editors into the error of trying to improve the style. And even a French editor would be faced with a number of language difficulties which themselves offer much interest to the student of French dialects. For the work includes many words of a dialectal nature whose meanings have been lost, or so it would appear; Godefroy's great dialect dictionary contains many words for which the only reference is the 1853 edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique and for which the lexicographer can give no precise meaning.

In my search for parallels, I have checked most of the great French folktale collections and many journals, and have found surprisingly little tall tale material. There are no references to the genre in the great bibliography of French folklore, volumes III and IV of Arnold Van Gennep's Manuel de Folklore Français Contemporain, although I found much comparative material in the works of Eugène Rolland (in particular, his Faune Populaire) and Paul Sébillot (especially his Folklore de France). This apparent lack of interest in the genre on the part of French folklorists is reflected in all the French folklore journals I have been able to consult; it is possible to examine long runs of journals, never finding more than one or two tall tales.

It is unfortunate that Paul Delarue and M.-L. Tenèze's magnificently detailed index of French folktales, Le Conte Populaire Français, has so far only reached volume II, but I am confident that when the section dealing with tall tales appears, much material will be presented that I have not found. It will

certainly include the material collected by Professor Luc Lacourcière and his associates in French-speaking Canada, which is held in the Archives de Folklore at Laval University, Québec. I was fortunate to have had access to the Archives and Professor Lacourcière most kindly allowed me to consult not only archive material but his collection of folklore journals and books. He also gave me a copy of the list of tale types held in the Archives de Folklore, which has proved extremely helpful. Thus, while I would not claim to have made an exhaustive survey of French material, I feel sure my study of such works is at least representative.

Nonetheless, since French sources seem so limited, I have necessarily sought elsewhere for parallels. In my notes I have referred to the Aarne-Thompson catalogue, The Types of the Folktale, Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk-Literature and, as a supplement to these works, Ernest W. Baughman's Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America. One may note in passing that Stith Thompson seems to have overlooked La Nouvelle Fabrique, as it is not listed in either The Types of the Folktale or the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, as far as I can see. Thus it is in other European traditions and in the U.S.A. that I have looked for parallels. The U.S.A. is especially rich in tall tale material, and in this respect I have been most fortunate to have had access to Professor Halpert's remarkable collection of folklore books and journals of Anglo-American scholarship. It was largely his contribution to tall tale studies which enabled me to crystallize my views on the genre in general and on La Nouvelle Fabrique and Philippe d'Alcriste in particular.

In attempting to consider the tall tale as a narrative genre, it became apparent to me that the usual classification of tales was misleading; indeed, the mere classification of tales tells one little more than their recorded geographical location and historical appearance. This is quite useful, but it prevents the

student saying much of value about the genre a tale represents. So I have attempted to suggest what I feel to be criteria for a more precise definition of the genre, by studying it not only in terms of form and content but also in terms of context and function.

In this respect, it has become clear that the tall tale is frequently linked with the names of individual tale tellers, to a degree hitherto unsuspected by many folklorists. These storytellers often become legends in their own lifetime, acquiring impressive reputations as the protagonists and narrators of their remarkable deeds. Their reputations are often perpetuated by later generations of storytellers, such is the mark the original heroes make on the folk imagination. Such representatives of oral tradition may be contrasted with literary heroes of tall tales, such as R.E. Raspe's Baron Munchhausen, with whom the oral tall tale hero, as a type, is often confused. Some folklorists have been led to believe that the true hero of oral tradition is a rara avis, whereas the very opposite is the case: there are many tall tale heroes in oral tradition, but there are few Munchhausens.

On the other hand, this 'cult of personality' is balanced by the more anonymous, if sometimes more formalised aspect of tall tale telling. Certain types of traditional storytelling situations have been recorded in which not only the individual may shine, but in which many spinners of yarns make equal contributions. The informal Liars' Bench may grow into the formal Liars' Club. While much of the evidence for both formal and informal story telling situations is drawn from American tradition, it has been possible to establish the existence of similar traditions, of the Liars' Club and the tall tale 'hero', in France.

While the tall tale marks the high point of lying and boasting in folklore, especially in respect of the tall tale hero and the Liars' Bench or Liars' Club, the humour of lies and exaggerations intrudes into more areas of human experience than the preceding

remarks tend to suggest, although its presence is not always immediately apparent. Consequently, I have tried to show the relationship which exists between the tall tale and other areas of folklore such as the Märchen, the saint's legend, giant lore, the nonsense tale, the lying song, children's lore and folk speech.

In the light shed by a study of the American tall tale tradition, La Nouvelle Fabrique and its author, Philippe d'Alcriste, may be seen in a fascinating perspective. For it can be argued that Philippe d'Alcriste was both an accomplished teller of tall tales who did his yarning in a kind of sixteenth century Liars' Club, and, even more strikingly, a skillful collector of folklore: a man who defied the literary conventions of his day in order to record, with an accuracy almost approaching the standards of twentieth century field-workers, a considerable body of folk narrative. Intimately attached to his material, Philippe d'Alcriste was one of the first authentic folklore collectors.

## TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF THE TALL TALE

As I pointed out in my introduction, La Nouvelle Fabrique des Excellents Traits de Vérité,<sup>1</sup> despite its early date (1579), and the fact that it contains a large number of tall tales which seem to be international in distribution, has been surprisingly ignored by most folklorists. The work is not mentioned in either of the two basic reference works recognised by international folklore scholars, Stith Thompson's second revision of Antti Aarne's Verzeichnis der Märchentypen, The Types of the Folktale,<sup>2</sup> and Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk-Literature.<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that most of the 110 tales of La Nouvelle Fabrique may be classified under the rubric "Tales of Lying" in The Types of the Folktale, or in the section on the "Humor of Lies and Exaggerations" in the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, it is my contention that one cannot understand the tall tale as a genre merely by referring to the "lying motif," as the narrative element of the tall tale is usually known. As C. Grant Loomis demonstrated, the presence of motifs of exaggeration in a tale is not itself sufficient to make a tall tale of it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Philippe d'Alcricpe, La Nouvelle Fabrique des Excellents Traits de Vérité, livre pour inciter les resveurs tristes et melancoliques à vivre de plaisir, Paris, Jean de Lastre, 1579. I have been unable to locate this edition, the earliest known to librarians, and have used, for the most part, the 1853 edition. For full details on the publishing history of the work, see the section under "Editions."

<sup>2</sup> Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, The Types of the Folktale, FF Communications No. 184, Helsinki, 1961.

<sup>3</sup> Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, FF Communications Nos. 106-109, 116, 117. Revised edition, Copenhagen and Bloomington, 1955-58.

<sup>4</sup> C. Grant Loomis, "The American Tall Tale and the Miraculous," California Folklore Quarterly, IV, 2 (1945), 109-28.



In this chapter, therefore, it is my intention to mention briefly why the tall tale should not be equated with the lying motif, and to dwell at some length upon the criteria, functional and contextual, which I feel will lead to a more precise definition of the genre.<sup>5</sup>

The main reason why the tall tale has been equated with the lying tale and the lying motif is, I suspect, because most scholars who use The Types of the Folktale and the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature usually find tall tales under "Tales of Lying" and the "Humor of Lies and Exaggerations." Although Stith Thompson obviously

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<sup>5</sup> Definitions of the genre are not lacking, and I indicate here some of the more important ones. For a very brief definition of the tall tale, see Laurits Bødker, Folk Literature (Germanic), Vol. II of the International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore (Copenhagen, 1965), p. 292. The confusion over the term 'tall tale' is emphasised by the number of cross references in this work, all of which need to be consulted and none of which adequately define the term; all are useful, but too brief. See particularly: "Tale of Lying," p. 291; "Lügenschwank," p. 183; "Lügenwettmärchen," p. 183; "Lügenmärchen," p. 183; "Lügenmärlein," p. 183, and "Münchhauseniade," p. 204. The article by B.A. Botkin on "Liars and Lying Tales" in the Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, ed. Maria Leach (2 vols., New York, 1950; II, 617-18), is rather confused and incomplete, but does suggest some of the functions and contexts of the tall tale. Emphasis on the hero of the tall tale is to be found in W. Rehm's article on the "Münchhauseniade" in the Reallexikon der Deutschen Literaturgeschichte, eds. Paul Merker and Wolfgang Stammeler (Berlin, 1926-28), Zweiter Band, 423-24. Carl Müller-Fraureuth, in his Die Deutschen Lügendichtungen bis auf Münchhausen (Halle, 1881), pointed out that not all lying tales were tall tales and that nonsense lies should also be considered as a distinct category.

recognised the existence of similar motifs in different genres,<sup>6</sup> he did not discuss the point at length. His concern was not with genres, after all, but with parallel motifs. It is quite possible, therefore, to consult type numbers in The Types of the Folktale, in, for example, the section on "Tales of Lying," and find references to lying motifs from genres other than the tall tale. In a later chapter I shall make a detailed examination of the relationship of the lying motif to other areas of folklore than the tall tale, but for the moment one such example will suffice.

AT 1910,<sup>7</sup> The Bear (Wolf) Harnessed, is a case in point. One of the most famous literary examples of this tale of lying tells how Baron Münchhausen was driving a horse and sledge through a forest in winter when a ravenous wolf, jumping over the Baron's head, landed on the horse and began devouring it. After the wolf had eaten most of the horse, Münchhausen whipped it so hard it jumped into the empty harness and was obliged to take the horse's place until the Baron reached his appointed destination. Thompson's first reference to this tale is, however, to a saint's legend recorded by G. Vidossi.<sup>8</sup> Vidossi brings together several European versions of this tale, in which the agent is not a mendacious soldier but God, a bishop and a variety of saints, who

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<sup>6</sup> "As stories transcend differences of age or of place and move from the ancient world to ours, or from ours to a primitive society, they often undergo protean transformations in style and narrative purpose. For the plot structure of the tale is much more stable and more persistent than its form." Stith Thompson, The Folktale, New York, 1946, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout this study the abbreviation AT followed by a number will refer to the type number of tales classified in The Types of the Folktale.

<sup>8</sup> G. Vidossi, In Margine ad Alcune Avventure di Münchhausen, FF Communications No. 162, Helsinki, 1955.

force the wolf or the bear to replace the ploughing horse. In one version, the Devil himself is obliged to replace a cartwheel which he has maliciously broken. Thus, a given motif may appear in quite different genres. If one is concerned with the definition of genres, as one of the present trends in folklore scholarship appears to be,<sup>9</sup> then other, additional criteria are needed.

European scholarship, until very recently, has been primarily historical and comparative in its treatment of tall stories. It was not until Gustav Henningsen's important study of the tall tale genre (based on Norwegian stories he had collected) which first appeared in 1961, that an attempt to lay down criteria was made in Europe.<sup>10</sup> The basic nineteenth century compilation of European tall tales, Carl Müller-Fraureuth's Die Deutschen Lügendichtungen bis auf Münchhausen,<sup>11</sup> brought together a large number of tales which he demonstrated to have been known in Europe for a long time. In Italy, Arturo Graf at the end of the nineteenth century,<sup>12</sup> and

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<sup>9</sup> Contemporary European scholars are actively engaged in trying to redefine the minor genres. I am indebted to Professor Luc Lacourcière for a copy of a communication from Professor Kurt Ranke, President of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research, dated September 1967, in which members of the society were informed of work in progress towards the production of a catalogue for the organisation of short, humorous narrative forms.

<sup>10</sup> Gustav Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," trans. Warren E. Roberts, Journal of the Folklore Institute, II, 2 (1965), 180-219.

<sup>11</sup> Halle, 1881, and reprint edition, Hildesheim, 1965. Stith Thompson surprisingly makes only one reference to this work, under AT 1920G (The Types of the Folktale, pp. 515-16) and does not include it in the bibliography to that work.

<sup>12</sup> Arturo Graf, "I Precursori del Barone di Münchhausen," Fanfulla della Domenica, VI, Roma, 1884.

G. Vidossi in the twentieth, and Ariane de Félice in France,<sup>13</sup> have also contributed valuable studies to different aspects of the genre.

One would have preferred, in an attempt to analyse the genre, to rely on French sources, being presumably closer to the subject of this study. But, as I have indicated in my introduction, French collectors and scholars have unfortunately not been interested in the genre. The comparative lack of relevant published material on the tall tale in Europe led me to concentrate my study upon North American sources, which are quantitatively far richer than European ones. American sources are rich because the lying motif caught the imagination of travellers at an early date.<sup>14</sup> But when the first enthusiastic collecting was carried out in North America, during the nineteenth century, most of it resulted in large collections of bare stories or semi-literary treatments of various themes. Favourite subjects for journalistic treatment were the formalised lying club and lying contest, which have a long literary history.

Although the collecting of tall tales has gone on apace in North America during the twentieth century, and is still a popular

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<sup>13</sup> Ariane de Félice, "Les joutes de mensonges et les concours de vantardises dans le théâtre comique médiéval et le folklore français," Actas do Congresso Internacional de Ethnografia Promovido pela Camara Municipal de Santo Tirso de 10 a 18 de Julho de 1963, Vol. II, 37-83. Additional European material has been collected in an unpublished MS by a Miss Bartelmez, a student of Archer Taylor at the University of Chicago in 1940. Professor Taylor gave a copy of the MS to Herbert Halpert, who kindly allowed me to consult it.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the nature and origins of American frontier humour, see Mody C. Boatright, Folk Laughter on the American Frontier, New York, 1942, and reprint edition, 1961.

genre among collectors,<sup>15</sup> it was only in the late nineteen-thirties and early nineteen-forties that a few folklorists began supplementing their collections of tall tales with valuable background material. At a time when many folklorists were still primarily interested in the search for parallels,<sup>16</sup> some, among whom Herbert Halpert stands

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<sup>15</sup> The richness of the tall tale tradition in North America was not apparent in Thompson's first revision of Aarne's work, which covered a fairly small body of lying tales. This was also true of the first edition of the Motif-Index. Folklorists had to wait for Ernest W. Baughman's Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America to glimpse the rich store of lying motifs in the U.S.A. Many of Baughman's motifs were incorporated into the revised editions of both reference works.

<sup>16</sup> In the following chapter I shall comment on the curious fact that many European and American folklorists, in their search for parallels, have used as the touchstone of the tall tale the literary reworking and embellishment of what was originally, no doubt, a rather small collection of oral tall tales. I refer to R.E. Raspe's The Singular Travels, Campaigns, and Adventures of Baron Münchhausen (1785). Some folklorists have come to equate the oral tall tale with the literary versions of this work. The stature of the literary Münchhausen, whose author presented his tales in novellistic fashion (as opposed to the original tall tale teller who inspired the book), has tended to obscure the existence of true, oral tall tale heroes. Some of the European studies cited earlier show the influence of the work in their titles, as does the presence of sections devoted to Münchhausen tales in the three reference works mentioned. The unclear distinction between the oral and literary source, so characteristic of the historical-geographical method, is particularly true of Baughman's valuable index. Under the "Humor of Lies and Exaggerations" there are many motifs which are literary reworkings of what may or may not be genuine folkloristic material.

out, began making their valuable contributions of rich contextual descriptions, which I regard as basic for this discussion.

Mody C. Boatright was also amongst the first folklorists to take an interest in the functions of the tall tale, and he commented on some of them in his discussion of American frontier humour: "The frontiersman lied in order to satirize his betters; he lied to cure others of the swell head; he lied in order to initiate the recruits to his way of life. He lied to amuse himself and his fellows." <sup>17</sup> Boatright further set down some of the main characteristics of the tall tale as he had heard them illustrated by gifted raconteurs; folk liars did not depend on exaggeration alone, but had to "... provide ludicrous imagery, an ingenious piling up of epithets, a sudden transition, a non sequitur--something besides mere exaggeration if his audience was to respond to his tales." <sup>18</sup>

Boatright recognised the importance of understatement and the occasional truthful element as useful adjuncts to the liar's art. He insisted upon the logic and structure of tall tales; how they begin plausibly and build carefully to a climax. He mentioned the crucial pause at the point of highest suspense, intended to induce a listener into asking a question, thereby proving his gullibility. Boatright was perhaps misled, as others were later, into thinking that the accretion of folktales around a few heroes was mainly the work of writers. While this is certainly true for some 'folk heroes,' I shall later show that this was by no means the rule.

It was the perceptive comments of folklorists like Boatright (who drew his conclusions about tall tales from largely literary sources) and Halpert, who first began supplementing his collections of tales with rich contextual descriptions, who supplied the groundwork upon which others could undertake a reappraisal of

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<sup>17</sup> Mody C. Boatright, Folk Laughter on the American Frontier, p. 97.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

the minor genres. But while such scholars provide one pole to the axis of tall tale studies today, it is a European, Gustav Henningsen, who provides the other. Henningsen, through the medium of a newspaper contest, collected a large number of Norwegian sailors' tales.<sup>19</sup> When the first fruits of his collection were published in English, folklorists were faced with a most significant study which offered not only a good body of material but many thoughtful reflections on the nature of the tall tale. Henningsen's ideas on the one hand, and material published by some American collectors on the other, have provided the information, functional and contextual, which is inextricably bound up with any definition of the tall tale.

Henningsen takes as his starting point the narrators, "...for only through the tall tale narrators can we approach an understanding of what really makes the tall tale an independent genre." Such an approach is necessary because "The tall tale is first and foremost a humorous genre, but it is a special kind of humor, a humor of lies and exaggerations, in which the comic element consists of the teller persistently reporting in a form which, on the surface, completely corresponds to a reminiscence. He does not expect to be believed, but he wants not to be interrupted as long as he lies consistently."<sup>20</sup> To lie consistently means that the tale teller sets up his own natural laws and dimensions, different from the laws and dimensions of reality, but by which he is bound. Henningsen feels that this inner logic is the essence of the tall tale narration and that the knowledgeable listener's favourite preoccupation is to break in when the teller contradicts himself. The crucial point here is Henningsen's definition of knowledgeable listeners. They are "...primarily members of a folk group who have specialised in telling tall tales. The remarkable thing about tall tales is that they are,

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<sup>19</sup> Gustav Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying."

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

in contrast to so many other traditional genres, to some extent exclusive. One finds tradition bearers among sailors, hunters, fishermen, and anglers, and also among emigrants and soldiers. One also knows that there have been tall tales circulating among farmers, but in the past they seem to have been current only to a limited extent." <sup>21</sup>

The nature of such occupations leads Henningsen to assume that the tall tale is an exclusively masculine genre, an assumption which is reinforced by the sailors' stories he read: "It is thus characteristic that there are only a very few women who sent in stories to the Jotun competition, and all who did reported in the third person or else had heard the story from someone else and began, 'Old Tobias told...,' and gave the rest of the tale in the first person. Any outsider must use an introduction of this sort if he repeats a tall tale which he has heard, for no one would expect him to report it as a personal experience. The firsthand attitude can, on the contrary, be used without further ado by a sailor or a hunter, for that is his privilege." <sup>22</sup>

Earlier in his article, Henningsen had come to the conclusion that the major weakness of The Types of the Folktale as far as the minor genres were concerned lay in the dual nature of its method of tale analysis: "The Aarne-Thompson types should, in principle, all be defined according to criteria of content. In practice this means that any version of, for example, the Cinderella tale, AT 510, could be identified with the help of the survey of the outline of the type's action and most important motif combinations. This principle is also followed in connection with most of the types which we can therefore call 'content-types.'" <sup>23</sup> But, and Henningsen illustrates this with an analysis of AT 1920, Contest in Lying, many tales are classified by form and created according to criteria

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<sup>21</sup> Gustav Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 214.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 193.



of form: "AT 1920, 'Contest in Lying,' has three subtypes of which the first, A, is characterised as follows:

The first [liar]: 'The sea burns.' The other: 'Many fried fish.'  
Variant: The first tells of the great cabbage, the other of the great kettle to cook it in.

As the type is defined, it includes all tales of lying which have the form of a contest between liars in telling stories. It further follows from the variant to subtype A that all stories about liars who tell lies which supplement one another could be brought under that type number. The two variants of A have nothing in common except that the lying motifs in the first teller's statement correspond to the lying motif in the second teller's retort. As far as the content is concerned, they are markedly different types (content-types), each with its independent origin, distribution, and variations which have been brought together under the same number. Therefore, the type number AT 1920A shows nothing about which story is referred to, but only what kind of story--and that is very unfortunate, because the idea underlying the type system is that each number corresponds to a definite story with all its variants."<sup>24</sup>

Now there were sufficient examples of the "Contest in Lying" in the collection of sailors' tales for Henningsen to perceive a general category of tall tales which he called "group lies," a category divisible into three form types, "The Lying Competition," "The Lying Cooperation" and "The Lie with Provoked Interruption." Henningsen observed that each of these types reflects a crystallized telling situation, since they cannot be told in the first person unless the telling is done dramatically. He carries the point no further than to observe that "In American tradition one can come

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<sup>24</sup> Gustav Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 193.

upon both lying competitions and collective tall tale telling wherein one liar helps the other (cooperative lie), practiced in a tall tale milieu...." <sup>25</sup>

Henningsen also observed that since tall tales had to be told in the first person, it was logical to expect "tall tale heroes," in the pattern of American heroes such as Paul Bunyan, to appear. Lack of comparative material prevented Henningsen carrying this idea any further.

By developing Henningsen's points and by combining them with Boatright's conception of the tall tale in a functional role, it is possible to present a descriptive definition of the tall tale. Briefly, one may summarise the salient criteria of the tall tale as follows: the tall tale is based on the humour of lies and exaggerations; its narrative content is traditional in nature. It exists in certain contexts or traditional situations and serves certain functions within those contexts; it is characterised by certain formal patterns which reinforce the functions it serves; one may consider both context and function as part of a traditional performance. The tall tale is a genre which relies on dramatic presentation and is thus normally told in the first person. Characteristically, tall tales tend to gather around certain "hero" figures--the protagonists of their own tales, active transmitters of traditional matter, as opposed to the passive recipients, the traditional audience.

It is inevitable that within the descriptive material which will illustrate these criteria, there will be a certain overlapping and intermingling of the points under discussion; but it would, perhaps, be undesirable to compartmentalise items representative of each criterion and to separate, for example, context from function.

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<sup>25</sup> Gustav Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 215.

Few folklorists, if any, would disagree that exaggeration forms the basis of the tall tale,<sup>26</sup> yet exaggeration is not confined to the anecdote. In some shape or form, lies and exaggerations are to be found in Märchen, the saint's legend, giant lore, the nonsense tale, the lying song, children's lore and folk speech; in a later chapter I shall discuss the relationship of these forms with the tall tale. In literary forms, the tall tale overlaps with the strong man hero of epic romance, who is exaggeratedly superior to ordinary men.

If lies and exaggeration are the sine qua non of the tall tale, equally important is the necessity of first person narration. As Henningsen put it, "Only when such a lying story is reported as a personal experience by the teller who is consciously lying is it a tall tale. On this theory, if we call a lying story told in the third person a tall tale, this implies a postulate that the story

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<sup>26</sup> Although understatement may sometimes be used with similar effect, as Vance Randolph points out: "It is a mistake to assume that backwoods humor is merely a matter of grotesque exaggeration. The Ozark story-teller appreciates understatement also, and knows more of irony than many sophisticated comedians. Our summer visitors are accustomed to people who appear more prosperous than they really are, but the rustic who makes light of his wealth is new to them. 'Come out to my shack, an' stay all night,' said a shabbily dressed cattleman. 'The roof leaks a little, but we always let company sleep in the dry spot.' The city feller accepted the invitation, and his eyes popped when he saw the 'shack'. It was a big stone ranch house of perhaps thirty rooms, with a swimming pool, golf course, and so forth. The roof was made of green tiles, and didn't leak any drop." We Always Lie To Strangers (New York, 1951), p. 6. Mody C. Boatright has noticed the same pleasure in understatement in Folk Laughter on the American Frontier, p. 98.

in question appears in a secondary form."<sup>27</sup> That is to say, someone originally told the story as a personal experience, and it is now being reported at second or third hand. The implications of this remark lead inevitably to the original purpose of the tale and the context which dictated the need for first person narration.

Perhaps the best documented function of the tall tale is its use as a means of mocking the greenhorn. The following remarks made by a Canadian informant to Herbert Halpert also describe the physical context and something of the manner in which the tall tales were told: "...Oh, sitting around the house in the evening--at branding time--sometime when people got together. More particularly when some greenhorn or tenderfoot--an Eastern visitor, was present. These stories would never be told directly to the greenhorn, but would be told in his presence, and very often verified by one or more of the bystanders, and sometimes enlarged upon by a suggestion from a friend, or verified as to the exact location. They would tell it as a matter of course--just part of the daily conversation. Not as though it were anything out of the ordinary course of events--just a common bit of gossip. Naturally, if he had any brains at all he would savvy that they were having fun at his expense."<sup>28</sup>

A similar attitude has been expressed in Randolph's We Always Lie To Strangers, the very title of which is singularly expressive. As Randolph says, talking about "windies", or tall tales: "A windy

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<sup>27</sup> Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 216. Susan Mullin, in her "Oregon's Huckleberry Finn: A Münchausen Enters Tradition," Northwest Folklore, II, 1 (1967), 19-24, has commented on the process of how a lie becomes a tale. Benjamin Franklin Finn was a noted liar, proud of his reputation; his grandson, Arthur Belknap, is "...quite well aware of his own role as a tale-teller, not a 'liar'." (p. 19).

<sup>28</sup> Herbert Halpert, "Tall Tales and Other Yarns from Calgary, Alberta," California Folklore Quarterly, IV, 1 (1945), 29-49; see p. 32.

ain't a lie, nohow,' said one of my neighbours, 'unless you tell it for the truth. And even if you do tell it for the truth, nobody is deceived except maybe a few tourists.' (p. 3).

The presence of the greenhorn as the butt of the tall tale tellers' stories implies a special kind of situation, that of the insider in relation to the outsider.<sup>29</sup> It is important for the collector to bear this in mind since he is generally an outsider, and one of the prime functions of the tall tale is to mock the outsider. In merely recording tall tales, as well as other kinds of narrative, the collector might misunderstand the nature of the tall tale completely. If the collector is fortunate enough to avoid being labelled a greenhorn, he may still be able to witness the tall tale in its most natural context and fulfilling its simplest function, that of providing entertainment for gentlemen of leisure. Within any folk group, occasions may arise when members of the community gather together to swap yarns and pass an hour together with their friends. The "Liars' Bench," the storytellers' meeting place, has been described in Hoosier Tall Stories, a 1937 Federal Writers' Project in Indiana publication: "From earliest times men in American small towns and rural communities have gathered at crossroads, stores, and taverns to swap yarns, and tell tales. So common is this yarn-swapping among Hoosiers that a time-honored institution exists from which the yarns are started on their rounds. This institution is called variously the 'Lazy' or 'Liar's Bench,' the 'Community Bench,' and the 'Cracker Barrel.' It is here that tall stories usually get their start."

Vance Randolph, amongst others, has testified to the existence elsewhere of the "Liars' Bench" upon which may be found seated many liars participating with pleasure in the tale swapping. Herbert

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<sup>29</sup> For a fuller examination of this question, see William Hugh Jansen, "The Esoteric-Exoteric Factor in Folklore," The Study of Folklore, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), 43-51.

Halpert elicited some precise information from a Bloomington, Indiana, gentleman by the name of Mr. Robert Barr: "The Liars' Clubs usually meet in the rural districts at some congregating point--like around a country store or railroad crossing--and 'course they swap their yarns. It'd be usually in the evening after supper. It could be the year round--has been usually. Warm weather they'd sit out somewhere, like the railroad crossing or in front of an old country store, and in the winter time usually around the stove in the country store after the day's business is done.

"That's 'bout all they do--tell stories, tell their yarns. Smoke, chew tobacco. That's recreation for them--get away from home, visit among their neighbors. One feller drops in, and he's not there very long 'fore another feller comes in. Then the fireworks starts. Then the crowd will enlarge, one or two at a time, all the rest of the evening. Ordinarily the storekeeper doesn't take any part in it. He'll listen in, maybe smile at the tales--that's about all. He kinda stays in a position that any time trade comes in he can withdraw to wait on his business.

"These tales don't have the kick to you that they've to fellers who've been in it. That's the way they come on--when there's been one told, it calls for another in retaliation." <sup>30</sup>

The last point made by Halpert's informant recalls Henningsen's remarks about group lies. There is evidence to support his three form-types involving deception, cooperation and contest. The process of deception is an integral part of the tall tale as far as greenhorns are concerned. Various devices may be used by the tale-teller to aid the deception. The location in which the tale is set will usually be well known to the audience and throughout the narrative the teller will introduce a wealth of circumstantial detail which,

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<sup>30</sup> Herbert Halpert, "Liars' Club Tales," Hoosier Folklore Bulletin, II, 1 (1943), 11-13.

as has been noted, may often be verified or corrected by an accomplice. The tale will begin like any ordinary narrative and the lying motif, when it finally appears, will be the result of a logical situation, such as the one described in the following tale: "Dave was getting food for the family and naturally in the Western country there's always a shortage of ammunition. He was down pretty near to his last shell, and so he lay on the edge of the lake and waited till he got the geese in line. He got about a dozen in line and let drive. He was telling this story to his friends in the dining room and his wife was in the kitchen. He said, 'I got fourteen with one shot.' And his wife called from the kitchen, 'Fifteen, Dave, fifteen! Don't you remember we found one in the grass the next morning?'" <sup>31</sup>

This tale also illustrates and emphasises another of the elements which help to enforce the aura of reality created by the storyteller--the cooperation between the teller and another member of the audience. The addition may sometimes take the form of an even greater lie than the first. Henningsen describes such a situation: "Christiansen tells thus one evening about a storm in the Bay of Biscay where the waves went as high as the houses so that only the funnel was sticking out. 'Oh--that was the time--the time when the engineer had to carry smoke up in buckets,' Syvertsen chimes in." <sup>32</sup>

A typical "contest in lying," set in its natural context, has been recorded by Earl A. Collins: "'Daddy' Eggleston and 'Old Man' Orton were rivals when it came to telling tall tales. It was a lot of fun for the boys of the community to get these two old men together. If one would make a statement of questionable exactness or tell a tale of doubtful veracity, the other would be sure to tell a bigger one. 'Daddy' when separated from the 'Old Man' would

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<sup>31</sup> Halpert, "Tall Tales and Other Yarns from Calgary, Alberta," p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 195.

swear that you couldn't believe a word the 'Old Man' said, while the 'Old Man' would stoutly affirm that 'Daddy' was the biggest liar in the state.

Their favorite meeting places were in front of the village hotel or on the sunny side of the old livery barn. Here they would be sure to have an audience of listeners who would maneuver to get the two old fellows started telling tales." <sup>33</sup> "Daddy" might then give a version of the "Lucky Shot," and the "Old Man" would reply with his version of the "Ramrod Shot."

That it is the pleasure derived from the contest and general atmosphere as much as the lying motifs themselves which is important to the audience is obvious. But listeners are well able to appreciate the artistry of the narrators, and such appreciation may well have prompted Joseph C. Allen to put many of the tales he heard in a similar context into verse, and publish his poems. <sup>34</sup> Walter Hard, a Vermont poet, put much of local life into verse, including the description of a typical Liars' Bench and some of the tall tales he heard there. Richard M. Dorson has brought Mr. Hard and other poets of the people to the attention of folklorists, emphasising the vivid reality of the scenes they described. <sup>35</sup>

From the informality of the "Liars' Bench" and the occasional contest provoked by the audience, there seems to have grown up more formally organised groups. While such activities are properly beyond the scope of this study, some of the better known Liars' Clubs may be noted, especially as they have parallels in Europe. The activities of the Sazerac Lying Club, which flourished in the

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<sup>33</sup> Earl A. Collins, Folk Tales of Missouri, Boston, 1935, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph C. Allen, Fireside Tales Told On Martha's Vineyard, subtitled Joe Allen's Fireside Tales Told 'Longside the Stove at Sanderson's, New Bedford, 1933 and 1941.

<sup>35</sup> Richard M. Dorson, Jonathan Draws The Long Bow, Cambridge, Mass., 1946, pp. 254-60.



mid-nineteenth century, were recorded by F.H. Hart.<sup>36</sup> Richard M. Dorson reported on the origin of the Burlington Liars' Club, which was apparently created as a piece of journalistic enterprise which backfired. The description of a fictitious 'Best Liar Contest' submitted to a newspaper as Christmas filler caught the eye of an editor on another paper, and before long the original publisher was submerged by requests for more information and the continued publicity of the Club.<sup>37</sup> If one may judge by their publications, such clubs spread all over the United States, although the frequency of their meetings may have been slight; but one may measure their success by that of the radio program directed by Lowell Thomas, who published a large collection of tall tales sent to him by his listeners.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the formal and sometimes commercialised "Liars' Clubs," it is true to say that the tall tale really thrives at the local "loafing place." It is here that the tall tale artists gather to swap their "experiences." Philippe d'Alcripe describes just such a context in his preface. He used to meet his friends at a tavern, and warmed by good food and drink they swapped yarns, which Philippe was later called upon to write down. La Nouvelle Fabrique may be considered the chronicle of a sixteenth century Liars' Club.

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<sup>36</sup> F.H. Hart, The Sazerac Lying Club, San Francisco, 1878. C. Grant Loomis reproduced tales from this book in the California Folklore Quarterly, IV, 3 (1945), 216-38, and speaks of it in the same journal, IV, 4 (1945), 351-58.

<sup>37</sup> Richard M. Dorson, "Two City Yarnfests," California Folklore Quarterly, V, 1 (1946), 72-82. See also O.C. Hulett, President of the Burlington Liars' Club, Now I'll Tell One, Chicago, 1935.

<sup>38</sup> Lowell Thomas, Tall Tales, New York, 1931. A typical piece of Liars' Club publicity may be seen in E.E. Selby, 100 Goofy Lies (Tall Tales), published by the Goofy Liars' Club, Organisers and Promoters of the International Liars' Contest; Decatur, Illinois, 1939.

One of the reasons Philippe gave for committing the tales to paper was that they might not be forgotten but preserved for his friends' children. Perhaps he foresaw the day when the men of the village would no longer gather to spread their tales by word of mouth. At any event, it is within such a context that tales are spread. In Philippe's case, entertainment seems to have been the prime function of the yarning. These are, however, by no means the only methods of transmission nor the sole purposes of tall tale telling. The tall tale teller may often learn his stories consciously, especially if they form part of his stock-in-trade: "The way I heard most of them stories: different local boys out with parties [this is told to Halpert by Andrew Wright, a guide], they each have their own stories. You have to entertain your guests when you're out--sittin' around the campfire nights. We usually have our own parties in the wintertime, and we set and tell stories. You've got to memorize them." <sup>39</sup>

If professional swapping is one line of transmission, there is also evidence to suggest, at the same time, that tall tales are handed down from adult to child. Some tall tales I collected from a Newfoundland informant, Mr. Boyd Trask, had been passed on to him by an uncle, who was always ready to stop work and tell his experiences to the youngsters. <sup>40</sup> Herbert Halpert found the same process reported by some soldier informants, where the chain of transmission was from grandparent to grandchild. <sup>41</sup>

It has been noted earlier that some tall tale tellers tell their tall tales with themselves as protagonists, while others tell their tales about the person from whom they originally learnt the tales.

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<sup>39</sup> Halpert, "Tall Tales and Other Yarns from Calgary, Alberta," p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> Memorial University of Newfoundland Archive, Accession number 67-19, cards 7-10.

<sup>41</sup> Herbert Halpert, "Tales Told By Soldiers," California Folklore Quarterly, IV, 4 (1945), 364-76.

Collectors seem to have assumed that we know why people tell tales on themselves, but rarely provide evidence to support their assumption. Halpert has recorded one example where his informant had a very sound reason for telling the tales on himself: "This really didn't happen but I want to tell it on myself. It makes it more real.... My uncle ... told it on himself and so I tell it on myself. In other words it ain't good unless a fellow tells it on himself."<sup>42</sup> While it is usual for the tall tale teller to adopt the recognised device of making himself the hero of his yarns, it is not always the case. To use the device successfully requires a certain degree of dramatic ability and the poor storyteller may renounce its use in favour of recounting someone else's exploits.

This may happen frequently when the hero of the tales is a noted liar whose reputation was well established at his death and whose memory, impressed upon the minds of his contemporaries by his great artistry, survives in the narration of his tales by old friends and acquaintances. The famous liar does not have to be deceased, of course, to be admired by his friends. Among the liars on the Liars' Bench may sit an accomplished artist. His fellows may resent others telling "his" tales as their own. So appreciating his skill, they may take pains to provoke him into spinning some of his yarns. Proud of his reputation as an expert liar, he has been known to display a temperament more frequently associated with a theatrical prima donna.

Chester A. Smith has this to say about Henry Denny, a long-dead storyteller: "[he was]... so distinctive in his methods of storytelling that his memory still survives after the lapse of nearly a century.... It was only by chance that he would tell a story, and if one asked for a tale he would leave immediately.... But no questions must be asked or he would leave in high dudgeon, and if

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<sup>42</sup> Herbert Halpert, "Tales of a Mississippi Soldier," Southern Folklore Quarterly, VIII, 2 (1944), 97-106; see p. 98.

one ever referred later to a story he had told, he would throw down whatever tools he happened to be using, if he was in the midst of farm work, and leave for the day."<sup>43</sup> For the great storyteller does not need competition.

Perhaps no American storyteller can match "Lying Abe" or "Oregon" Smith, whose reputation spread across two states. Like Henry Denny, "Lying Abe" Smith did not care to swap tall tales. In one of the most elaborate discussions of a tall tale teller and his art, William Hugh Jansen noted that "Although I agree that the lying contest is a common thing, Abe Smith was not characteristic. Of course he listened to jokes and he may have swapped jokes. But he did not swap lies. Many tellers regard their tale-telling as lie-swapping or joke-telling. Not so Abe Smith, and his audiences did not think of him as a tale-swapper. They came to listen. They asked him to tell a story. They 'tried to get him to tell a story.' If either Abe or his auditors evolved a philosophy of composition based on his tale-telling, it was that his was a narrative performance as distinct from the tale- and joke-swapping of others."<sup>44</sup>

Harry Botsford, writing in The Saturday Evening Post,<sup>45</sup> made similar observations about another storyteller, a certain Gid Morgan. He described how, as a young boy in an oil town, his father had ushered him into the presence of Morgan, who was surrounded by a crowd of oil men, and after a long, preliminary conversation had managed to get Morgan to spin some of his famous yarns. And not without some difficulty, largely because Morgan was proud of his

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<sup>43</sup> Chester A. Smith, "Henry Denny, Storyteller of the Highlands," New York Folklore Quarterly, V, 1 (1949), 59-64.

<sup>44</sup> William Hugh Jansen, "Lying Abe : A Tale-Teller And His Reputation," Hoosier Folklore, VII, 4 (1948), 107-24; see p. 118.

<sup>45</sup> Harry Botsford, "Oil-field Minstrel," The Saturday Evening Post, October 3, 1942, pp. 11, 71-72.

reputation and required a fully appreciative audience before he would start. Now Gid, or Gib Morgan as he is best known, is one of a large number of tall tale heroes who have lived and flourished in the United States.

## THE TALL TALE HERO

In the preceding chapter, I concluded my illustrations of the context and function of the tall tale with some observations on the role of the individual storyteller. I adopted Gustav Henningsen's suggestion that for a lying story to be a tall tale, it should be told in the first person. This implies that the storyteller himself is very important, and Henningsen, on the basis of his Norwegian collection, found some small evidence of the existence, in European tradition, of potential "tall tale heroes." But if Henningsen's European evidence is inconclusive, the same is not the case in North America. Some of the American collectors who first described the contexts and functions of the tall tale also gathered information about the actual tellers of tall tales. As a result, there is now available a substantial body of material describing these traditional narrators, proof, in fact, of the existence of a large number of "tall tale heroes" in North American tradition.

There are, in the main, two types of tall tale teller. The first, just like the second, may make himself the protagonist of his yarns; but he is just as likely to tell his tales about someone else, usually about a person who has dominated his milieu to such an extent during his lifetime that "his" stories are still told about him long after his death. It is this storyteller to whom I refer as the "tall tale hero."

It should be mentioned here in passing, however, and I shall discuss it at some length later in this chapter, that the term "tall tale hero" has been used inappropriately by some folklorists. This is largely due to the immoderate influence exerted by R.E. Raspe's literary creation, The Singular Travels, Campaigns, and Adventures of Baron Münchhausen. When folklorists refer to Münchhausen, they are normally thinking of the literary reworking into the novellistic form of continuous narrative of what was originally, no doubt, a small but genuine collection of tall tales told by an authentic

"tall tale hero." Raspe's M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen has enjoyed such fame that his literary handling of the tall tale has been accepted as typical of the oral tall tale. Even more astonishing is the apparent assumption that Raspe's form of presentation of tall tales, narrated as a continuous series of adventures, is typical of the oral storyteller. Possibly because of confusion with this rewriting of the original M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen's tales, possibly for reasons which are not clear to me, some folklorists have assumed that tall tale heroes in oral tradition are few in number.

But the presentation of tales in novellistic form is alien to the spirit of the tall tale,<sup>1</sup> and there are many oral tall tale heroes. The true tall tale hero is a gifted raconteur, not a novelist. His artistry is recognised as a rule within the occupational group in which he moves--in the oil fields like Gib Morgan, or as a guide such as "Oregon" Smith, telling his yarns to tease and entertain his charges. It is only with some form of exploitation, literary or commercial, that the tall tale hero becomes known outside his social group or community.

It is my intention here to present what is only a sampling of genuine oral tall tale heroes, most of whom are known to a limited circle of people. These are the men (I know of no tall tale heroines) who have dominated the imagination of their peers both before and after their death. Anyone may be a hero of his own yarns, but it requires more than an artistic device to become the hero of others' stories. By this score, some of the heroes who follow are only potential heroes, but I feel this is due to insufficient collecting, and that a renewed interest will show that tall tale heroes are more numerous than one may think. And once the identity of the genuine oral hero has been made clear, he may be more easily measured against his literary brother.

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<sup>1</sup> This point was raised and developed in a fruitful discussion with Herbert Halpert.

Several of the early tall tale heroes were guides or explorers, and one of the oldest of such heroes to be recorded is Abe or "Oregon" Smith (1796-1893), from Indiana. Halpert first brought Smith to the attention of folklorists with a small collection of tales and some useful biographical information which suggested that Smith had much in common with Jim Bridger, another famous explorer. Both had discovered wonders of the American West and established reputations as liars, after acting as guides to green tourists.<sup>2</sup> A few years later, William Hugh Jansen considerably enlarged our knowledge of Smith, providing most valuable clues about his reputation, his style, the context in which he told his yarns and the attitude of those who knew him or knew of him. One may look eagerly forward to Jansen's forthcoming study of "Lying Abe" Smith.<sup>3</sup>

Jim Bridger (1804-1881), western explorer and guide and one of the earliest known "liars" to come to fame, was instrumental in opening up one of the great national parks of the U.S.A. Early

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<sup>2</sup> Herbert Halpert and Emma Robinson, "'Oregon' Smith, An Indiana Folk Hero," Southern Folklore Quarterly, VI, 3 (1942), 163-68.

<sup>3</sup> William Hugh Jansen, "Lying Abe: a Tale Teller and his Reputation," Hoosier Folklore, VII, 4 (1948), 107-24. The future study is based on Jansen's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "Abraham 'Oregon' Smith: Pioneer, Folk Hero, and Tale-teller" (Indiana University, 1949). See also Hoosier Folklore Bulletin, III, 4 (1944), 73-74. For tales by another Indiana tall tale hero, see Ruby Stainbrook Butler, "Old Man Edmonds," Hoosier Folklore, VI, 4 (1947), 151-52; R.S. Butler, "Old Man Edmonds," Hoosier Folklore, VII, 2 (1948), 33-38; and R.S. Butler, "Old Man Edmonds," Hoosier Folklore, VIII, 2-3 (1949), 48-49. William Easterly "Old Man" Edmonds was born in England during the first half of the nineteenth century and died in about 1908 at Franklin, Johnson County, Indiana.



publications concerned with the Yellowstone National Park devote a chapter to him; as an explorer there, his descriptions of the park were refused publication, because he was already known as a "liar."<sup>4</sup> Bridger may have lost something of his reputation after his death; later publications about the Yellowstone contain several of "his" lies, but he is not mentioned. There are amusing descriptions, however, of the situations which prompted the telling of many of the guides' lies; they were often inspired in answer to silly questions asked by naive tourists.<sup>5</sup>

A number of collectors have recorded the fame of John Darling (1809-1893) of New York State; Harold W. Thompson collected a long cycle of tales about him,<sup>6</sup> and Herbert Halpert's collection included a number of significant remarks illustrating how deeply Darling's reputation was rooted. As one informant put it: "I knew John Darling myself. He was the damndest liar in seven states. He said to my mother, 'Take that thimble away from that young one, for I seen seven children choke to death in one day on the same thimble.'"<sup>7</sup>

Although Moritz Jagendorf presented John Darling to the public in a literary reworking of the tales about him he had collected from people who knew Darling, he also had some interesting remarks to make about the context in which Darling told his tales, and the role he played in his society: "Since he was not a very strong man, he

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<sup>4</sup> Hiram Martin Chittenden, The Yellowstone National Park, 3rd edition, Cincinnati, 1899. See chapter VI, "James Bridger." An enlarged edition of this work, dated 1918, has the same chapter entitled "Bridger and his Stories."

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, C. Van Tassell, Truthful Lies of Yellowstone Park, St. Paul, 1923; and Jack Chaney, Foolish Questions (Yellowstone National Park), 4th edition, St. Paul, ca. 1929.

<sup>6</sup> Harold W. Thompson, Body, Boots & Britches, New York, 1962, 132-36.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert Halpert, "John Darling, A New York Munchausen," Journal of American Folklore, LVII, 224 (1944), 97-106; see p. 98.

probably was often asked more for the entertainment he gave than the work he accomplished." <sup>8</sup> More precisely, "No barn-raising, stonewall 'bee', or any other kind of 'bee'--that is, a gathering of a group for work--was complete without a few tales from Johnny Darling. At clambakes, elections, dances (they called them 'frolics' in those days), Johnny was among the star guests and was expected to furnish entertainment." <sup>9</sup>

"Captain" John Hance (ca. 1850-1919) of Arizona was, like Jim Bridger and "Oregon" Smith, a guide famous for his stories, stories which were still being told more than twenty years after his death: "...he was to the Grand Canyon what Jim Bridger was to the Yellowstone--pioneer, guide, and storyteller." <sup>10</sup> John Hance was reported as saying to a friend, Mrs. Elizabeth B. Heiser, "'Heiser,' he would say, 'I've got to tell stories to them people for their money; and if I don't tell it to them, who will? I can make these tenderfeet believe that a frog eats boiled eggs; and I'm going to do it; and I'm going to make 'em believe that he carries it a mile to find a rock to crack it on.'" <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> M[oritz] Jagendorf, The Marvellous Adventures of Johnny Darling, New York, 1949, p. 223. See also M. Jagendorf, "Catskill Darling: Facts about a Folk Hero," New York Folklore Quarterly, I (May 1945), 76.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Gillmor, "Old-Timer Yarns and Sayings," University of Arizona Bulletin, XVI, 1 (1945), 5-8; see p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Lon Garrison, "John Hance, Guide, Trail Builder, Miner and Windjammer of the Grand Canyon," Arizona Highways, XXV, 6 (1949), 2-11; see p. 4. One may also consult Frank C. Lockwood, "More Arizona Characters," University of Arizona General Bulletin, 6 (July 1, 1942), which I have not been able to see, but which includes several of Hance's yarns.

A Canadian hero, already mentioned in another context, is Dave McDougall (184?-1928), first brought to the attention of folklorists by Herbert Halpert. One of Halpert's informants, Alex R. McTavish, told him that both Dave and his historically more noted brother John "...told the stories for truth," and that members of the present generation of the family, especially the daughters, get very irate at the stories and deny that they were told."<sup>12</sup> Halpert was unable to get more than an inkling of the stories John told, but if remarks made to him about John McDougall are worth anything, he was a bigger liar than his brother Dave. One informant told Halpert: "They say the three biggest liars in Alberta were Dave McDougall; John McDougall was the other two."<sup>13</sup>

Warren Stanley Walker collected tales about another hero, Daniel Stamps (1866-1950) of Illinois, and had this to say about him: "Of the many tall tales told in the river country, those featuring Daniel Stamps compose by far the most interesting group that I have heard. In Calhoun, Greene, and Jersey counties there is currently a whole cycle of tales in circulation about 'ol' Dan'l.' Most of these Stamps once told about himself as true accounts of adventures he had experienced and feats he had performed, and many are the folks who still remember the wrath incurred by disbelievers! Others

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<sup>12</sup> Halpert, "Tall Tales and Other Yarns from Calgary, Alberta," p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 33. Charles M. Russell, in Trails Ploughed Under (New York, 1946), reported a similar anecdote: "Once up in Yogo, Bill Cameron pointed out Old Man Babcock an' another old-timer, Patrick, sayin', 'There's three of the biggest liars in the world.' 'Who's the third?' inquired a bystander. 'Patrick's one, an' old Bab's the other two,' says Cameron." (pp. 191-92). For further tales from Alberta, one may consult Robert Gard, Johnny Chinook (Toronto, London and New York, 1945). Johnny Chinook is the personification of the Alberta storytellers. Dave McDougall is but one of the characters about whom the tall tales collected by Gard were told.

of his stories, however, have been the property of the folk so long that they are frequently presented from the point of view of the third person narrator." <sup>14</sup>

One may also mention as representative tall tale heroes such men as Len Henry (1852-1946) from North Idaho, about whom Jan Harold Brunvand has written; <sup>15</sup> Benjamin Franklin Finn from Oregon, <sup>16</sup> and Bill Greenfield who, like John Darling, did his lying in New York. <sup>17</sup> Gib Morgan (1842-1909), who worked in the oil country from Pennsylvania to Texas and whom I have mentioned earlier, has been chronicled by Mody C. Boatright, who pointed out in his introduction that he had chosen the best of the tales extant about Morgan and woven them into a continuous narrative. <sup>18</sup> Others, for whom scanty biographical information is available, include the guide from Rangeley, Maine, Ed Grant, who flourished at the turn of the century; <sup>19</sup> "Slick"

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<sup>14</sup> Warren Stanley Walker (with the assistance of Richard Logan and Gordon Macleod), "Dan'l Stamps : Tall Tale Hero of the River Country," Midwest Folklore, IV, 3 (1954), 153-60.

<sup>15</sup> Jan Harold Brunvand, "Len Henry: North Idaho Munchausen," Northwest Folklore, I, 1 (1965), 11-19.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Mullin, "Oregon's Huckleberry Finn: A Munchausen Enters Tradition," Northwest Folklore, II, 1 (1966), 19-25.

<sup>17</sup> Harold W. Thompson, Body, Boots & Britches, pp. 136-42. See also Louis C. Jones, "Bill Greenfield, A Nearly Forgotten Folk-Hero," Club Dial, IX, 5 (1936), 8-10, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Mody C. Boatright, Gib Morgan, Minstrel of the Oil Fields, Publications of the Texas Folklore Society, XX, 1945.

<sup>19</sup> The Tame Trout and Other Backwoods Fairy Tales in Book Form as narrated by that Veracious Chronicler Edward Grant, Esq. of Beaver Pond, Maine. Chronicled by Francis I. Maule of Philadelphia, Farmington, Maine, 1941. The first edition of 1904 is reproduced by Samuel T. Farquhar, "The Tame Trout," California Folklore Quarterly, III, 3 (1944), 177-84.

MacQuoid, whose tales were collected in Wilton, Maine, by Richard M. Dorson; MacQuoid, however, usually preferred to tell the tales about his friends.<sup>20</sup>

To this selection of tall tale heroes one may add the names of another breed of folk heroes, men who owe their fame not so much to their skill as liars, but as strong men. All were real men who, like the liars, told tales about themselves and had tales told about them. There has, unfortunately, been little comment by collectors on the circumstances in which the yarns were told. Ernest W. Baughman collected tales about Bobby Hayes (ca. 1867-1933 or 1934), an Indiana quarry worker.<sup>21</sup> In an article on Nebraska's "Strong Men," Mari Sandoz mentioned a certain Antoine Barada (1807-1866), as well as Moses Stocking, who seems to have been a tall tale hero in Western Nebraska.<sup>22</sup> Both Harold W. Thompson and C. Eleanor Hall have recorded the feats in New York State of Joe Call (d. 1834)<sup>23</sup> and Richard M. Dorson has written about Barney Beal's marvellous feats of strength in New England.<sup>24</sup> From Canada came Louis Cyr (1863-1912), "The Strongest Man Who Ever Lived."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Richard M. Dorson, "Maine Master Narrator," Southern Folklore Quarterly, VIII, 4 (1944), 279-85.

<sup>21</sup> Ernest W. Baughman, "Bobby Hayes, Quarry Worker," Hoosier Folklore Bulletin, I, 3 (1942), 75-77.

<sup>22</sup> Mari Sandoz, "Antoine Barada," Nebraska History, XXIV, 1 (1943), 57-58. See also Paul R. Beath (on Nebraska folk heroes), Nebraska Folklore Pamphlets, No. 8, Sept. 15, 1937, 9-11. Federal Writers' Project.

<sup>23</sup> Thompson, Body, Boots & Britches, 142-44; and C. Eleanor Hall, "Joe Call, The Lewis Giant," New York Folklore Quarterly, IX, 1 (1953), 5-27.

<sup>24</sup> Richard M. Dorson, American Folklore, Chicago & London, 1959, pp. 124-28; and Dorson, Jonathan Draws The Long Bow, pp. 124-25.

<sup>25</sup> Jack Tremblay, Louis Cyr, The Story of the Strongest Man Who Ever Lived, Fredericton, 1967.

While these last figures are noted for their strength rather than their ability as liars (although most of the tales about them are undoubtedly exaggerations), they represent a distinct type of American folk hero; both types of hero overlap in American literary tradition in the shape of Paul Bunyan, who was both a giant and a tall tale hero. I mentioned earlier that some folklorists had been overimpressed by Paul Bunyan and it is fitting therefore to comment on this essentially literary figure.

It has been established that the Paul Bunyan now known to North America is a widely popularised version of a tall tale hero who probably did exist in oral tradition, in the manner of many of the heroes previously mentioned. Daniel G. Hoffman's study illustrates how the Bunyan of oral tradition was transformed for commercial advantage to such an extent that some voices were raised denying the existence of Bunyan in oral tradition at all.<sup>26</sup> Herbert Halpert, however, made available to Hoffman manuscripts of Bunyan tales he had collected from Eastern loggers; they had told their tales before Bunyan was launched into the world by a publicity campaign.<sup>27</sup> And Stith Thompson heard Bunyan tales in 1910.<sup>28</sup> Richard M. Dorson has detailed the literary accounts of Bunyan's career, as well as discussing other comic heroes of literary inspiration such as Mike Fink, Joe Magarac, Febold Feboldson and Pecos Bill.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Daniel G. Hoffman, Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods, Philadelphia, 1952.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 165, note 3.

<sup>28</sup> Stith Thompson, The Folktale, p. 250, note 34.

<sup>29</sup> Richard M. Dorson, American Folklore, pp. 214-26. For the history of the genesis of Febold Feboldson, see Paul R. Beath, Febold Feboldson, Tall Tales From The Great Plains, Lincoln, 1948. A new edition (University of Nebraska Press, 1962) includes Louise Pound's article on "Nebraska Strong Men," reprinted from Southern Folklore Quarterly, VII (September, 1943), 133-143.

If Paul Bunyan has come to represent the epitome of the American tall tale hero to the American public, it has been common practice amongst folklorists to refer to genuine tall tale heroes as "Münchhausens," after the famous Baron whose adventures set the pattern for the literary heroes. Halpert, who was probably the first to use the term and who was followed by other collectors, now feels he was inaccurate in this usage because while he was referring to the historical Münchhausen, the man who originally told the tales, most people think not of this person but of the Münchhausen of the literary redaction ascribed to R.E. Raspe, two quite different characters. In passing, one may note the distinct possibility that the literary Münchhausen exerted an influence on American oral tradition through chapbooks, as Erwin G. Gudde has shown.<sup>30</sup>

The style of the literary Münchhausen bears little or no resemblance to that of the tall tale hero of oral tradition. Anyone familiar with the style of anecdotes collected from oral tradition is liable to be seriously shocked on reading the famous Baron's adventures for the first time, if he expects to find a collection of oral tall tales.<sup>31</sup> That Raspe's Münchhausen has little connection with his genuine oral counterpart will jump to the eyes, for the

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<sup>30</sup> Erwin G. Gudde, "An American Version of Munchausen," American Literature, 13 (1941-42), 372-90. Gudde describes four chapbook versions of Münchhausen's adventures published in the U.S.A. between 1805 and 1845. It is a small point, but one should observe the difference between American and European spellings of the Baron's name: Münchhausen or Munchausen in the U.S.A., Münchhausen in Europe.

<sup>31</sup> The best and most readily available edition of The Singular Travels, Campaigns, and Adventures of Baron Munchausen is probably the Dover edition (New York, 1960) with an introduction by John Carswell. This is a republication, with slight differences of pagination, of the Cresset Press edition of 1948.

Adventures are written in the most high-flown eighteenth century manner, as a parody of travellers' tales. The literary Munchhausen is as artificial as James Stevens' Paul Bunyan, and most untraditional in style and presentation.<sup>32</sup> I am not familiar with any collections of tall tales from oral tradition in which the protagonist presents his adventures in the form of a sustained narrative, yet this is precisely how both Munchhausen and Bunyan have been introduced to the public and how many folklorists have come to know them.

It should be clearly recognised that there were indeed two bearers of the name Munchhausen who are of concern to folklorists. Munchhausen was not a pseudonym used by Rudolf Erich Raspe, as Dorson seems to imply when he speaks of such genuine oral heroes as Jim Bridger, "Oregon" Smith, Gib Morgan and John Darling: "Mostly, however, the exaggerators depend upon stock fictions current throughout the country, which they adopt as authentic personal experiences. This after all is the manner of that most redoubtable truth-twister, Baron Munchhausen (Rudolph Erich Raspe, 1720-1797), whose solemn-faced Narratives of his Marvelous Travels and Campaigns in Russia made his name a synonym for gorgeous fabrications."<sup>33</sup>

As John Carswell has so clearly illustrated, the Baron Munchhausen who is so well known to North American specialists of the tall tale as the major European representative of the genre, is a literary creation. While there really did exist a Baron of that name (Hieronymus Karl Friedrich, Freiherr von Munchhausen, 1720-1797), who was a storyteller, it was Rudolph Erich Raspe who made a hero out of him. Munchhausen saw service on the side of the Russians, finally reaching the rank of captain, and "...ten years later, when he was only forty, he retired to his estates on the Weser. There he hunted and entertained, becoming known in the neighbourhood for

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<sup>32</sup> James Stevens, Paul Bunyan, New York, 1924 and 1940.

<sup>33</sup> Dorson, American Folklore, p. 227.



his generosity and graphic conversation. His vein of humour, which has found many modern imitators, was the serious narration of palpable absurdities. One of his guests observed that he spoke 'cavalierly, indeed with military emphasis, yet without any concession to the whimsicality of the man of the world; describing his adventures as one would incidents which were in the natural course of events'." <sup>34</sup>

Raspe had met the famous Baron's cousin and may have met the Baron himself. He certainly knew of the Baron's reputation as a raconteur, and may have heard some of the Baron's stories. While it is not the place here to examine the background to Raspe's literary creation, nor to establish once and for all that it was indeed Raspe who wrote the Adventures (all of this has been expertly done by John Carswell), it is well to point out that Raspe probably drew on earlier written sources. As Carswell states: "The fact of Raspe's authorship of the 1785 English edition having once been established and with it, of the Baron as a character, the search for the sources of his subject-matter diminishes from literary to merely bibliographical interest. Even the existence in the issues of the Berlin Vade Mecum für Lustige Leute for 1781 and 1783 of two unsigned contributions which give the bare bones of the first seventeen anecdotes can detract little from Raspe's claim to original creation." <sup>35</sup> Raspe's importance lies in the fact that he was almost certainly the first person to give a literary treatment to a genuine tall tale hero, in this case, Baron Münchhausen.

Having established the existence of two Münchhausens, it seems fairly safe to assume that the historical Münchhausen, whose tales inspired Raspe was, in all probability, one of a kind with the

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<sup>34</sup> R.E. Raspe and Others, The Singular Travels, Campaigns and Adventures of Baron Munchausen, with an introduction by John Carswell, New York, 1960, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. xxv.

heroes of the tall tale tradition in North America. His Liars' Bench may have been in a castle rather than in a village store, but he was the equal of any of his American successors, few of whom have found, as yet, a Raspe of their own. Not that they might be pleased to find one, any more than Munchhausen was after Raspe thrust an undesired fame upon him.

If the hero cast in the Munchhausen mould may be said to be international in distribution (Gustav Henningsen found traces of what he termed potential heroes in his collection of Norwegian yarns, and I have found evidence of a similar tradition in France today), I must further disagree with Professor Dorson when he asserts that "American field collectors have found surprisingly little trace of heroes in oral tradition,"<sup>36</sup> and claims that "Gib Morgan stands as the only tall-tale hero of occupational lore with satisfactory folk credentials,"<sup>37</sup> Firstly, the weight of evidence suggests that there are many heroes in oral tradition and secondly, the implication that Gib Morgan alone possesses a cycle of tales about him must be considered in the light of the fact that Dorson uses as his source for the Morgan cycle Mody C. Boatright's Gib Morgan, Minstrel of the Oil Fields. Boatright clearly states in his introduction that he has taken a large number of scattered tales he collected about Gib Morgan and woven them into a sustained narrative. He added, moreover, that he had made a selection of what he felt were the best tales. While it is theoretically possible that tall tale heroes weave their tales with the thread of narrative unity, the weight of research and collections tends to suggest that they do not. It would be most interesting to see if there are any oral narrators who do attempt to create an artistic whole, something in the manner of Raspe's Munchhausen.

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<sup>36</sup> Dorson, American Folklore, p. 200.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

Thus far I have attempted to show through the medium of American material something of the nature, contexts and functions of the tall tale. Accepting the prime importance of the narrator, the tall tale seems to be shared by two kinds of storyteller. On the one hand, there are tale tellers whose yarns and artistry set them apart from their fellow liars and whom one may dub "tall tale heroes." Cycles of tales about them may survive after their death. On the other hand, there are the liars who, while still the frequent protagonists of their tales, find their pleasure not so much in yarning about themselves or others, but in the atmosphere of the informal Liars' Bench. Their equality may or may not be menaced by the domination of a true lying hero. It has not yet been established which of the two kinds is the most common, either in America or abroad; further study in this field will, I feel sure, confirm the presence of a great number of tall tale heroes who belong either to local communities or professional occupational groups.

## LYING HEROES, LIARS' CLUBS AND LYING CONTESTS IN FRENCH TRADITION

Up to this point my analysis of the tall tale has been largely based on American material, since it is in North America that folklore collectors have been most interested in the genre. The tall tale has rarely interested French folklorists, if the paucity of references is any indication. But there are a few hints, however, that some aspects of the tall tale tradition--the local storyteller who makes himself the protagonist of tall tales, the Liars' Club and the Lying Contest--do exist in France.

The existence of a certain kind of tall tale hero in French tradition became apparent to me after browsing through a series of almanacs from the Revolutionary period. The name Monsieur de Crac, associated with tall tale motifs and reminiscent of Baron Münchhausen, appeared frequently in verse or prose. At my request, my father-in-law, Monsieur Roger Durand, now of Marseille but a native of Poitou, wrote down from memory some dozen tales about M. de Crac which he thought he had once read as a boy. Most of the tales were exactly parallel to those of Münchhausen, although no mention of de Crac was to be found in French folklore journals.

I mentioned the problem of M. de Crac to Roger Pinon, and he was kind enough to send me a reference to an important study by André Tissier entitled M. de Crac, Gentilhomme Gascon.<sup>1</sup> This study demonstrates that the name de Crac seems to be the invention of a late eighteenth century playwright, Collin d'Harleville, who gave it to the central figure of a boastful Gascon in a play he entitled M. de Crac dans son petit castel which was first produced in 1791.

Tissier, illustrating the theatrical and literary antecedents of de Crac, felt that the name was a brilliant discovery on the part of d'Harleville. It was a name which epitomised the type of

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<sup>1</sup> Paris, 1959.

the boastful Gascon who had appeared in French comic theatre since the early seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> The great success of the play provided a name which struck the popular imagination. Previously, there had been no nationally known tall tale hero who might summarise the characteristics of the boastful Gascon, no hero of the calibre of Baron Münchhausen. It was at this period, moreover, that Münchhausen's adventures were first translated into French, appearing in two parts, in 1786 and 1787, some three years before d'Harleville's creation. The continued success of both d'Harleville's play and the archetype his character de Crac had come to represent, followed by numerous editions of Münchhausen's adventures in French after 1840, led inevitably to the juxtaposition of the French de Crac with the German Münchhausen.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Gascons have long been known for their boasting in France; the word gasconnade, meaning a piece of brag or a tall story, has been known in France since at least the end of the sixteenth century (see Albert Dauzat, Dictionnaire Etymologique, Paris, 1938, p. 355). D'Harleville's de Crac was, of course, a Gascon. The verb craquer 'to boast,' was in existence at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Dauzat, p. 217) and the meaning of 'to lie' has been recorded for it as early as 1649 (see Gaston Esnault, Dictionnaire des Argots, Paris, 1965, p. 206, s.v. Craquelin). For further discussion of the name de Crac and gasconnades, see Tissier, pp. 11-34.

<sup>3</sup> According to Tissier, the person responsible for the substitution of de Crac for Münchhausen was a certain Hilaire Le Gay, one of whose pseudonyms was none other than P.A. Gratet-Duplessis. Le Gay, or Gratet-Duplessis, who had already edited an edition of Münchhausen's adventures and was to edit the 1853 version of La Nouvelle Fabrique, had also produced a number of smaller collections of "gasconnades." Tissier argues that the parallels between the tales of La Nouvelle Fabrique, Münchhausen and the "gasconnades"

A curious reference, unfortunately not clearly dated, demonstrates that some time after the beginning of the eighteenth century, the association between the name de Crac and the "liar" had been made in the minds of quite ordinary people. The following entry is taken from a study of nicknames given to inhabitants of a small French parish over a period of 150 years, from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. The study, by Lucien Logeat, contained this entry: "Le Cracuoue--Donné à un farceur qui racontait des histoires invraisemblables comme M. de Cracq. Porté pendant deux générations. Ses enfants Lazare Cracq, Franchette Cracq." <sup>4</sup> This would seem to indicate that an inveterate tall tale teller had acquired the nickname Crac because Crac was associated with lies, and that his children were known not by their true family name but by their father's nickname. Logeat was not able to say at what date

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attributed to de Crac prompted Le Gay to publish an Almanach du Baron de Crac (Tissier, p. 178), in the same year as he edited La Nouvelle Fabrique, in which he deliberately reproduced the Baron's adventures--not hiding that they were M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen's tales (the work appeared too soon after the successful edition of M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen's chronicle) but encouraging throughout the confusion between Crac and M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen. In diverse later publications the two characters appeared side by side, until they became fused into a single Baron de Crac de M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen. Thereafter, and up to the present day, editions of M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen's tales have appeared, correctly attributed to M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen, but also attributed to de Crac. In the latter case, skillful editing and rearrangement of the tales have led to two distinct, but purely literary traditions in print: the true M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen and the Crac-M<sup>u</sup>nchhausen.

<sup>4</sup> Lucien Logeat, "Etude sur les surnoms ou sobriquets étant ou ayant été en usage à Nan-sous-Thil (Côte-d'Or) depuis le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," Revue de Folklore Français et de Folklore Colonial, III, 2 (1932), 76-82; see p. 77.

"Le Cracuoue" acquired his nickname, but it is safe to assume that it was some time after d'Harleville's play. Were it not the case, a number of theories would need revision. The process of acquiring a nickname is not uncommon. In North America, many examples have been found of a would-be liar being told he is "as big a liar as..." followed by the name of the best known local liar.<sup>5</sup>

Tissier, who knew La Nouvelle Fabrique, noted that while there was undoubtedly a lying tradition in France prior to the translation of the Baron's adventures, it was only with Münchhausen's transformation into de Crac that a well known name, easily recognisable to the French public, could be associated with the tall tale hero. But the absence of such a national figure is quite understandable. As I have indicated earlier, most non-folklorists are not aware that genuine tall tale heroes enjoy at most a regional popularity, unless there is a Raspe or a Laughead behind them.<sup>6</sup> It is due to the fame acquired by a purely literary figure, de Crac, that such a popularised hero could spread to the remote confines of France, as Logeat's study indicates.

So far, I have only been able to find references to one genuine regional French tall tale hero, some of whose tales were recounted in a recent almanac.<sup>7</sup> Obviously, the whole question of local

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<sup>5</sup> See Jansen, "Lying Abe: A Tale Teller and his Reputation," p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> It was W.B. Laughead's booklet on the marvellous exploits of Paul Bunyan, published by the Red River Lumber Company in 1922, which launched Bunyan on his "folk" career, although its first edition appeared nearly a decade earlier. For a discussion of Laughead's contribution to the spreading of the Bunyan cycle, see W.H. Hutchinson, "The Caesarean Delivery of Paul Bunyan," Western Folklore, XXIII, 1 (1963), 1-15.

<sup>7</sup> René Terrier, "Jacquot Malavaux--Conteur populaire et Tisserand," Barbizier, Almanach Populaire Comtois, Besançon, 1962, 451-54.

heroes requires further investigation, as I have elsewhere tried to show. The scant interest shown by French folklorists in the genre has, naturally enough, not caused many regional tall tale heroes to be brought to light. Such heroes have not suffered, at the same time, the consequences of literary exploitation of the sort which bedevilled the original Munchhausen and caused confusion over the nature of the tall tale hero in the ranks of American scholars.

When I described the American Lying Club to Roger Pinon, he drew my attention to the possibility of the existence of formalized Liars' Clubs in France, clubs akin to the Burlington and Sazerac Liars' Clubs. Through Professor Pinon's kindness, I was able to contact a friend of his, Monsieur Ernest Montellier, President of La Royale Moncrabeau, a club which flourishes in the Belgian town of Namur. Monsieur Montellier was kind enough to send me a small selection of publications concerning his society's history and activities.

Following the eighteenth century Parisian fashion of literary Cabarets, devoted to singing and dining, similar clubs began to appear in the provinces. In 1783 La Société des Canaris was founded, its members cultivating in particular songs in the Walloon dialect. It was also something of a philanthropic organisation. It did not survive the Napoleonic Wars, but a tradition had been established which led to the flowering of a Cercle des Minteurs (Liars' Circle). This club was in turn replaced in 1834 by a new group calling itself Li Cabinet des Mintes (The Cabinet of Joyful Lies). The club was characterised by the already traditional burlesque entrance examination which they adapted to their own ends--the successful narration of a tall tale, in dialect.

The Cabinet des Mintes split asunder in 1843, part of its members forming La Royale Moncrabeau in the same year. Taking its name from an already flourishing Gascon society (to which I shall shortly return), it set itself up as an academy, limiting its membership, in parody of the Académie Française, to forty, and



calling themselves Molons. The examination, success in which called for the telling of a tall tale, was retained, as was the musically-oriented tradition of earlier clubs. La Royale Moncrabeau created its own orchestra, using a variety of unusual instruments, and adopted a costume which, with little change over the years, is considered by some to be one of the most spectacular folk costumes in Belgium. Today, La Royale Moncrabeau retains many of the characteristics of its predecessors. It gives concerts, supports the resurgent dialect literature, and is a philanthropic organisation closed to all who cannot tell a tall tale. <sup>8</sup>

I mentioned earlier that La Royale Moncrabeau took its name from a Gascon society, with which it is still in contact. André Tissier, commenting on the influence of d'Harleville's hero, describes how the Gascon club was formed and the characteristic "Liars' Certificates" which were sent to "liars." "Following a fashion which seems to have been established at the end of the eighteenth century and which consisted of addressing, under the name of a more or less fictitious society, satirical letters patent to people whose situation, profession or character lent themselves to such jokes, there was formed in Moncrabeau, a genuine village in Lot-et-Garonne, a society of humorous boasters which took the name of 'Académie des hâbleurs de Moncrabeau'." <sup>9</sup> Since this village is in Gascony, the name Crac frequently appears on its liars' letters patent. <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The full history of La Royale Moncrabeau is described in a brochure published in Namur in 1968 to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the society's foundation.

<sup>9</sup> Tissier, M. de Crac, Gentilhomme Gascon, pp. 146-47.

<sup>10</sup> A number of these letters patent are reproduced in Charles Nisard's Histoire des Livres Populaires ou de la Littérature du Colportage, Paris, 1968 (two volumes in one; reprint of the nineteenth century original edition), Vol. I, pp. 332-34.

Although such societies are far removed from the informal liars' bench of the U.S.A., their very existence suggests the possibility of earlier, informal groups. Their existence does demonstrate the constancy of the desire felt by many to meet in a more or less formal way, for the pleasures of the social club. The degree of formality varies with the age and with local conditions. It is an old tradition in Europe, dating at least as far back as the fifteenth century, since the Bugiale, "a sort of laboratory for fibs" is described in Poggio's Facetiae.<sup>11</sup> Although Poggio's friends did not specialize in tall tales, the function served by the social gathering was the same as that of later groups. With growing sophistication and formality, the function of such clubs may change. Thus, La Royale Moncrabeau is now an essentially philanthropic organisation deriving its funds from musical concerts.

While there is very little French material available, Ariane de Félice's very able study shows that lying occurs in other areas of French tradition. She has established, for example, the existence of a tradition of lying contests in medieval theatre which is related to oral patterns.<sup>12</sup> Characterised by a highly formal and formulaic appearance, the content of many dialogues from comic theatre of medieval times seems to have provided a basis for the popularity of lying songs still current in French tradition.

At the end of the nineteenth century, itinerant artisans in Normandy were renowned for their lying tales and were welcomed by villagers wherever they went for the entertainment they afforded.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Facetiae of Poggio, 2 vols., Paris, 1879, p. 230.

<sup>12</sup> Ariane de Félice, "Les joutes de mensonges et les concours de vantardises dans le théâtre comique médiéval et le folklore français," Actas do Congresso Internacional de Ethnografia Promovido pela Camara Municipal de Santo Tirso de 10 a 18 de Julho de 1963, Vol. II, 37-83.

<sup>13</sup> Mlle. de Félice quotes extensively from Jean Fleury, Littérature orale de la Basse-Normandie, Paris, 1967 (reprint edition), pp. 207-10.

Their dialogues were usually delivered with an odd musical intonation, a feature common to similar material collected in several French provinces. It was the rhythmical peculiarities which prompted Ariane de Félice to compare them to medieval fatrasies, eleven-line verse forms, the content of which usually included motifs of absurdity or exaggeration.<sup>14</sup> Related forms appear in medieval theatre, and the pattern of the contest in lies which characterises the presentation of such material has apparently remained alive to this day.

Although this information on de Crac, the Liars' Club and the Lying Contest is not very expansive, it is at least clear that tall tale patterns are known in France. From the internal evidence of La Nouvelle Fabrique, there appears to be a clear case of what is better known in American tradition as a Lying Club. Its author, Philippe d'Alcriste, says in his preface that he and his friends used to meet regularly in an inn in Lyons-la-Forêt, where they swapped tales which he was later requested to write down. Further on, I shall attempt to show that La Nouvelle Fabrique is the product of the kind of situation I have earlier described and that his stories were tall tales, in the sense I have given the expression. La Nouvelle Fabrique, perhaps a part of an already old tradition when it was first written down in 1579, lacked only a central protagonist in the style of a Munchhausen to have given it the fame its successor was to win. But I shall try to show how, unlike Raspe's literary fashioning of Munchhausen's adventures, Philippe d'Alcriste's work is, in fact, an accurately recorded collection of oral tall tales, and that Philippe was one of the first folklore collectors to work by anything approaching modern collecting standards.

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<sup>14</sup> Some of the major themes which persistently reappear include types AT 1540, The Student from Paradise (Paris), AT 1930, Schlaraffenland and AT 1935, Topsy-Turvy Land, as well as motifs of exaggeration and boasting, monsters and wonders from distant lands.

Before dealing with this final theme, however, there remains the task of setting the tall tale as a genre against the backcloth of folk tradition. Firstly, because of the confusion which exists in people's minds about the relationship of the tall tale to some other genres, and secondly, because by contrasting the tall tale with these other areas--the Märchen, the saint's legend, giant lore, the nonsense tale, the lying song, children's lore and folk speech--La Nouvelle Fabrique will appear even more clearly to be one of the earliest examples of a folktale collection taken from oral tradition.

## THE TALL TALE IN RELATION TO SOME OTHER AREAS OF FOLKLORE

The tall tale is occasionally confused with other forms. It is necessary to examine the cause of this confusion to understand the true nature of La Nouvelle Fabrique. Some people see very little difference between the tall tale and the extraordinary happenings which occur in the Märchen, the saint's legend and giant lore. The tall tale is also confused with the nonsense tale, and both genres overlap in the lying song. Nonsense of the kind predominant in the lying song also appears in children's lore. Clearest of all, tall tale motifs appear in folk speech, without being tall tales.

To set these genres in perspective, I repeat my earlier definition of the tall tale: it is essentially a humorous narrative genre which relies on the humour of lies and exaggerations for its effect. Normally told in the first person, it flourishes in certain homogeneous social groups; it may fulfill certain functions peculiar to these groups, and it usually appears in certain easily recognisable social contexts.

It will become apparent that the confusion arises for two main reasons: the presence in some of the genres of motifs usually associated with the tall tale; and the underlying and less easily identified notion of impossibility, common to all the genres mentioned above. Understanding the different kinds of impossibility involved in the various genres can explain this confusion in part; the same motif which appears in different genres may be explained in terms of the function of the motifs. An examination of the attitudes of storyteller and audience towards their material may also help reconcile the discrepancy of motifs appearing in different genres. Attitudes may also help distinguish the various types of impossibility.

## The Märchen

There is at least one type of tale included in the category of Märchen in which there are close parallels to the tall tale; such tales are, however, exceptions. AT 852, The Hero Forces the Princess to Say, "That is a Lie" is a case in point. The theme is that of the hero who wins the hand of a princess by telling her as many lies as are necessary to make her say "That is a Lie." The lies told by the hero are often, in another context, tall tales. Under AT 852, the reader is referred to AT 1875, 1920C, 1960E and G, tall tale types which have appeared as lies told by the hero to win the hand of the princess. These references are, therefore, to realistic exaggerations. The winning of the princess by such a device is, however, quite unrealistic, although typical of Märchen. Such lying motifs are neither typical nor characteristic of Märchen, but other aspects of the genre have led some people to think of the Märchen and tall tale as related genres.

Stith Thompson described the characteristics of Märchen in defining it as "... a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and is filled with the marvelous. In this never-never land humble heroes kill adversaries, succeed to kingdoms, and marry princesses."<sup>1</sup> The essential characteristic of the Märchen is that it is a tale of wonder; belief in the reality of the narrative is not required of the listener. Consequently, this fantasy world is easily filled with magical objects such as the ring which will perform the wishes of its owner, magic lamps, the land and water ship or seven-league boots. These marvellous objects allow the humble hero to perform wonderful deeds, and this is an essential difference between the remarkable hero of Märchen and his counterpart in the tall tale: the former achieves success

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, The Folktale, p. 8.

with magical help, the latter by exaggerating his ordinary, inherent ability. So while both genres share an interest in the marvellous, the marvellous is of two kinds: magical in Märchen, realistic in the tall tale.

This may be illustrated by AT 513, The Helpers. A hero wins the hand of a princess by overcoming certain obstacles with the aid of supernatural companions.<sup>2</sup> The companions variously include a skillful marksman, a man with acute hearing, a mighty eater, a mighty drinker, a mighty blower and a strong man who can uproot trees. All these otherwise supernatural abilities have been recorded in other contexts as tall tales (most of them appear as such in La Nouvelle Fabrique). But the presence of tall tale motifs in an Ordinary Folktale does not make a tall tale of the Märchen. The difference between the lie or exaggeration of the tall tale and that of the Märchen is not the narrative content (which may be the same) but the function of the motif. In the tall tale, the lying motif is usually the whole point of the story; in the Märchen it is a means to an end. The lying motif has taken only temporary shelter in the Märchen and usually appears as of magical inspiration.

The key to the distinction between the two genres lies therefore not in a similarity of motif but in the different interpretation of the motifs, interpretations which are dictated by the attitudes of the storyteller and his audience. The function and the context of the motif determine whether it will be magical or realistic in use.

In the Märchen, the fantasies related by the storyteller do not require any belief on the part of the audience, which is expected to share 'that willing suspension of disbelief.' The tall tale

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<sup>2</sup> Thus, as Henningsen points out, "The fifth and sixth sea stories in Münchhausen thus are merely the folktale (AT 513A) about the supernatural helpers ... who quite temporarily have taken service with Münchhausen..." ("The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 217).

teller at least attempts to convince his audience of the truth of his narrative. Thus, in the former situation, magical causes of wonderful deeds are the rule; in the latter, realism is essential.

One further example will illustrate this problem. AT 654, The Three Brothers, describes the testing of the marvellous skills acquired by three sons. The motifs--the smith who shoes a galloping horse, the barber who shaves a running hare, the swordsman who protects the crops from rain or hail with his sword--have all been recorded as tall tales. But in The Types of the Folktale, they are classed together as an Ordinary Folktale, under Supernatural Powers or Knowledge.

Is this story a tall tale or Märchen? It is only the collector who can answer this question, by ascertaining the attitude of the storyteller and his audience when he collects it. The motif may be 'marvellous' whether in tall tale or Märchen. But if the narration is characterised by an attitude of wonder, if the audience shares 'that willing suspension of disbelief' which permits of magical causes, then he is dealing not with a tall tale but with Märchen.

#### The Saint's Legend

Just as the heroes of Märchen control nature by magical means, so do the saints. Both are invested with extraordinary powers. But while the predominant attitude of teller and audience towards the fantasy world of Märchen is one of a willing suspension of disbelief, the saintly miracle is usually narrated as an article of faith. There are many miracles which have parallels in the tall tale.

It was Gregory the Great who gave the Church's seal of approval to the miraculous. C. Grant Loomis has summarized the reasons he feels brought about this acceptance: "The love of wonder lived among the people. Their belief in a cult of heroes and supernatural men, coupled with a multitude of old religious formulas and



superstitions, had a continuous tradition. Theoretical theology was forced to recognise the impossibility of stamping out the belief in magic. A wise substitution of Christian magical elements was made wherever possible. Old beliefs reinterpreted, and the cult of wonder served to capture the popular imagination. Christian dogma could not reach the mass of men, but marvellous incidents were convincing manifestations in a thousand localities at once."<sup>3</sup>

As Loomis has ably pointed out, however, not all miracles bear comparison with tall tale motifs: "... most miracles deal with the cure of human infirmities. These cures are usually effected by faith in the saintly intercessor. All miracles of this kind belong to faith and leave no additional ingredient for comparison."<sup>4</sup>

There are, however, two kinds of ingredient which may be compared to the tall tale. Firstly, the contextual matter; like the tall tale, the miracle is attached to a specific locality and there is, in the miracle, an implicit understanding that what is told is the truth. The tall tale is told as truth, but the audience rarely believes. The tall tale is a humorous genre, the miracle an article of faith.

The second ingredient is the miraculous motif which is directly paralleled in the tall tale. Loomis first considers the hero, and compares the lives of the saints with certain American heroes of tall tales.<sup>5</sup> He shows how the precocious youth of saint or hero as recorded in tradition is usually subsequent to their lives. Not until they have become great do people look back and remember all

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<sup>3</sup> C. Grant Loomis, White Magic, Cambridge, Mass., 1948, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Loomis took many of his parallels, both for legend and tall tale, from literary sources. He cites, for example, long passages from Richard M. Dorson's Davy Crockett, American Comic Legend (New York, 1939). Herbert Halpert has pointed out to me that this is something of a weakness when dealing with oral tradition, but it does not, on the other hand, deny the validity of his argument.

the signs which indicated the inevitable advancement of their fortunes.

Weather motifs are common to both genres. The quick change of weather found in tall tales is paralleled in saints' lore. Thus, "In the legend of the Forty Soldiers, the ice in which they were caused to be frozen during a severe winter melted beneath a particularly unseasonable sun, and they were released from their sufferings in this way." <sup>6</sup>

In the presence of the saint, plants exhibit unusual qualities, as they do in tall tales. The motif of the fast growing corn (which appears in La Nouvelle Fabrique) is surpassed in this legend: "In the life of St. Iyves, we are told of certain trees which had been cut down for the building of a new church. Over night each trunk sprouted three new trees, so that in place of twenty trees which had been cut down, sixty equally large were found." <sup>7</sup>

G. Vidossi found that the tale of the wolf which devours a horse and is obliged to replace it and draw the sledge, is among the most widespread of saints' legends. He cites versions of this tales from German, Italian, French and Bulgarian sources. <sup>8</sup> This is one of Munchhausen's tales and is the international tale type AT 1910, The Bear (Wolf) Harnessed.

The basic difference between the saintly miracle and its milieu and the tall tale is clearly that of the attitude of narrators and audience. The tall tale in North America grew up as a popular genre in a young and vigorous pioneering society. But it was a nineteenth century society in which the tall tale flourished in the U.S.A., not a medieval one. Pioneers were probably less influenced by ignorant awe than their European ancestors. Impressed

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<sup>6</sup> C. Grant Loomis, "The American Tall Tale and the Miraculous," California Folklore Quarterly, IV, 2 (1945), 109-28; see p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>8</sup> G. Vidossi, In Margine ad Alcune Avventure di Munchhausen, p. 1.

as they were by the size of their new country, they expressed their awe in a less naive manner. In short, "The miraculous, in whatever form it may appear, stirs the imagination and leads either to conscious or unconscious imitation and transmission. The belief of one age becomes the tall tale or bald lie in another era.... the cult of wonder flourishes best in the childhood of a man, a nation, or a cult."<sup>9</sup>

So while the motifs of the tall tale may be common to the saint's legend, it is quite obvious that within their various contexts the folklorist is dealing with two distinct genres: the article of faith in narrative form, the miracle, on the one hand; the humorous tall tale on the other.

#### Giant Lore

The heroes of Märchen and the saints control nature by magical means. Their marvellous feats are dependant on their supernatural power. But while the Märchen hero inhabits a world of fantasy in which few people believe, the saint, on the other hand, moves in a world in which miracles and the supernatural powers which permit them, are accepted.

In some ways, the giant stands between the Märchen and the saint's legend. The giant is a fantasy of a person of extraordinary size and power, but above all, he is a fantastic exaggeration of reality. The logic of his existence, and to a lesser extent that of the strong man, depends on the acceptance of this exaggeration. Once the premise of the huge man is accepted, his actions are the logical consequences of his size. His control of nature, as when he creates mountains out of the dirt from his shoes, is a simple magnification of the ordinary man's real ability. Like the saint, on the other hand, the giant is of the realm of legend, he is

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<sup>9</sup> Loomis, "The American Tall Tale and the Miraculous," p. 109.

believed to have really existed. Once more the attitude of the storyteller and the audience is crucial in illustrating the difference between the tall tale and the giant.

Paul Sébillot studied the most famous of French giants, Gargantua, in a work not concerned with erudite explanations of the origins of giants<sup>10</sup> but with legends and beliefs still current in France in the latter years of the nineteenth century. When Sébillot collected the stories and legends about Gargantua, he attempted to ascertain the opinion of the people about the giant. Gargantua was spoken of as someone who had really existed, but a very long time ago. Sometimes his bones might be shown as testimony. Gargantua was frequently helpful; and thought of as a well-meaning person. If he caused harm from time to time, it was despite himself, or as a consequence of his great size. Lakes and rivers, mountains and hills were formed when he urinated or scraped mud off his shoes.

Gargantua is characteristic not only of ancient heroes and giants but also of the remarkable tall tale heroes of Anglo-American tradition. They are characterised by their remarkable appetites, thirst, strength and, of course, size. All over France, dolmens, menhirs, natural formations of unusual shape bear Gargantua's name. Depending on chance resemblance, such objects may be likened to man-made utensils, becoming chairs, beds, tables, saucepans, skittles and other items of domestic usage. This is certainly not unusual in Western Europe, where there has been at all times a traditional panoply of giants, now appearing in Märchen, now as part of an aetiological tale or legend. Above all, the giants are thought to have really existed.

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Sébillot, Gargantua dans les traditions populaires, Paris, 1883 and reprint edition, 1967. Sébillot did discuss the linguistic-mythological school which sees Gargantua as a relic of the Gallic pantheon. Some eighty years later, Henri Dontenville maintains the same argument in La France Mythologique, Paris, 1966.

The important distinction between giant lore and the tall tale, as between the tall tale, Märchen and saint's legend, is the attitude of the people towards these legends. Belief in giants is, or was, very real.<sup>11</sup> Once the notion of the giant man has been accepted, there is no question of any 'willing suspension of disbelief,' an attitude so typical of the Märchen. All that is required for a giant legend to become a tall tale is a change of attitude; as Gustav Henningsen observes, it will allow what on the one hand is "... a regular legend told with an attitude of wonderment which is characteristic of the firmly believing legend teller..."<sup>12</sup> to become a humorous lie or exaggeration told about a local (and very real) strong man.<sup>13</sup>

#### The Nonsense Tale

In showing the differences and similarities between the tall tale and the Märchen, saint's legend and giant lore, I have indicated that while motifs may be parallel, it is the attitude of storyteller...

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<sup>11</sup> For an analysis of giants in tradition, one may usefully consult Laurits Bødker, Folk Literature (Germanic), Vol. II of the International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore (Copenhagen, 1965), at the headings Erklärungssage (pp. 86-87), Erlebnissage (pp. 88-89), Riesensage (pp. 246-47) and Verhältnissage (pp. 311-12).

<sup>12</sup> Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 216.

<sup>13</sup> The importance of this distinction becomes very clear when consulting indexes of motifs. Ernest W. Baughman does not apparently distinguish the giant from the huge man of tall tale tradition. In his Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America, the section under "Humour of Lies and Exaggerations" which deals with "The Remarkable Man" includes both tall tales and legendary material about giants.

and audience which best allows a distinction to be made. The nonsense tale (or as it is sometimes called, the nonsense lie) is a type which has been included under Tales of Lying in The Types of the Folktale and which folklorists in general have tended to include under tall tales. No clear distinction of the type is made by Stith Thompson in The Folktale. Under Lies and Exaggerations he includes "A piece of nonsense ...in which all kinds of animals and things are designated by senseless names (X951; Type 1940)." <sup>14</sup>

Yet even a brief comparative analysis of the content of nonsense tales with that of the tall tale shows that they are two quite distinct types of tale. It is interesting to observe, however, that the two major European students of the tall tale, Carl Müller-Fraureuth and Gustav Henningsen, both felt the need for a distinction to be made. As Henningsen noted, "Müller-Fraureuth has already made the correct observation that not all lying stories are tall tales, but that nonsense lies must be excluded." <sup>15</sup>

If we examine the content of tall tales and nonsense tales, it is clear that the only link between the two genres is the notion of impossibility. In one sense, as I have shown, the tall tale, Märchen, saint's legend and giant lore all deal with impossibilities, but they are impossibilities based on an exaggeration of normality or magical intervention. The steer which has a head as big as a barrel and other dimensions of the same calibre is a simple exaggeration of reality; if the steer is really thought to have existed, it enters the realm of giant lore. A saint who travels over water on millstones does so through magical power; magical power is also the cause of the Märchen hero's abilities. But when we are bluntly told that a millstone is seen swimming across a river, without magical help of any kind, it is a case of normal logic being reversed. Millstones normally sink in water. All

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<sup>14</sup> Thompson, The Folktale, p. 215.

<sup>15</sup> Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 216.

these examples deal with impossibilities, but they are of a different nature.

The element of fantasy found in Märchen, saint's legend and giant lore is also found in the nonsense tale, although the motifs in the latter are normally characterised by the reversal of normality rather than by magical qualities or the exaggeration of reality. There are two main types of absurd motifs in nonsense tales. AT 1930, Schlaraffenland and AT 1935, Topsy-Turvy Land best illustrate each kind. The Schlaraffenland theme tends to unite impossible motifs about a 'Land of Milk and Honey' or Earthly Paradise, a fantasy world in which everything is geared to the pleasurable. Pancakes grow on trees on the banks of rivers of wine or honey, and little roast pigs run around crying "Eat me!" Its inhabitants are paid to sleep and when they awake, roast quail drop into their mouths. Schlaraffenland is a humorous world of laziness and gluttony.

In Topsy-Turvy Land (AT 1935) motifs tend to concentrate on a true reversal of normality. Thus the stone or anvil swims the river (see La Nouvelle Fabrique, tales 12 and 102), doves fleece a wolf (compare tale 85 in La Nouvelle Fabrique), the hawk swims, a razor-sharp sword serves as a footbridge, or the footless man outruns a swift horse. There is a third kind of nonsense which includes motifs involving verbal contradictions or reversals, of the type 'the cheese eats the mouse,' about which I shall have more to say when discussing the lying song.

The distinction between Schlaraffenland and Topsy-Turvy Land motifs has not been made by Thompson who, contrary to his usual procedure, has placed all topsy-turvy motifs under one number (X1505). At the same time, he includes under AT 1930, Schlaraffenland, motifs which are not directly on this theme. I do not feel that the present system is a satisfactory way of grouping these motifs, which might be clearly separated into two distinct sub-divisions and placed under a new section, 'Nonsense Tales' or 'Nonsense Lies,'

for it may bear repeating that tall tale and nonsense motifs are basically different in character, although related in that they both deal with impossibilities.

Apparently, few examples of nonsense tales exist in the anecdotal form characteristic of the tall tale. There are cases, however, where nonsense motifs are added to tall tales. It is possible that many storytellers, like many folklorists, do not make a clear distinction between the two types. Certainly, just as there are one or two Märchen in La Nouvelle Fabrique, so are there a few nonsense enumerations (tales 12 and 50, for example). These tales also have a certain amount of mixing of genres; tale 12 begins as an account of a traveller's journey, but like tale 50, is largely an enumeration of nonsense motifs. Indeed, nonsense tales seem to appear primarily as enumerations.

#### The Lying Song

It is only to round out the analysis of material related to the tall tale that I take up the so-called lying song,<sup>16</sup> but as it is a genre which requires particular clarification, I am going to devote rather more attention to it than to the other sections of this chapter. One would expect the lying song to deal with lies and exaggerations, but the term is, in fact, a very misleading one. Just as Stith Thompson includes nonsense tales with lies and exaggerations, so have folksong collectors tended to talk of lying songs while having what are, more often than not, essentially nonsense songs in mind. Indeed, the two major studies in English which apparently deal with the lying song, G.L. Kittredge's

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<sup>16</sup> The field of the so-called lying song is sufficiently wide to require a separate study, which I hope at some time to undertake.



"Note on a Lying Song,"<sup>17</sup> and Anne G. Gilchrist's "The Song of Marvels (or Lies),"<sup>18</sup> are primarily concerned with enumerative, topsy-turvy nonsense songs.<sup>19</sup> Most so-called lying songs deal with nonsense rather than lies or exaggerations. There are, however, a few songs in which both nonsense and exaggerations appear, and a few dealing almost uniquely with tall tale motifs.

By far the largest number of so-called lying songs, in both English and French tradition, rely on the humour of the absurd or the reversal of normality for their comic effect. Anecdotal content is usually slight in the songs. Following, for example, the statement of a recent journey, the singer enumerates the wonders or topsy-turvy incidents he has seen. Here are three verses from the English song variously known as Nottingham's Fair, Nottamun Town or Paddy Backwards, which graphically illustrate the nature of this type of nonsense humour:

As I was a-ridin up St. James' Park,  
In the middle of the day, the night it was dark,  
Where I saw a man, he was all dressed in green,  
Black pants and white waistcoat was plain to be seen.

My horse standing still threw me off in the dirt,  
Which dirtied my body and bruised my shirt,  
And up to her saddle I stepped up so gay,  
And on my ten toes I went jogging away.

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<sup>17</sup> G.L. Kittredge, "Note on a Lying Song," Journal of American Folklore, XXXIX, 153 (1926), 195-99.

<sup>18</sup> Anne G. Gilchrist, "The Song of Marvels (or Lies)," Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, IV, 3 (1942), 113-21.

<sup>19</sup> One of the features of the nonsense tale, as noted above, is that motifs tend to appear in enumerations; that enumerations lend themselves to rhyme may explain why these motifs are common in song, set to music as a kind of mnemonic device.

It hailed and it blowed as I stood in the storm;  
 I saw two pretty fair maids a makin' up hay  
 In the middle of winter, one fine August day;  
 I sat myself down on a hot frozen stone;  
 Ten thousands around me and me all alone.

Other versions refer to such things as silver cups made of cow horn; a two-legged drummer who runs off with his heels in his pockets; a naked drummer with his hands in his bosom; dirt falling from the sky instead of rain, and a grey mare with a white mane and a completely black coat.<sup>20</sup> This song also includes examples of verbal reversals, another kind of contradiction or nonsense impossibility which does not seem to be common in prose narrative forms of nonsense. A typical example of verbal reversal

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<sup>20</sup> MacEdward Leach, Folk Ballads and Songs of the Lower Labrador Coast, Ottawa, 1965, p. 274 (two versions). For other versions of this song, see Wehman Bros., Good Old-Time Songs, New York, 1910, p. 108; Elisabeth Bristol Greenleaf and Grace Yarrow Mansfield, Ballads and Sea Songs from Newfoundland, Cambridge, Mass., 1933, p. 219; Herbert Halpert, "Some Ballads and Folk Songs from New Jersey," Journal of American Folklore, LII, 203 (1939), p. 66; Vance Randolph, Ozark Folksongs, 4 vols., Columbia, 1946-50; vol. III, p. 202; Helen Creighton and D. Senior, Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia, Toronto, 1950, pp. 240-41; Helen Creighton, Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia, New York, 1966, pp. 177-78; Cecil J. Sharp, English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, ed. Maud Karpeles, London, 1966, p. 270, two versions; and Roger D. Abrahams and George Foss, Anglo-American Folksong Style, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968, pp. 8-9. For the song's relationship with the 'neck riddle,' see George Foss and Roger D. Abrahams, "Fa'r Nottalin Town," Kentucky Folklore Record, XIV, 4 (1968), 88-91.

is from a version collected by Helen Creighton: "Her age it was red and her hair was nineteen." <sup>21</sup> Another so-called lying song, studied by G.L. Kittredge, Martin Said To His Man, includes such topsy-turvy reversals as a mouse catching a cat, or the cheese eating the mouse. <sup>22</sup>

In French tradition there are two widely known songs which contain similar verbal reversals and topsy-turvy motifs. La Chanson de Menteries <sup>23</sup> is ostensibly sung by a farmer on his way to plough a field in which there is no earth; he carries his team in his pocket and his plough over his shoulder (which shows how tall tale motifs may appear in nonsense songs); he finds a fruit tree bearing the wrong fruit, plums on a pear tree, or cherries on an apple tree. He causes one such fruit to fall on to his toe; it makes his ear bleed. Returning home, he finds his animals doing the domestic chores--the cock heating the oven, the hen spinning, the dog doing the washing-up, and so on.

The song Compère, Qu'as-tu vu? is a simple enumeration of the impossibilities the singer claims to have seen various animals performing: a cow dancing on ice in the summer, a snake trembling with fever, a lizard sharpening its tongue in order to go mowing; different creatures combing their daughter's hair before her wedding, a wolf selling or planting cabbages, a frog spinning and

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<sup>21</sup> Helen Creighton, Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia, p. 178.

<sup>22</sup> G.L. Kittredge, "Note on a Lying Song," in which several versions of this nonsense song are given, with discussion and references.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of this song, see Patrice Coirault, Formation de nos Chansons Folkloriques, Paris, 1953, pp. 194-99, 4 versions. See also Morel Retz, Revue des Traditions Populaires, XXXI (1916), p. 76; Eugène Rolland, Mélusine, Paris, 1878, cols. 51-52; Rolland, Recueil de Chansons Populaires, Paris, 1883-90; reprint, 3 vols., 1967: Tome IV, pp. 58-62, 3 versions, V, pp. 19-20; Marius Barbeau and Edward Sapir, Folk-Songs of French Canada, New Haven, 1925, pp. 161-62.

donkeys playing a game at the top of a steeple.<sup>24</sup> Similar songs exist in Welsh and Irish tradition, as Anne G. Gilchrist has ably shown. Motifs include, in an Irish song, an eel playing the pipes, sheep cutting turf, foxes without ears or tails and a church dancing. A Welsh song refers to a ship of lead, a sinking cork, and a harp-playing pig.<sup>25</sup>

A final example of the nonsense song is one which presents the Schlaraffenland theme, known in French tradition as Au Pays de Cocagne. Versions of this song have been found in French Canada by Luc Lacourcière<sup>26</sup> and Gustav Henningsen found a Norwegian version.<sup>27</sup> The motifs are usually, if not uniquely, of the 'Land of Milk and Honey' type. The only English parallel with which I am familiar is the hobo song Big Rock Candy Mountain.

There are a few songs in which one finds a mixture of topsy-turvy and tall tale motifs. The Deer Song has the tall tale hunting motifs of the bent gun barrel and the great catch of game.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For other versions, see Mélusine, 1878, cols. 314-15; Paul Sébillot, Littérature orale de la Haute-Bretagne, Paris, 1881 and reprint, 1967, pp. 286-88; Eugène Rolland, Rimes et jeux de l'enfance, Paris, 1883 and reprint, 1967, pp. 107-9, 3 versions; for a literary version, see Eustache Deschamps (1346-1406), Oeuvres Complètes, VIII, New York, 1966, s.v. Balades: Sote Balade.

<sup>25</sup> Gilchrist, "The Song of Marvels (or Lies)," p. 115.

<sup>26</sup> I am most grateful to Professor Lacourcière who let me copy the texts of 4 versions of the song in the Archives de Folklore.

<sup>27</sup> Henningsen, "'The Great Ship' and the 'Great Farmhouse'", AT 1960H and E, " Journal of the Folklore Institute, III, 1 (1966), 50-69.

<sup>28</sup> For versions, see Sharp, English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, II, pp. 217-19, Sally Buck; Thompson, Body, Boots & Britches, p. 154; with discussion, Arthur K. Moore, "Neighbors: Kentucky: A Metrical Version of the Wonderful Hunt," New York Folklore Quarterly, VII, 3 (1951), 236-40. Halpert has other references in the revision of his unpublished New Jersey collection.

Among the few songs in Anglo-American tradition in which typical tall tale exaggerations appear, the best known is probably The Ram of Derby.<sup>29</sup> The song begins with an anecdotal introduction, but largely dwells on a description of an enormous ram (cf. AT 1960A) the singer has seen. Its horns reach to the sky or moon, as does the wool on its back, in which eagles build nests. Its feet are so large that each one covers an acre of ground. Its teeth are hollow and each one holds a bushel of corn. When the ram is slaughtered, witnesses of the butchery are washed away in the flood of blood.

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<sup>29</sup> For full versions of this song, see A.P. Hudson, "Ballads and Songs from Mississippi," Journal of American Folklore, XXXIX, 152 (1926), 173; H.H. Flanders, A Garland of Green Mountain Song, Vermont, 1934, pp. 24-26; H.M. Belden, ed., Ballads and Songs collected by the Missouri Folk-lore Society, Columbia, 1940 and 1955, pp. 224-25; Ivor Gatty, "The Old Tup and its Ritual," Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, V, 1 (1946), 23-30; H. Creighton and D. Senior, Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia, Toronto, 1950, pp. 241-42, 2 versions; for English references and brief discussion, see Margaret Dean-Smith, A Guide to English Folk Song Collections, 1822-1952, Liverpool, 1954, s.v. (The) Derby Ram, p. 63; Albert B. Friedman, ed., The Viking Book of Folk Ballads, New York, 1956, pp. 441-42, taken from Rosa S. Allen, Allen Family Songs, Mass., 1899; H.W. Thompson, Body, Boots & Britches, New York, 1962, pp. 153-54; Gavin Grieg, Folk-Song of the North-East, Hatboro, 1963, No. XIV; M.O. Eddy, Ballads and Songs from Ohio, Hatboro, 1964, p. 199; Kenneth Peacock, Songs from the Newfoundland Outports, 3 vols., Ottawa, 1965, I, pp. 10-11; C.J. Sharp, English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, ed. Maud Karpeles, 2 vols., London, 1966: II, pp. 184-87, 3 versions; E.E. Gardner and G.J. Chickering, Ballads and Songs of Michigan, Hatboro, 1967, pp. 460-62, 2 versions; and P.S. Smith, "'T'owd Tup'--High Wincobank, Sheffield," Lore and Language, 1 (July, 1969), [pp. 7-8].

The Crocodile (cf. AT 1889G) is another widely spread song dealing in exaggerations, containing the motif of the man swallowed by a great animal.<sup>30</sup> It is perhaps the most anecdotal of all the so-called lying songs and significantly, the one with the least trace of nonsense motifs.

It is apparent that the lying song has very few tall tale motifs and that the most common motifs are those associated with the Topsy-Turvy Land theme. But it is also clear that there are nonsense types of which one, the verbal reversal or contradiction, is uncommon in prose narrative. This 'backwards' humour, as it has been referred to, is favoured by children; thus, one may conclude this consideration of nonsense motifs, if not of exaggerations, with a glimpse at an area of folklore seemingly little connected to the tall tale.

#### Children's Lore

Another area where people speak of lying motifs and impossibilities is children's lore. Such motifs are, in fact, largely of the nonsense kind--contradictions and verbal reversals. It is simply to call attention to the genre that I mention it here, because of the relationship of this type of nonsense with the lying song. Before making any assertions, the whole field would require a systematic examination. It does, however, seem apparent that there are, in general, three types of nonsense motif and that the tall tale impossibility is not common in children's lore.

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<sup>30</sup> For versions of this song, see Creighton and Senior, Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia, pp. 230-32; Gavin Grieg, Folk-Song of the North-East, XIV; Frank Purslow, ed., Marrow Bones, London, 1965, p. 20; Creighton, Songs and Ballads from Nova Scotia, pp. 122-23.

The pattern of nonsense favoured by children may be seen in the following examples:

One fine day in the middle of the night,  
Two dead men got up to fight,  
Back to back they faced each other  
Drew their swords and shot each other. <sup>31</sup>

The child's delight in this kind of contradiction of the natural order of things is expressed not only in verse but also in prose, albeit delivered in a mock-heroic manner: "A little man walking about barefooted with his grandfather's boots on, carrying on his back an empty sack full of cheese. Anyone finding the same, will they please return to Mr. Green, door painted red, and they will be handsomely rewarded with a yard of wood to make themselves a flannel shirt." <sup>32</sup>

The same kind of nonsense motifs also occur in French language areas. Roger Pinon collected the following piece of contradictory nonsense in Wallony:

Un jour, en hiver, qu'il faisait très chaud,  
Un vieil homme de dix-huit ans était assis au coin d'une  
table ronde;  
Lisait dans un livre fermé à la lueur d'une bougie  
éteinte,  
Et entendit un grand bruit silencieux.  
Il monta les escaliers de la cave les yeux fermés;  
Il vit un nègre tout blanc

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<sup>31</sup> Iona and Peter Opie, The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren, Oxford, 1959, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

Qui déterrait les morts pour les manger vivants.<sup>33</sup>

Some of the French lying songs mentioned in the previous section have also been found in the mouths of children, used as counting-out rhymes. This is one of the few functions of the lying song that has been clearly observed.<sup>34</sup> Examples of nonsensical contradictions are found in La Nouvelle Fabrique, used, for the most part, as opening formulas. Tale 6 begins, "For the last year, my grandmother, who died twenty years ago, told me the day before yesterday...." Tale 74 opens with the remark that "When I was small I wasn't big...."

This brief glimpse of nonsense in children's lore has been given to show the relationship of the genre with the lying song, but there is one other area of folklore where nonsense has little part to play and in which the true lying motif of the tall tale is clearly present. A full circle has turned when one considers the area of folk speech.

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<sup>33</sup> One day, in winter, when it was very hot,/ An old man  
eighteen years old was sitting at the corner of a round table;/ He  
was reading a closed book by the light of an extinguished candle,/ And heard a loud quiet noise./ He went up the cellar stairs with his eyes closed;/ He saw a white Negro/ Digging up the dead to eat them alive. I am most grateful to Professor Pinon who allowed me to reproduce this item from a manuscript by a student of his, Robert D. Bethke, entitled: "Tangletalk Nonsense: An Analysis."

<sup>34</sup> For examples, see Jean Baucomont, Frank Guibat, Tante Lucile, Roger Pinon and Philippe Soupault, Les Comptines de langue française, Paris, 1961, several references; and Eugène Rolland, Rimes et jeux de l'enfance, pp. 107-10.



## Folk Speech

The aspect of folk speech which is linked to the tall tale has been variously described as epigrammatic hyperbole, the Jonathanism and, more simply, proverbial exaggeration. The main difference between the proverbial exaggeration and the tall tale is not the content, but the form. Proverbial exaggeration is not anecdotal, but represents the lying motif reduced to its simplest form. As C. Grant Loomis has put it, "To a single creature, object, force of nature, ability, or quality is attributed an excess of inherent possession which aims at the production of a derisive risibility."<sup>35</sup> Loomis gleaned many examples from newspapers and journals of the three decades preceding the American Civil War, but there is no reason to assume that they did not exist in oral tradition.

A few examples will illustrate some of the seven categories into which Loomis groups his 'Jonathanisms;' between them, they run the gamut of traditional tall tale themes. Under 'Personal Characteristics' he cites the following: "There is a boy out west, who is growing so fast his shadow can't keep up with him."<sup>36</sup> Skills are always good for the boaster, thus "A man said of a painter he knew that 'he painted a shingle so exactly like marble that when it fell into the river it sank'."<sup>37</sup> That nonsense motifs are not totally absent from the field of proverbial exaggeration is shown by the example of "A duck hearing the mistress tell the cook to kill and roast it for dinner, went into the garden and stuffed itself with sage and onions."<sup>38</sup> But this

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<sup>35</sup> C. Grant Loomis, "Jonathanisms: American Epigrammatic Hyperbole," Western Folklore, VI, 3 (1947), 211-27; p. 211.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

example approaches anecdotal form. Another example concerns the weather, a frequent cause for exaggeration with tall tale tellers: "A sailor who had recently returned from Newfoundland says that the fog is so thick there he has to drive a nail in it to hang his hat on." <sup>39</sup>

Similar patterns of humorous speech have been collected from oral tradition. Harold W. Thompson mentions these examples of tall talk: "It rained so hard that the water stood ten feet out of the well." "She's so nosy she can hear the grass grow." <sup>40</sup> Halpert collected many proverbial exaggerations from the oral tradition of West Kentucky <sup>41</sup> and a number from West Tennessee. <sup>42</sup> Kentucky is one of the few states to have been well explored, since both Martha Dell Sanders and Leonard Roberts have made collections of similar material there. <sup>43</sup>

Halpert also brought to the attention of folklorists a form of exaggeration in speech specifically concerned with the disadvantages of local climates. Thus, if an outsider were to make some slighting remark, he might be told that the local weather consisted of

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<sup>39</sup> C. Grant Loomis, "Jonathanisms: American Epigrammatic hyperbole," p. 225.

<sup>40</sup> Harold W. Thompson, Body, Boots & Britches, p. 499.

<sup>41</sup> Herbert Halpert, "A Pattern of Proverbial Exaggeration from West Kentucky," Midwest Folklore, I, 1 (1951), 41-47. Halpert also brought together here a number of references and launched the phrase 'proverbial exaggeration' which seems to have found favour at the expense of the earlier 'Jonathanisms.'

<sup>42</sup> Herbert Halpert, "Proverbial Comparisons from West Tennessee," Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin, XVII, 3 (1951), 49-61.

<sup>43</sup> Martha Dell Sanders, "Proverbial Exaggerations from Paducah, Kentucky," Midwest Folklore, I, 3 (1951), 191-92; Leonard Roberts, "Additional Exaggerations from East Kentucky," Midwest Folklore, II, 3 (1952), 163-66.

"... nine months winter and three months late in the fall."<sup>44</sup>  
Halpert was able to find enough versions of the example to prove that it was widespread in North America and probably quite old.

Both C. Grant Loomis and Mody C. Boatright have suggested the connection between the proverbial exaggeration and the tall tale. As Loomis put it, "A Jonathanism is an integral element of tall tale lore and is, perhaps, the initiating force behind the longer, exaggerated anecdote."<sup>45</sup> For all that the proverbial exaggeration lacks to become a tall tale is the anecdotal delivery which characterises the tall tale.

In this chapter I have attempted to show that although lies and exaggerations appear in different folklore genres, they are not necessarily tall tales. Indeed, 'lies' and 'exaggerations' are terms which have sometimes been applied to what is, strictly speaking, nonsense. It is apparent that the key notion which underlies such erroneous connections is that of the 'impossibility.' Since it is a rather vague concept, it has easily provided the link, in many people's minds, between the genres discussed above.

It is sufficiently vague that many storytellers may not always distinguish types which appear clear to the folklorist. Thus, in Philippe d'Alcrist's original collection of ninety-nine tales, there are two or three Märchen, several nonsense tales and one or two in which the notion of the 'strong man' provides the theme. Numerically, these tales form but a small fraction

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<sup>44</sup> Herbert Halpert, "Cold Weather Comments," Journal of American Folklore, LXI, 238 (1948), 312. See also Herbert Halpert, "Cold Weather Comments Again," Journal of American Folklore, LXIV, 253. (1951), 222.

<sup>45</sup> C. Grant Loomis, "Jonathanisms: American Epigrammatic Hyperbole," p. 211. See also Mody C. Boatright, Folk Laughter On The American Frontier, pp. 164-65.

of the whole collection, but since all these tales deal with 'impossibilities,' one may understand why Philippe d'Alcripe did not stick rigorously to 'tall tales.' But if the storyteller need not make distinctions between certain genres, the folklorist must.

The fact of a common body of motifs, or a basic unifying notion of 'impossibility,' demands a clarification of the differences between the various and otherwise related types. Thus the element of fantasy which predominates in the Märchen can be opposed to the fantasy of the saint's legend in terms of the element of belief--absent in the minds of storytellers or audiences of Märchen, present and crucial in the field of the saint's legend. Belief also characterises the narration of giant legends, but the fantasy involved is based not on the magical or supernatural powers of the Märchen or saint's legend, but on exaggeration of reality. This is true for tales about strong men, the less fantastic descendants of the giant. The expression of motifs may be determined by the function the motifs have to play in a given context. Thus in one context a motif exists as a saint's legend which is an oral narrative expression of an article of faith, while in another it exists in an entertaining fantasy world.

It is a clarification of the 'impossibility' which leads to a comparison of tall tale and nonsense tale, since these genres have been confused, as have the Märchen, saint's legend and giant story with the tall tale. Clarification is all the more important, since nonsense motifs are sometimes found in conjunction with tall tales. While the tall tale deals with exaggerations of reality, nonsense generally concerns the reversal of normality. Both the tall tale motif and the nonsense motif appear in the lying song, a genre in which yet another kind of nonsense appears, based on verbal contradictions or reversals. It is a consideration of this kind of nonsense

which leads to a passing glimpse of children's lore, in which it often appears. Nonsense formulas are found in some of Philippe d'Alcricpe's tales, examples of the lack of discrimination of the storyteller between different kinds of impossibility. A full circle has been described upon reaching the proverbial exaggeration of folk speech, for this is the raw material of the tall tale.

Earlier chapters have stated what the tall tale is, while this chapter is primarily concerned with what the tall tale is not. This not only because a certain confusion exists in some minds about the relationship between various genres, but also because upon consideration of the internal evidence of La Nouvelle Fabrique, it is possible to assert that Philippe d'Alcricpe's collection is a collection of tall tales and not a list of Märchen motifs. Against the background of the American tall tale and related genres, La Nouvelle Fabrique appears as one of the earliest collections of oral tall tales.

M I N I B R A R Y

LA NOUVELLE FABRIQUE DES EXCELLENTS TRAITS DE VERITE

"Philippe d'Alcricpe, Sieur de Neri in Verbos"

In preceding chapters I have attempted to provide a rescriptive definition of the tall tale, noting some of the functions and storytelling situations which characterise it, both in English and French traditions. This long excursus was concluded by a consideration of areas related to the tall tale, in order to clarify certain confusing connections that exist between the genres, but also to provide the widest possible backcloth against which La Nouvelle Fabrique might stand in clearer perspective. On the basis of this broad view, it is possible to examine Philippe d'Alcricpe both as tall tale teller and folktale collector. La Nouvelle Fabrique may then assume its true place and reputation in the field of folktale collections.

For La Nouvelle Fabrique, this collection of 110 tall tales, of which 99 date from the latter years of the sixteenth century, has never been widely known to folklorists. The nineteenth century edition did not, however, escape the attention of such distinguished figures as Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka<sup>1</sup> and Bolte's compatriot, Carl Müller-Fraureuth.<sup>2</sup> It was also known to such outstanding French folklorists as Paul Sébillot<sup>3</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka, Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm (5 vols., Leipzig, 1913-32, and reprint edition, Hildesheim, 1963). See Band 4, p. 261, s.v. "Zur Geschichte der Märchen (Frankreich)."

<sup>2</sup> Carl Müller-Fraureuth, Die Deutschen Lügendichtungen bis auf Münchhausen (Halle, 1881, and reprint edition, Hildesheim, 1965), pp. 41 and 50 and notes 99 and 151.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Sébillot, Le Folklore de France (4 vols., Paris, 1904-07, and reprint edition, Paris, 1968); several references.

Eugène Rolland,<sup>4</sup> and more recently, Paul Delarue commented on the originality of many of the tales, written down in an age when many French story collections consisted largely of borrowings from Italian sources.<sup>5</sup> Arturo Graf in Italy also knew of La Nouvelle Fabrique through the nineteenth century edition.<sup>6</sup>

As I stated in the introduction, the work is also known to a few North American folklorists, including Archer Taylor, Luc Lacourcière and Herbert Halpert, although as far as I know, none of them have referred to La Nouvelle Fabrique in print.<sup>7</sup>

None of the folklorists who did refer to La Nouvelle Fabrique had occasion to comment on its author, Philippe d'Alcricpe. The two chief sources of information about Philippe come from Larchevesque, the editor of the 1732 edition, and from internal evidence. Rudolf Schenda, in his "Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique, Eine Studie zur französische Wunderliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts" (Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur, LXVIII (1958), 43-61), summarises not only the internal evidence but most, if not all, of the bibliographical information

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<sup>4</sup> Eugène Rolland, Faune Populaire (13 vols. in 7 tomes, Paris, 1877-1915, and reprint, Paris, 1967); several references.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Delarue, Le Conte Populaire Français, Vol. I, Paris, 1957, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Arturo Graf, "I Precursori del Barone di Münchhausen," Fanfulla della Domenica, VI, Roma, 1884.

<sup>7</sup> Although one of Archer Taylor's students, a Miss Bartelmez, included references to La Nouvelle Fabrique in a tentative "Catalog of Lying Tales," prepared as a course project. Miss Bartelmez was apparently not trying to be exhaustive, as she only included 31 of the 110 tall tales of the work in her Catalog. It was, however, through this Catalog, which Archer Taylor allowed Halpert to copy, that Halpert learnt of La Nouvelle Fabrique, and after obtaining a copy of the 1853 edition, brought me to this study.

provided by French literary bibliographers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who were themselves often restricted in their discussions to the dating of editions. Schenda also supplemented such information as previously existed with archival and topographical data. Most of the information I give here is drawn from Schenda, although I have been able to supplement him in one or two small matters.<sup>8</sup>

According to Schenda, there is general agreement that La Nouvelle Fabrique was first published in 1579 and that Philippe flourished in the last third of the sixteenth century. Internal evidence supports this theory.

Interpretations of the author's name, Philippe d'Alcripe, have been varied. Schenda concurs with most authorities who feel that d'Alcripe is an anagram of le Picard, on the basis that the use of anagrammatical pseudonyms was not uncommon in the sixteenth century. The name le Picard need not, however, be taken as a geographical epithet. It may well have been Philippe's family name. Evidence to reinforce this possibility comes from the district in which the stories were set. Schenda found references to the name Philippuz le Picart fairly frequently in the Eure Department archives at Evreux,<sup>9</sup> although he does not assume that these entries necessarily referred to Philippe. The presumption of the anagram is reinforced by a version of the name given in the first line of a four line verse at the end of La Nouvelle Fabrique, which presents it in a quartered form:

Ton Philip, ton puz, et ton pic et ton art (Philippuz Picart).

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the chronology of the various editions of La Nouvelle Fabrique, see the section below "Editions."

<sup>9</sup> Evreux is the capital city of the Eure Department, in which the village of Lyons-la-Forêt is situated.



Continuing with the author's name, the title page of La Nouvelle Fabrique tells us that Philippe was the Sieur de Neri in Verbos. However, the name Neri does not refer to a place, as there is no such locality; rather, it is an apparently humorous anagram in the same vein as d'Alcripe. Schenda deduces that Neri stands for Rien (Nothing) and finds confirmation in an obscure verse which precedes the tales. This verse, entitled Pour le Sieur de Neri, ends: "En ceci, de Rien héritier te succède." <sup>10</sup>

The whole phrase has had contradictory interpretations. Schenda cites one authority who interprets the title as "Lord of Nothing in Words (Verbos)" and another who considers in Verbos to be an anagram of en bourse, "Lord of Nothing in his Purse." <sup>11</sup> An interpretation of in Verbos, first proposed by Larchevesque, would make Philippe "Lord of Nothing in the Greenwood (Vert bois)". This last interpretation, based on the fact that the town of Lyons-la-Forêt is situated in a forest of beech trees, would be consistent with the general context of Philippe's tales, many of which take place in the forest of Lyons.

Larchevesque proposed further that Philippe was a Cistercian monk who lived in the formerly flourishing abbey at Mortemer-en-Lyons, near Lyons-la-Forêt. Schenda finds numerous references to the monastery. If Philippe was a monk who had taken vows of poverty, the humorous title "Lord of Nothing in his Purse" would be fitting. The interpretation "Lord of Nothing in the Greenwood" would be equally appropriate if it referred to the location of the abbey, which was in a forest. Finally, the third interpretation, "Lord of Nothing in Words" would also be valid, whether Philippe was a monk or not, if he

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<sup>10</sup> Although the Mallard edition says "En cecy, de Neri, héritier te succède," as Schenda correctly observes.

<sup>11</sup> Schenda, "Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 46.

was a storyteller who amused his friends with tall tales.

Schenda also refers to a poem dedicated to Philippe by his friend Duthot. The poem, which in all editions follows the original 99 tales, is a description of "The Republic of Neri in Verbos" and Schenda feels it refers to a monastery in which monks led a joyless existence. He argues that Philippe was a monk who escaped the tedium of monastic existence by writing.<sup>12</sup> Further, in a sonnet by Duthot to the friends of the Sieur de Neri, one notes the following lines:

"... Car il convient l'auteur chastement vivre,  
Ce qui n'est point necessaire à son livre."

This can be interpreted as meaning that Philippe had taken vows of chastity.

Further evidence that Philippe was a monk is found in allusions scattered throughout the tales. Philippe himself ends tale 27 by referring to himself as "Frère Philippes," and begins tale 96 by addressing himself to "... mes pères et frères." He ends the same tale by wishing long life to Frère Guillebert. Tale 98 begins "Frères entendez...". Philippe makes frequent references to Mortemer abbey and its environs; tale 25 concerns a pond emptied by "Le deffunt Abbé de l'Abbaye de Mortemer-en-Lyons..." In the same tale, he tells us there are twenty-two monks in the abbey.

Philippe is also clearly familiar with the local geography. In tale 32 he mentions how a certain Maître Regné met him on his way from Outrebosc to Mortemer, and in general fashion, all the place-names he mentions are in the vicinity of Mortemer. Schenda, who had access to topographical documents related to the area

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<sup>12</sup> Schenda, "Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 49.

around Lyons-la-Forêt and who visited the region, confirms this.<sup>13</sup>

It is not inconsistent, if one accepts that Philippe was a monk, that he should spend so much time in the village inn drinking and telling stories, as he says he does. The social behaviour of clerics in the sixteenth century did not preclude drinking and it certainly did not keep a man with an interest in stories from yarning. One need only think of Rabelais, or Béroalde de Verville (whose Le Moyen de Parvenir, published in about 1610, could hardly be considered a usual publication of a Canon of the Church) or the German monk Johannes Pauli, whose Schimpf und Ernst (1522) also included some well known tall tales.

Philippe adds, as a kind of justification for his presenting the stories, that his companions asked him to write down the tales that were told. Certainly, if anyone in the sixteenth century could write, it would be a monk. Schenda makes various criticisms of the typography and spelling and these are, no doubt, fully justifiable. What he apparently overlooks is the possibility that Philippe was following the request of his companions rather than attempting conventional authorship. His very failure to observe the niceties of style may well be taken as evidence that he was recording what he heard without attempting to doctor it. I suggest that what we may well have in La Nouvelle Fabrique is a fairly faithful attempt at transcribing what people actually said. If I am right, it would not be too much to claim that Philippe was one of the first folktale collectors to follow present day standards of authenticity.

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<sup>13</sup> Schenda, "Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 49, note 2.

## Philippe as Traditional Storyteller and Collector

It has been suggested that Philippe spent much of his time at the village inn where, because of his ability with the pen, he was called upon to write down the tales he told or heard tell. In the remarks which follow, a few words should first be said about the storytelling situation itself. For if it can be demonstrated that the situation is a traditional one, the traditional aspects of Philippe's style fall more readily into perspective; together, they reinforce the contention that Philippe's is one of the first authentic collections of oral folktales and that Philippe was one of the first collectors.

Philippe tells us in his introduction who his company was and how he came to write down the tales. His favourite haunt was a tavern in Lyons-la-Forêt, the proprietor of which was a certain Mother Gillette, and there he used to drink with his friends: monks, peasants and occasional travellers. During the course of the drinking, "... furent recitées maintes joyeuses histoires et plaisans contes, tant frais que saiez..." and he was invited to write them down for their children's benefit. This at least is the reason given by Philippe. For although one may suppose that not all his friends were monks and that not all could write, a more likely reason for this excuse would be that Philippe was reluctant to be identified as the author of a work which he obviously did not expect his literary friends to think of as worthwhile literature. For literary friends he had, as the abundant laudatory pieces preceding the first tale show. He also had his detractors, if his little poem dedicated to the Mesdisans is any guide.

Philippe hints in his preface at other sources of his tales: his 'excellent truths' were sometimes "... fidèlement recueillis à la grouée des meilleurs arbres de la forest de Lyons." It is not difficult to imagine Philippe wandering about the outskirts of the village, stopping to chat with the peasants, some of whom

would probably form, later in the evening, part of the company at the inn. In tale 8 he begins, "Ainsi que racontent les vieux peres de nostre forest..." In tale 84, he describes a typical traditional occasion in which tales were told: "Quelquefois es jours de feste, les voisins s'assemblent pour eux desennuyer, passer le temps, deviser de plusieurs choses, comme de leurs marchandises, de ce qu'ils ont veu et où ils ont esté" (My italics). Philippe begins many tales by referring to individuals who probably told their yarns in the inn of an evening. In tale 32, "Maître Regné nous a recité..."; in tale 42, one man talks of a mad dog which nearly bit him; this prompts a certain Pierrot to tell of a fine dog he possesses which eats mad dogs and is a marvellous hunter. It is the classic situation of one liar outdoing the other. On many occasions it is Philippe who tells the tale, on others he admits that many people tell of a particular unlikely occurrence. In tale 67, two travelling merchants stop at the inn and tell of the wonders they have seen; tale 12 is another account of a traveller's epic adventures. Sometimes, Philippe recognises the force of tradition; tale 22 begins: "La vraye et ancienne histoire raconte...."

As several commentators on the tall tale have mentioned, it is a genre which flourishes amongst certain homogeneous groups; Philippe's company fits this description. The only outsiders come from other groups of recognised liars: travellers and soldiers. Traditionally hunters and fishermen are fond of lying tales, and given the well-wooded and well-watered location of Lyons-la-Forêt, it is quite likely that many of Philippe's peasant friends were hunters and fishermen. The large number of tales devoted to these themes would seem to favour this suggestion.

Philippe himself admits to being a conteur and therefore fits into a storytelling group. But more than this, both in his preface and in the tales themselves, the group and the storytelling situation he describes seems to fit the pattern of the Liars' Bench

which I have described earlier. The nineteenth and twentieth century incumbents of Liars' Benches would have no difficulty in recognising their sixteenth century brethren. The very title Philippe bestows upon his fellows, these "... amateurs et sectateurs de pure verité" recalls the epithets linked to the more formal Liars' Clubs of a later age.

If Philippe did indeed set down his tales in print, he did no more than tall tale tellers of a later era, New England storytellers like Joseph C. Allen or poets like Walter Hard, who also committed their own or others' tales to print, with the laudable aim of preserving a picture of one aspect of the life they loved.

Philippe's tales, then, would appear to be not only traditional in content but also in context. One cannot deny, on the other hand, that there are certain formal literary features in the work, such as the Rabelaisian enumerations (see, for examples, tales 2, 5, 62, 64, 71 and 93), classical allusions (to Pliny, in tales 25 and 60), and the quasi-moralising couplets which follow each tale. But since Philippe was not a trained folklorist, one must excuse the absence of a rigorously applied collecting method. And one must weigh against these few non-traditional features a large body of highly traditional material which appears all through the collection, quite apart from the narrative content.

Beside the more general aspects of Philippe's style which concern his spontaneity and simplicity, there are more easily recognisable traditional dramatic devices. Philippe uses opening and closing formulas; he includes snatches of folk song, rhymes and animal calls; he makes dramatic use of proverbs and proverbial sayings; he alludes in some tales to folk beliefs. These various devices add not only to the dramatic quality of the tales and their telling, but also emphasise Philippe's general closeness to oral tradition.

Certain general aspects of Philippe's style indicate a lack of concern for formal literary usage, or, to put it more positively, emphasize his preoccupation with the informal and traditional. His style is a familiar, chatty one. Many of his tales seem to have been written down soon after their narration. He does not encumber them with long preambles; he simply mentions that he has heard of such an event or met such a man, and he proceeds with the tale. Frequent asides, addressed as much to the original audience as to the reader, help capture the spontaneity of traditional joke-telling situations. That several of these asides are vulgar is further evidence of the informal oral quality of the situation.

Again, evidence of the oral quality of the tales is their brevity. Like the tall tale today, these humorous anecdotes are designed to produce a quick laugh. The few tales which occupy more than a page or two are not really tall tales at all. Some are topsy-turvy tales consisting of an enumeration of impossibilities or contradictions.<sup>14</sup> Others seem quite out of place in La Nouvelle Fabrique, treating as they do of meetings with fairies or romantic, novella-type tales.<sup>15</sup>

Although many of the tales are short, their sentence structure is generally complex. Philippe pays little heed to the niceties of punctuation, the tales do not bear the hall-mark of order and preparation. This is typical of many a storyteller in oral tradition. To use short, well-balanced and coherent sentences is a mark of literary consciousness and training. Schenda's criticism of Philippe's style is valid; the work is not of high literary quality. But it is close to oral tradition. Philippe's colloquial fluency helps recreate an atmosphere of spontaneous storytelling. The tales move at great pace and one's interest

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<sup>14</sup> See tales 49 and 50.

<sup>15</sup> See tales 92 and 93.

in the narrative rarely flags. Most literary men would be pleased to succeed as well.

These somewhat general features are compounded by a whole series of traditional devices and allusions which emphasize Philippe's familiarity with the folk idiom. One of the common devices he uses is the opening and closing formula, examples of which are scattered throughout the collection.<sup>16</sup>

The very first tale in La Nouvelle Fabrique begins, "Du temps du Roy Pernot et de la Roynne Gillette," which might be rendered very loosely by the common English formula, 'Once upon a time.' Philippe uses different kinds of formulas. Some are nonsensical, as in tale 6 (Depuis un an, ma mere grand, qui mourut il y a vingt ans, me conta devant hier...) and in tale 29, where he begins with a long and amusing nonsense genealogy. Others include rhymes of a type common in everyday French speech, and are used both as opening and closing formulas. Tale 45 opens, "Ne vous deplaise, Blaise, de ce que je veux reciter," and tale 27 closes with "... et tant de trippes, frere Philippes." Other examples of such rhymes are in tales 19 and 79. One opening formula is in the form of a tongue-twister using the word questionner: "Quand il est question de questionner en questionnant, il faut qu'on questionne, disoient certains questionneurs, lesquels se mirent

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<sup>16</sup> For an extensive illustration and discussion of opening and closing formulas, one may usefully consult the following works: Bolte and Polivka, Anmerkungen, IV, 1-40; George Laport, Les Contes Populaires Wallons (FF Communications No. 101), pp. 6-9; Elsie Clews Parsons, Folk-Tales of Andros Island, Bahamas (New York, 1918. Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, Vol. XIII), pp. x-xii; and the most recent discussion, Daniel J. Crowley, I Could Talk Old-Story Good : Creativity in Bahamian Folklore (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966. University of California Publications, Folklore Studies: 17), s.v. "Opening and Closing Formulae," pp. 32ff.



à questionner..." (tale 49). Tale 71 begins with the unnecessary remark that "Quand j'estois petit, je n'estois pas grand." It is a statement which still survives in the rhymes of modern French children. In tale 56, a soldier has not changed his clothes for "Trois ans, trois mois, trois semaines, trois jours et trois heures." Other, less striking expressions also seem to have a formulaic quality about them. Thus, tale 8 begins "Ainsi que racontent les vieux peres de nostre forest," and tale 22, "La vraie et ancienne histoire raconte qu'un jour..."

Philippe occasionally uses snatches of folk song and children's rhyme in a similar formulaic function. One may assume that they would be familiar to the readers, and certainly familiar to his audience. He ends tale 24 by advising housewives to "... ramoner vos cheminées haut et bas." This apparently innocuous piece of advice is pregnant with allusion which Philippe's friends would certainly have appreciated. The line is part of a refrain from a song first attested in 1543, thirty-six years before Philippe composed his book. It is a lady's lover who is to 'sweep her chimney.' Tale 49 ends in a rather complex confusion of folk song and children's rhyme. "... ma mere, je veux Robin" is the title and refrain of a very old song, and the preceding element, "... turlututu, chapeau pointu" is still collected as part of children's counting-out rhymes.<sup>17</sup> Tale 91 ends with the rhyme "Lire lire, pot d'estain,/ Nous nous marierons demain."

The oral and dramatic quality of some of the tales is enhanced by the inclusion of such things as calls to animals--to pigs in tale 33, to bulls in tale 41, to horses in tale 48, to cows in tale 63 and cries to warn of wolves in tale 89. These are traditional calls, of which similar varieties are recorded in, for example, Rolland's Faune Populaire and Sébillot's Le Folklore de

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Jean Baucomont et al., Les Comptines de langue française (Paris, 1961), pp. 140, 157.

France. In all probability, the narrator of the respective tales called out the cries realistically in the course of his narration; an aspect the reader tends to overlook, yet which is such an obvious way of adding a touch of dramatic realism to the tale (as well, no doubt, as provoking rude comments about their authors; one should not forget the element of audience participation which adds to the spontaneity of a performance). Furthermore, these tales in which dramatic use of such calls is made, as for the rhymes and snatches of song previously considered, are related to the pattern of the cante fable. Thus, another dimension appears in Philippe's awareness of the traditional idiom.

Somewhat less significant in number, although always used appropriately, are proverbs or proverbial sayings. Tale 19, a story about the fortunate acquisition of a swarm of bees which multiplies, concludes with the comment that "Un essaim de May/Vaut une vache à laict." Tale 49 is partially concluded with a welter of proverbs and retorts which suggest an intrusion into the storytelling by the lady innkeeper. Having listened to a catalogue of wonders of different lands, she expresses her cynicism with the proverb "En tout pays, toutes guises," only to be thanked for her untimely comment with the proverbial retort "... et toutes femmes mal apprises." The joust continues: "Autant de testes autant d'opinions--et autant les truyettes que les mulotz." Philippe has vividly captured the friendly cut-and-thrust of a genuine storytelling situation. Such verbal fencing is apt to disconcert the reader at first, as Philippe inserts no word of explanation for its presence. But if one considers the whole tale as the record of what was said, no explanations of the context are needed. In tale 105 there may be an allusion to a proverb about liars, in which the humorous motif illustrates the proverb.

One of the most interesting features of Philippe's use of traditional material is the way in which he tells as tall stories

items which have elsewhere been recorded as folk beliefs. Both tale 21 and tale 66 are lies about disappearances and reappearances under water. They reflect the widely held belief that certain pools and wells have underground passages connecting them with distant exits. The belief about toads and frogs being born in the sky appears as a tall story in tale 32. The electrical qualities of amber are used to humorous effect in tale 48. The belief that wind was sold to mariners is stated in tale 49, as is the belief that wolves cannot live in England--a belief related to the more widely known one about snakes in Ireland. Tale 56 incorporates both a belief and a slice of folk psychology. It was held that lice were attracted to water, and the belief was used to encourage children to comb their hair. The tale, which involves a louse-ridden soldier being dragged into a river by thirsty lice and almost drowned, is thus not only a tall tale but a cautionary tale to boot. Tale 72, in which a tailor bravely defends himself against a soldier, derives part of its humour from the common belief that all tailors were cowards. The belief that owls steal bright objects is the source of a man's fortune in tale 96.

The examples I have given above do not exhaust the traditional items of folklore in La Nouvelle Fabrique; they do indicate Philippe's closeness to his tradition and, in the manner of their presentation, his desire to write down what he heard. His skill in capturing conversation (see especially tales 29 and 72) goes hand in hand with a typical French lack of prudery. He has no qualms about calling a spade a spade. So although polite Anglo-Saxon society in the past was more readily offended by the four-letter word, I have given exact equivalents where necessary. Such words are not so common, however, as to become boringly repetitive.

Turning to the question of morality as a corollary to obscenity, Philippe does not indulge, as so many sixteenth century authors did, in stories concerning the humorous aspects of marital infidelity. Only one tale treats this subject and the guilty parties are most

severely punished. This may reflect Philippe's chastity, mentioned by Duthot in his poem to the friends of the Sieur de Neri, or Philippe's own squeamishness on the subject. But the absence of such tales, so common in French writings of the time, is certainly a refreshing departure from the literary conventions of the day, as is Philippe's turning to oral tradition (although, as Halpert remarks, the French have a traditional fondness for the humour of marital infidelity). Unfortunately, Philippe seems to have had little effect on French folklorists who, unlike their American and Scandinavian contemporaries, have consistently neglected the tall tale. Philippe and his work deserve a better fate,

## A CLASSIFICATION OF TALES IN LA NOUVELLE FABRIQUE

The classification of tales which follows is not based on any previous catalogue, but merely groups together the major areas of thematic interest to the storytellers, as I see it. Evidently, a certain overlapping with Ernest W. Baughman's classification of tall tales in his Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America is inevitable. Differences may be accounted for by the vast number of Baughman's motifs, which provided him with a much broader perspective than a more limited body of tales might be expected to offer. This narrower breadth of classes of tales is illustrated by Eleanor Hayeslip's grouping of New York tall tales, which is broken up into five major groups: I, INDIVIDUALS (subdivided into (A) Men of Ingenuity and (B) Men of Strength), II, ZOOLOGICAL CREATURES, III, BOTANICAL OBJECTS, IV, OVERSIZE OR UNUSUAL OBJECTS and V, WEATHER.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps an oversimplified analysis, but its author admitted the eventual need of revision.

The unique nature of Philippe's collection--a hundred or so tales apparently collected in a well localised context--permits a classification of tales which emphasises the environment in which they were told. Apart from the obvious preoccupation with remarkable people and their feats, the bulk of the tales are about animals, hunting and fishing, and the weather. These three groups of tales constitute two-thirds of the collection. Many of the remaining tales also reflect a country environment, a wooded locality in which hunting and fishing are prime activities and where men are still close enough to the earth to be concerned about the weather or amused by unlikely occurrences in the farmyard. Above all, the collection tells us what kinds of tales Philippe and his friends enjoyed, something of their mentality but only rarely,

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<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Hayeslip, "Sorting Our Tall Tales," New York Folklore Quarterly, I, 2 (1945), 83-87.

alas, something of the role played by the tellers and their tales within the group.

Yet light may be cast on the function of some of the tales. It is significant that wolves figure frequently in the stories, usually as the butt of the humour. Wolves were still a real danger in some parts of France at the end of the nineteenth century, indeed, one may still read accounts of villagers being mauled by these savage creatures. The frequency of tales about wolves no doubt reflects the people's concern with them, an ever present danger treated lightly, as people are wont to treat danger when they must live with it. That wolves still haunt the minds of some French villagers is shown by the following advice to parents which appeared in a French almanac as recently as 1953. The wolf becomes the frightening figure used to coerce disobedient children: "A wolf is like the devil for children. My mother often used to tell us: the wolves don't eat good children, but they always eat lazy, disobedient and untruthful children. You must inspire fear and love in children, make them believe in and love what they think ought to be worthy of fear and love. That's the only way to bring them up properly." <sup>2</sup>

Scattered amongst the tales about hunting, fishing, unusual animals, bad weather, unusual people and occurrences, are the occasional tales in which exaggeration has no part. It would be surprising if no such tales were present, for, no doubt, the sixteenth century storyteller was no more given to subtle distinctions than his twentieth century counterpart. Such distinctions are useful to the specialist, but the storyteller is chiefly concerned with entertainment; anything which strikes his imagination is worthy of narration, and as I have tried to show earlier, the notion of impossibility is common to different genres.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Moreau, "Le Loup en Franche-Comté," Barbizier, Almanach Populaire Comtois, 1953, p. 140.

A final question, which I am unable to answer, concerns La Nouvelle Fabrique as a local collection. How far are the tales typical of the tradition area they represent? Are tales which seem to be confined to La Nouvelle Fabrique still to be found in that part of Normandy where Philippe d'Alcricpe spent his days? It is rare for old collections of tales to be so finely localised, and the existence of such a collection as La Nouvelle Fabrique could permit a collector to verify the apparent richness of tall tales in a comparatively limited area and to ascertain how far they fit into their environment some 400 years after first appearing in print.

If regional catalogues were made according to the natural patterns which appear amongst the tales collected, a new approach to the organisation of minor genres might be required. Certain themes may be more popular in one area than another and such preoccupations might make a significant contribution to the understanding of the life of a folk group. For example, in La Nouvelle Fabrique, there are three tales which have as their theme the idea of the 'unusual home.' In tale 80, a troupe of squirrels live in the antlers of a stag. In tale 82, an otter lives in a bush growing on the back of a large fish. In tale 98, a she-wolf and her cubs live in a giant strawberry which has been hollowed out by slugs. The motif of animals living in giant vegetables or fruit is quite common (see Baughman X1401.1.) but the presence of three tales in La Nouvelle Fabrique, in which only one is concerned with the occupation of a fruit or vegetable might suggest an alternative grouping.

Some of the categories which follow are more consistent than others. "Lies about Individuals" bring together motifs which may be included in other subdivisions; but they rarely have close genetic ties in the way "Lies about Hunting and Fishing" do. Conversely, one could classify all lies about hunting and fishing under "Lies about Individuals," since someone normally lays claim to the authorship of the remarkable deed. But there is no

outstanding liar, no Munchhausen in La Nouvelle Fabrique about whom a body of tales are told.

Without giving motif and type numbers, which follow in the notes, I have here given the gist of the narrative elements in each tale, the tale number and, where relevant, cross references to other divisions in the classification.

I            ACQUIRED SKILLS : Lies concerning the results of possessing a special skill.

- Tale    1    Three skillful brothers: barber shaves running hare, blacksmith shoes running horse, swordsman parries raindrops from his body.
- ..       2    Skillful carpenter: makes organ from stand of trees.
- ..       11    Dexterous swordsman cuts arrows fired at him in half.
- ..       60    Accurate shooting with sling. Great strength of shot.
- ..       61    Accurate shooting with guns. Men fire bullets down one another's gun barrels.
- ..       87    Skillful goldsmith chains flea to tiny box he has made.

II           LIES ABOUT INDIVIDUALS

- Tale    6    Great fart.
- ..       44    Great belch.
- ..       15    Great spitter.
- ..       16    Great eater.
- ..       58    Great eaters and drinkers.
- ..    107    Savant's great sensitivity: feels difference in height from ground when piece of paper is placed under stone he sits on.
- ..       17    Man's vast beard. Tennis ball lost in it.
- ..       55    Sparks struck from man's rotten teeth. Beard burns.
- ..       46    Agile man catches squirrels in trees.
- ..       68    Very fast runner.



- Tale 23 Man cuts himself in two.  
 .. 94 Severed head frozen back in place. Falls off in heat.  
 .. 9 Frozen nose pulled off face.  
 .. 97 Man claims vast number of relations.

### III LIES ABOUT SWALLOWING, BEING CARRIED THROUGH THE AIR, UNUSUAL MEANS OF TRANSPORT AND UNDERGROUND DISAPPEARANCE

- Tale 47 Man swallowed by great bird, carried through air.  
 .. 39 Bird swallowed by man flies around in his stomach.  
 .. 90 Dog swallowed by fish.  
 .. 34 Woman carried through air by arrow attached to tooth.  
 .. 59 Fox carried up from ground by magpie.  
 .. 62 Dog carried through air by bugs it has eaten.  
 .. 21 Duck falls down well, appears elsewhere.  
 .. 66 Coach and horses fall in pond, come out many miles away.  
 .. 91 Man pulled out of pit by wolf, rides wolf.  
 .. 88 Man rides wolf.  
 .. 105 Man dragged along by hare.  
 .. 110 Donkey dragged along by bird.

### IV LIES ABOUT HUNTING AND FISHING

- Tale 19 Man finds hare beneath large thistle; takes both home;  
 swarm of bees collects on thistle, later gives many swarms.  
 .. 43 The Great Hunt. Man catches birds in split limb, arrow  
 kills large fish; boots fill with eels, fish falls on hares  
 which kill more birds.  
 .. 7 Two hares caught by piece of wax stuck to their heads.  
 .. 36 Bait swallowed by many birds, all threaded together.  
 .. 40 Man wears disguise, catches ducks by legs.  
 .. 46 Squirrels caught by agile man (see II).  
 .. 52 Shooting off the Leader's Tail. Many more wild pigs

Tale 52 (contd.) caught when blind leader's squeals attract attention.

- .. 64 Boar's tusks clinched to a tree.
- .. 74 Hare thrown in air by dog, caught by master.
- .. 83 Good hunting dogs pursue hare into sea, where it is caught.
- .. 14 Dog gives birth while hunting; pups in at the kill.
- .. 77 Dog rolls in mud, crayfish stick to its coat.
- .. 65 Swimming horse kicks fish to death (see V).
- .. 81 Basket attached to neck of drinking horse fills with fish.
- .. 88 Stag caught when hunting horn catches in its nostril.  
Blowing attracts hunters.
- .. 101 Dogs with special collars catch wolves.
- .. 103 Fish drug kills many fish.

V LIES ABOUT ANIMALS (Not connected with hunting or fishing).

- Tale 13 Dog and fox stare so hard at each other, their eyes pop out.
- .. 42 Remarkable dog. Eats mad dog, catches all game.
  - .. 45 Bitch mounted by three dogs at once.
  - .. 76 Scalded dog backs into tree, causes many nuts to fall.
  - .. 78 Wolf caught in goat's horns astride horse's back.
  - .. 31 Lynx turned inside out and back again.
  - .. 10 Horse cut in half by cannon ball; later falls with rider.
  - .. 65 Horse's dislocated limb set by swimming in pond. It kicks many fish to death (see IV).
  - .. 26 Stags pull each other's heads off.
  - .. 27 The great steer.
  - .. 51) (Hawk hatches hen's eggs; steals chicks.
  - .. 54) Unusual foster-parents (Kittens raised by rat.
  - .. 69) (Young hares raised by bitch.
  - .. 80) (Squirrels live in antlers of stag.
  - .. 82) Unusual homes (Otter lives in bush on back of fish.
  - .. 98) (She-wolf and cubs live in giant strawberry.

- Tale 41 Calf born with handkerchief on head instead of ears.  
 .. 63 Cows' tails cut off; sown back on again.  
 .. 53 Mole causes building to fall down.  
 .. 67 Hare escapes from dogs by crossing river on chip of wood.  
 .. 105 Man dragged along by hare (see III).  
 .. 72 Many mice killed.

Appendix: Whale contains ship. etc.

- Tale 90 Dog swallowed by fish (see III).  
 .. 25 The great eel. Feeds many people.  
 .. 73 Many feathers from broken pillow choke fish, break mill.  
 .. 59 Fox carried through air by magpie (see III).  
 .. 71 Many birds killed; many feathers.  
 .. 70 Voracious birds; no grain allowed to fall to earth.  
 .. 95 Rat escapes through a turkey.  
 .. 96 Owls hoard much treasure.

Appendix: Birds overheard in conversation.

- Tale 37 Ducks build nests shaped like baskets; carry young to water.  
 .. 39 Bird flies inside man's stomach (see III).  
 .. 47 Bird swallows man and flies off; bird eaten by insects,  
 man released (see III).  
 .. 62 Dog carried through air by bugs it has eaten (see III).  
 .. 110 Donkey dragged along by bird (see III).  
 .. 56 Lice in clothes drag man to water.  
 .. 99 Squashed louse makes big bang.  
 .. 109 Great leap made by many fleas.

## VI LIES ABOUT PLANTS

- Tale 35 Fast-growing corn.  
 .. 98 Great fruit; strawberry inhabited by family of wolves (see V).

## VII LIES ABOUT THE WEATHER

- Tale 3 Great wind blows women up on building.  
 .. 106 Great wind carries off belfry.  
 .. 79 Great wind blows speck of dust which breaks man's leg.  
 .. 9 Extreme cold: frozen nose pulled off face (see II).  
 .. 18 Man in tree uses frozen icicle of urine to retrieve  
     fallen sickle.  
 .. 24 Woman's pubic hair freezes to puddle of urine.  
 .. 28 Cat and rat freeze to death in mid-air.  
 .. 102 Great cold followed by great flood; stones float (see VIII).  
 .. 20 Great hailstorm knocks horns off goats' heads.  
 .. 32 Great rainstorm: rains toads.  
 .. 33 Mixed weather (see VIII).  
 .. 100 Bolt of lightening comes down chimney; tossed in pan,  
     burns food.

## VIII TOPSY-TURVY LAND; REVERSAL OF NATURAL LOGIC

- Tale 12 Travellers' tales; logical impossibilities.  
 .. 49 Motifs concerning characteristics of certain lands; climate  
     too healthy to die in.  
 .. 50 Treasure contains impossible objects.  
 .. 85 Cock bitten by mad dog kills many creatures.  
 .. 8 Other side of world beneath well-stone.  
 .. 33 Another season at other end of hole.  
 .. 79 Speck of dust blown by wind breaks man's leg (see VII).  
 .. 102 Floating stones; also lies about freezing (see VII).

## IX REMARKABLE HAPPENINGS

- Tale 4 Cannonballs collide; frighten man.  
 .. 5 Great fire caused by small spark.

- Tale 86 Pond emptied; filled to make giant bowl of soup.  
 .. 108 Great explosion: cork flies through roof, kills bird.  
 .. 22 Lucky cast of dice.  
 .. 29 Floor gives way, people unhurt.

X MISCELLANEOUS TALES

- Tale 30 Man's testicles cut off in mistake for his purse.  
 .. 48 Magic stone attracts straw on waggon.  
 .. 57 Amorous intrigue punished.  
 .. 84 Ingeniously contrived weathercock.  
 .. 92 Unfinished tale: magical romance.  
 .. 93 Brothers dance with fairies; wasted wishes.  
 .. 104 Fool tries to fly; falls in dung-heap.

I have not tried to classify here all the motifs which appear in the Letter From Prester John. Where motif numbers are available, they will be indicated in the notes to this item.

## EDITIONS OF LA NOUVELLE FABRIQUE

There are seven, possibly eight editions of La Nouvelle Fabrique known to exist, or to have existed.

The earliest date mentioned in connection with the work concerns an edition which I have been unable to trace, published in Paris by Jean de Lastre in 1579. Rudolf Schenda,<sup>1</sup> to whom I am indebted for much of the bibliographical information which follows, cites François la Croix du Maine and Antoine du Verdier's six volume Les Bibliothèques Françaises (Paris, 1772-73) as authorities for the existence of this edition. Jacques-Charles Brunet, through whose hands so many old editions passed, was also unable to procure a copy of this edition and likewise cites du Verdier.<sup>2</sup> Schenda believes that the first edition no longer exists, but feels that 1579 is a plausible date. He cites Philippe Renouard, Imprimeurs parisiens (Paris, 1898), who records that Jean de Lastre worked as a bookseller and binder between 1574 and 1582. Internal evidence in La Nouvelle Fabrique also lends weight to this contention. In tale 10, Philippe speaks about the siege of Rouen by the Catholics, which took place in 1562. Tale 33 is set in the year 1571. In tale 86 Philippe mentions the high cost of living in 1573 and tale 52 refers to the late King Charles IX, who was obviously dead since Philippe begins: "The King of France, Charles IX, may God have mercy on: him, once forbade..." Charles died in 1574.

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Schenda, "Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique, Eine Studie zur französische Wunderliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts," Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur, LXVIII (1958), 43-61.

<sup>2</sup> Jacq.-Ch. Brunet, Nouvelles Recherches Bibliographiques, pour servir de Supplément au Manuel du Libraire et de l'Amateur de Livres, Vol. I, Paris, 1834, p. 25, s.v. Alcripe. La Croix du Maine's first edition appeared in Paris in 1584, du Verdier's in Lyon in 1585.

There is evidence to suggest that the earliest extant copy of La Nouvelle Fabrique was also published before the end of the sixteenth century. It is an edition held in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris which Schenda was able to examine at first hand and of which I possess a photocopy.<sup>3</sup> The copy apparently belonged to Bishop Huet (1630-1721) as it carries an ex-libris showing his coat-of-arms and the words Ex libris Bibliothecae quam Illustrissimus Ecclesiae Princeps D. Petrus Daniel Huetius... (the rest is gummed over). The title page is imprinted A Rouen, Chez Thomas Mallard (no date). According to Schenda, Thomas Mallard worked in Rouen from 1556 to 1597.<sup>4</sup>

The third edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique, one which Schenda refers to but did not presumably see, is from the British Museum. I was able to obtain a photocopy of this edition and it is the same, in every detail, with the preceding edition published by Mallard, save that it bears the imprint of Loys Costé in Rouen. It has been variously dated at circa 1580 and circa 1620.<sup>5</sup> It is not certain whether Costé preceded Mallard or followed him, but it does seem likely that the one acquired the stock and equipment of the other. Since Mallard flourished between 1554 and 1597, it may have been Costé who substituted his name and address for Mallard's.

There is only a brief mention made of the fourth edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique. Schenda refers to the 1860 edition of Brunet's Manuel du Libraire (which I have not been able to consult) in which

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<sup>3</sup> Catalogue générale des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Auteurs 95, cols. 273-74.

<sup>4</sup> Schenda, p. 43, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> The British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books (263 vols., London, 1960-66), has a queried date of 1620 under its description of this edition (see Vol. 3, col. 151). The earlier, Edwards edition of the Catalogue (58 vols., Ann Arbor, 1946) mentions the same edition with a queried date of 1580.

is cited a 1639 edition, in-12, published in Rouen.<sup>6</sup>

There has been some confusion over the fifth edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique. The Catalogue général of the Bibliothèque Nationale indicates two copies of the Mallard edition and one of an eighteenth century edition published in Rouen by Viret in 1732. Schenda was able to confirm that there is in fact only one copy of the Mallard edition, but two by Viret. I have been able to obtain a photocopy of one of the two eighteenth century editions. The description Schenda gives of the Viret edition corresponds almost exactly to the copy I possess; he describes it as a revised and augmented version. There is in fact a preface by the new editor and eleven new tales which he added to the original 99.<sup>7</sup> But my copy lacks both printer's name and place as well as the date, although the date 1732 has been added in pencil to the title page. Schenda, who has seen both copies, says they are the same; but while the absence of the printer's name may be insignificant, it might indicate a sixth and possibly pirated edition.

The seventh edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique was published in Paris in 1853 by P. Jannet in the collection Bibliothèque Elzevirienne and anonymously edited by P.A. Gratet-Duplessis.<sup>8</sup> It bears on the title page, Nouvelle édition revue avec soin et augmentée des Nouvelles de Prestre Jehan but also includes two other shorter additions. The cryptic motto of earlier editions, Estist der Treitz

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<sup>6</sup> Schenda, p. 44, note 5.

<sup>7</sup> According to Schenda, the eighteenth century editor was a physician named Adrien Larchevesque, although his name does not appear in the photocopy I possess. Larchevesque also adds occasional notes to the text, to explain dialect words presumably unknown to the contemporary reader.

<sup>8</sup> His name appears in the Catalogue raisonné de la Bibliothèque Elzevirienne, Paris, 1866, and in the Catalogue général de la Bibliothèque Nationale, but not in the edition itself.



is changed to Es ist der Treitz, without making its meaning any clearer. Herbert Halpert permitted me to make a photocopy of this edition, from his original.

The eighth edition is probably no more than a reprint of the preceding one of 1853, of which it is an exact copy, and is even dated 1853. But the copy which I possess includes an extract from the Catalogue raisonné de la Bibliothèque Elzevirienne which is dated 1855; this addition is lacking in Halpert's copy.

Schenda includes in his study, as one of four editions of La Nouvelle Fabrique in the Bibliothèque Nationale (the other three are the Mallard, Viret and Jannet editions) a work entitled Facécieux devis et plaisans contes by a certain Sieur du Moulinet, published in Paris in 1612 by J. Millot. He considers it a separate edition although it only contains forty-two tales taken from Philippe's work, and these are included among other stories. The work also lacks the moralizing couplets found in La Nouvelle Fabrique after each tale. P.A. Gratet-Duplessis used this same work in making his edition, as he says in his preface. However, only in tale 29 does he make any significant amendment, adding a variant addition from the Facécieux devis to La Nouvelle Fabrique.

Schenda takes Gratet-Duplessis to task for having based his edition not on Mallard's but on Viret's, supplemented by the Sieur du Moulinet's work. Although Gratet-Duplessis says these were the only editions he could find, Schenda blames this oversight as the cause of the many mistakes in the 1853 edition. But Schenda praises Larchevesque, the eighteenth century editor of the Viret edition, for having produced a most carefully corrected text, in which punctuation and misprints are properly treated, paragraphs are introduced, the style is modernised and objectionable words are replaced by asterisks.

Mistakes in Larchevesque's edition (and presumably carried over into Gratet-Duplessis') came from the Mallard edition or contemporary ones. Schenda suggests that Mallard's edition was

based on a manuscript written by someone who could not spell or that an uneducated printer produced the text. For the punctuation in Mallard's edition is "... completely arbitrary, misleading..." and "... the spelling is often a phonetic transcription." <sup>9</sup> In comparing the Mallard edition with that of 1853, however, Schenda found about 230 points which can no longer be considered as spelling variations or simple printing mistakes. But they are not errors which change the facts of the tales. They would, on the other hand, require consideration in a new French edition. <sup>10</sup>

The edition upon which this translation has largely been based is that of 1853, and for this reason all the additions made to the original text, both by Larchevesque and Gratet-Duplessis, have been retained. At the same time, where any doubts have been raised concerning the interpretation of words or phrases the Mallard edition has always been consulted. Such comparisons have resulted chiefly in the restoration of words replaced in later editions by asterisks.

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<sup>9</sup> Schenda, p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 45, note 5.

## PREFATORY MATTER TO THE VARIOUS EDITIONS <sup>1</sup>

### Preface (To the 1853 edition)

The original edition of the facetious treatise which we are reprinting today is known to us only by reputation and hearsay. Du Verdier, in his Bibliothèque Française, indicates an edition from Paris, Jean de Lastre, in-16, dated 1579, an edition cited by Brunet, who adds that he has never seen it. Nodier, in his Mélanges tirés d'une petite bibliothèque devoted a short notice to La Nouvelle Fabrique, but he did not know of any earlier edition; he knew no more than was common knowledge about this little book, since he did not find the opportunity, while discussing it, to apply to it one of his expert pieces of bibliographical embroidery, with which he was so prodigal and which were so well received.

Strictly speaking, therefore, we only know La Nouvelle Fabrique des Excellents Traits de Vérité [The New Fabrication of Some Excellent Truths] by a modern edition, a mediocre and inaccurate reimpression which must have appeared in the first half of the eighteenth century. A librarian of the period fixed the date of this reedition in the year 1732 (see Manuel du Libraire, tome I, under Alcripe), and I am inclined to consider this to be more or less exact, by comparing it to a passage in the new editor's preface.

This passage seems to allude to certain publications of an analogous nature which appeared about the same time, which we owe to some wits who devoted a portion of their spare time to humorous and farcical compositions. This group consisted of the Comte de Caylus, M. de Maurepas, de Duclos and several other men of letters.

Whatever the precise date of the reedition of La Nouvelle Fabrique may be, it is certain that this edition was prepared with little care, and that it sins at least as much from the point of

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<sup>1</sup> Gratet-Duplessis included, after the preface to his 1853 edition, the prefatory matter of the earlier editions upon which he based his text. This chapter duplicates his order of presentation.

view of accuracy as from that of typographical elegance. It would therefore be opportune to publish this little book once again, submitting its text to a careful revision and thus restoring to it, in part at least, its original countenance.

After much fruitless research to find a sixteenth century edition, I discovered by chance that a part of this little book had been reproduced textually in another humorous treatise, itself quite rare and little known, although it was reprinted in 1829, in the Collection de Facéties et de Joyeusetés published by M. Techener. This treatise bears the following title: Facécieux devis et plaisants contes par le sieur du Moulinet, comédien.

Paris. J. Millot, Libraire, tenant sa boutique devant St Barthélemy. (No date). M. Techener's reimpression forms a 228 page volume in-16.

The Sieur du Moulinet announces, in a brief preface, that his intention has been quite simply to offer his readers a choice of the best tales to be found scattered throughout different anthologies; but he does not indicate any of the sources to which he refers.

Having examined his book, which is devoid neither of interest nor pleasure, I realised that he had borrowed forty-two tales or anecdotes from the ninety-nine which make up La Nouvelle Fabrique, the additions made by the eighteenth century editor considered apart (although he omitted the moral couplets at the end of the original tales). For want of an older edition, therefore, I found in the Sieur du Moulinet's book the opportunity to compare, in part at least, the texts of two editions. This comparison, which was all to the Sieur du Moulinet's advantage, convinced me that his text was much better than the eighteenth century version, and I was thus not only able to put the latter to rights concerning the tales common to both editions, but also to find in it some useful bits of information which enabled me to amend the texts of the other tales.

Because of these efforts, I have been able to re-edit it in its entirety, with all its minor details and without any deletions, but

also to make numerous corrections and to add some curious variations borrowed from the *Sieur du Moulinet*; and finally, to add some small notes, not a great number but almost all of which are devoted to the meaning of various words from the Norman patois.

For the author or compiler of La Nouvelle Fabrique was indeed a Norman; the places in which he chooses to set the scenes for his fantastic yarns, as well as the numerous expressions peculiar to Normandy which he continually uses, leave no room for doubt in this respect. One cannot, however, be so sure as far as his real name is concerned. An enigmatic quotation at the end of the book seems to indicate the name Philippe le Picard, which is also to be found as an anagram in the pseudonym Philippe d'Alcripe; this conjecture, strengthened by several analogous examples which are very common in the sixteenth century, is not devoid of probability. As for the title '*Seigneur de Neri en Verbos*,' which has been interpreted as '*Lord of Nothing in the Greenwood*' or '*Lord of Nothing in Words*,' I leave to more hardy or more skillful spirits the merit of solving this uncertain but important question in order to seek, in one of the epigraphs which stands at the head of this book, the main idea which has inspired its substance and its form: Omnis Homo Mendax. It is to this aphorism, borrowed from Holy Scripture, that the author, whoever he may have been, has referred all his inventions. He has sought simply to amuse himself and entertain his readers with the recounting of a certain number of marvellous, extravagant and impossible facts which had the merit, at least, of buffoonery if not that of exactness or even probability. One cannot deny that by and large he has made a good job of it, and if one is willing to forgive him those few tales whose rather crude expression shows too much of the coarse simplicity of his period, one will recognise that he was not devoid of imagination and that his style was very natural, which constitutes, to a large degree, the storyteller's talent. One must not show oneself to be unreasonably demanding of a humorous writer who is hardly bothered by any greater desire than to make his

readers laugh.

As for the second epigraph on the title page, which seems to be in German, no one has yet succeeded in interpreting it. I suspect, therefore, a typographical error, which only the original edition could put right, if one finally manages to uncover it somewhere.

You will allow me, or at any rate forgive me, because of the special nature of this little book, if I say a few words here, by way of digression, about certain works in the same style which, either because they preceded it or followed it, are worth being recalled to interested persons and bibliophiles.

In this field we have nothing to ask of antiquity. The ancients do not seem to have had the slightest taste for what, in an age nearer our own and especially in our age, it has been agreed to call 'fantastic literature.'

Poetry, in all its branches, was enough for the Greeks and the Romans. So we must move to the decadent ages of those literatures, to Lucian, who lived in the second century of the Christian era, in order to find some work of this nature. This satirical writer's True History is indeed a work of pure fantasy, written to mock and with the avowed intent of ridiculing the stupid credulity and incredible tales of certain ancient historians. Lucian's idea was clever; but in carrying it out he made the double error of too clearly announcing in advance his intention to relate nothing but extravagances, which could not fail to dampen the reader's enthusiasm: and still less happily, of so delighting in the narration of his imaginary adventures that it became boring. Thus it was that he left unfinished a work now consisting of two books but which was to have been four. The True History contains a few amusing passages but to read it in its entirety demands a rare courage today, and the sort of determination which is hardly to be found except amongst the erudite and professional philologists.

We must cross a long succession of centuries to arrive almost in modern times, in order to find a few literary fantasies which may be

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linked to this sort of composition. I only say linked, because the opuscle about which I wish to say a few words could well have been written with more serious intent than the True History, despite its form and its somewhat fantastic appearance.

I want to indicate here, as belonging to this class of fabulous tales, an alleged Letter from Prester John which contains marvellous tales of that imaginary kingdom which has been situated in Armenia, Abyssinia, in greater or lesser India, and about which a wealth of miraculous happenings has been told, each one more incredible than the last. All these marvels, let us be precise and say extravagances, might well, it is true, do no more than attest the naive and energetic credulity of the Middle Ages; but it is at least evident that such happenings are impossible and have never existed in their details, save in the minds of certain travellers. Would it not be permissible to conjecture that since the Letter from Prester John, or at least the letter attributed to him, cannot be from him, that it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some wit of the period, and some there are in every age, had tried to amuse himself at the expense of his readers by exaggerating still further the already exaggerated tales of contemporary travellers. I give this conjecture for what it is worth; be it accepted or rejected, it will remain nonetheless true that the Letter from Prester John is a very curious opuscle and that the Old French edition of the work is very rare. This double consideration has led me to re-edit the letter in the shape of a supplement, following and complementing La Nouvelle Fabrique; I also add two similarly oriented publications which seemed to me to be of equal interest.

I shall mention here a little piece in verse only as a reminder (La prinse faite par les Bretons) which I am reediting, as well as

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\* A short note preceding the supplement indicates the work necessary to establish a good text of the Letter from Prester John and gives some details on the two other items which follow it.

Bebelius' (Latin) Facetiae, in which one occasionally comes across a few fantastic tales, without stopping either at the Grandes Croniques de Gargantua, which would have deserved some consideration, perhaps, were it not, as is generally believed, the first essay, the prelude to that singular work which has made Rabelais' name so famous in the literary world.

It is in this book, indeed, in Rabelais' Pantagruel and Gargantua, that one must seek and in which one will find, if I may be allowed to express myself thus, the very prototype, the original of fantastic literature; for it is this book which has inspired, which has, as it were, sired all the creations in the same genre, serving both as source and model. Let us nevertheless regret, in this connection, that it is this unique and most curious work, one of the most precious monuments of our national literature, that the author's audacious imagination, so rich in itself and in the prodigious erudition which sustained it, allowed itself to be drawn into so many digressions. A little more order and restraint in the joyous creation of his genius, a little more respect for the moral proprieties, a little more decorum, especially in the expression of his delicious buffoonery, could have distracted in no way from the powerful originality of his ideas or the charm of his tales.

Rabelais had numerous imitators, of all classes and orders. Some, and they were the greater number, were satisfied to reproduce in their own way their master's extravagant utterances, the improbabilities of some of his inventions and the deplorable licence of his language; others sought in this bounteous and little expurgated mine the germ of philosophical reveries, of certain religious or political utopias which flattered their ideas or their feelings but which they could not throw into relief, lacking as they did both fertilising judgement and vivifying talent.

So I shall say nothing of this mass of books, quite forgotten today, which appeared in Rabelais' wake and which have left no trace behind them. I shall only recall a few works closer to our



times which certainly originate in Rabelais and which deserve, for different reasons and to different degrees, to occupy a distinguished place in the minds of cultivated people and the amateur's library.

In the seventeenth century, Cyrano de Bergerac, a man who was certainly not lacking in talent, although it was not always well regulated, tried his hand at a few creations in the fantastic genre. His Histoire comique des Etat et Empire de la Lune and his Etat et Empire du Soleil are, all things considered, more inspired by Lucian than by Rabelais; both tales serve as frames for a satire on the follies and absurdities of mankind. These pictures, however, in which one can distinguish here and there a few successful strokes, are almost always wanting in colour and light. It is a cold extravagance, the saddest and least agreeable of all follies.

Two works which must be sought outside France, appearing in England in the first few years of the eighteenth century, belong equally to the literature of the fantastic and the school inspired by Rabelais: The Tale of the Tub and Gulliver's Travels. Of these two works by the famous Dr. Swift, the first is a religious pamphlet much more mordant than amusing, which one recalls but hardly reads today. The second, on the other hand, which is just as much a satire, if a less restrained one, has become and has remained famous. If I am not mistaken, it owes this lasting and uncontested success to the rare skill with which its author was able, by the care and minute attention he brought to the slightest detail of his tale, to give every outward sign of reality to strange fiction; fiction to which, nonetheless, none of his readers could lend credence. The writer's skill was so great, producing such effects on the imagination of his readers that there were people in England, and probably elsewhere, who seriously believed in the existence of Captain Lemuel Gulliver and who barely dared to question his marvellous and interesting tales.

After Rabelais' book and Swift's Gulliver, we must move to the end of the eighteenth century (1786) to find worthy of our attention a book neither of similar importance nor equal value, but a piece of mere buffoonery, a facetious booklet which brings me quite naturally to the book I am reediting, to La Nouvelle Fabrique des Excellents Traits de Vérité. I refer to the Travels and Adventures of Baron Munchhausen, published in about 1786 in English by a German named Raspe, then a refugee in England, and reproduced since then in German, with numerous additions, by the famous Burger, and translated several times into French.

At this point we are no longer dealing with a work created with more or less skill, written with more or less talent or which demanded of its author great powers of thought or style. To write the Adventures of Baron Munchhausen it was enough to have a sufficiently fertile and audacious imagination, and talent, rare enough, it is true, to write simply and naturally. The author or authors of this little work satisfied these conditions perfectly. They put the hero's fantastic tales into the mouth of the hero himself; he is a great traveller and an intrepid hunter who utters with perfect artlessness and imperturbable composure the most marvellous lies that ever a traveller or hunter could invent, for his own satisfaction or the joyous and ready credulity of his friends. It is a book entirely in the style of La Nouvelle Fabrique, from which it has even borrowed a few items, indicated in my notes.

Of the same nature there is also the Story of a Tiger which was published in England a few years ago and put into French. It is a very short story and an amusing tale about the embarrassment of two travellers who, surprised by the sudden arrival of a tigress, skillfully manage to disentangle themselves from their terrible adversary by means of an expedient which nobody but they would have taken into their heads to adopt.

I have not mentioned here all I know of books of this kind, but only what seemed to me worthy of mention. A few people may

perhaps be surprised that I have not mentioned in this outline the name of Hoffmann and his Fantastic Tales which have recently obtained such a wide and legitimate success. My reply is that despite the occasionally whimsical strangeness of his inventions, Hoffmann does not seem to belong rigorously to the school of Rabelais and Swift and that, on the other hand, I could not, without in some way wronging a writer who must be classed separately, compare his work with the ingenious creations of the powerful and fertile imagination of that so honestly witty little book I am reediting, and the no less comical adventures of Baron Munchhausen.

X.

April 10th, 1853.

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G.L.B.V.D.L.  
To the Lord of Neri <sup>2</sup>

Do not doubt, my friend, that your book will live; commended by such dignity, the healthy will run, the sick will creep to it, hooked by such a beautiful frontispiece, greedily inhaling truth from beneath the mask of pure modesty.

The Lord of Neri  
to  
M.D. Duthot, in Paris.

To show you the great friendship I bear you and wish to bear you, I commend myself to you as whole-heartedly as I say my prayers to the Lord daily.

Antistrophe

Turn your eyes then to this place, and then you will know that I am in the company of your friends, and if you order me to live after you, I shall live unhappy.

The Lord of Neri  
to  
M.D. Duthot.

Treacherous boredom takes hold of one's mind; to please you and help you live a happy life, I have dedicated this entertaining book to you, which well deserves the prize for truth. When learned men have seen it, they will not be parted from it; wishing to pursue truth, they will prefer it to gold, silver or copper, because merry deeds

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<sup>2</sup> These verses and Philippe's 'To My Kind Readers' seem to have formed the preface to the first edition, and were included by later editors.

are told in it. So please accept it, my Lord and master, I can put it in no better hands for it to be favoured and upheld without any trouble--for you are kind, powerful, good, without impudence, learned, loved by the nine sisters of Parnassus and Apollo's dearest favourite.

To the Reader

Derived from Lucian's Cronosolon, by M. Duthot. \*

If you have contemplated its copper column, do not refuse this book at Saturn's banquet and do not dare disparage it, it is a gift from Saturn, do not laugh at it. If you do otherwise, Saturn's scythe will cut off your Paphian head with one stroke, for like his father, he punishes the person who does not gladly accept the gift he has given. Now you will tell me that among so many books you lack the leisure to choose this one, in which there is nothing but reveries, yarns and a pack of lies. But I must tell you, in all truth, that while you think you are avoiding one inconvenience, you are in fact bumping into another; for the scythe-bearing God punishes you in the same way if, when you come to his door, you do not leave all your serious ideas of study and reading there, in order to think only of drinking and laughter. Saturn's reign does not last forever, but comes to an end after seven days. Now, as Saturn's empire lasts for seven days, in that time we may laugh and rejoice and restore our spirits more easily; the time for work soon comes.

\* Cronosolon, or the Legislator of the Saturnalia, a humorous and satirical work by Lucian.

Prosopopoeia from the Lord of Neri to Macrin

Like someone throwing a spear with all his might at a hard rock, I do not think you will be successful, Macrin, if you come

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slandering me. He who admires his own ignorance must take the blame for his own mistakes, all bloated with stupid arrogance, thinking there is nothing like his own writings. I know well enough that it is not much; laughing at them all I propose, asserting, by great Jupiter, that if they had as long a nose as Proclus or Thymeles or even Latinus, I could really vex them.

By F. Charles Duthot.

For the Lord of Neri

First plant the delightful vine, never have I known a more worthy plant; I think you used to repeat that maxim, Alceus, because Eraphiot greatly entertains us, a most excellent and harmless cure for cares; in this, may Nothing [Neri, Rien] be your heir.

Eust. Bodin.

A sonnet from M.D. Duthot to the Lord of Neri.

Neri, do you think that by your writings you can imitate the speed of our contemporaries? Especially as you already feel the ease of your movements weighed down by importunate old age? But what of it? If we wish to see antiquity again, we indeed learn that prudent wisdom has often defeated vigorous gaiety, which could not perceive the reason why. And like shrewd Homer, weightiest of the Gods, who by his cunning trapped the nimblest in the heavens, you, by your witty writings, will joyfully attract everyone, leading them with careful delicacy along the honest path of virtue, showing its purpose to their minds.

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Leonardi Reinoudi in opus Nerium.  
Hexasticon

Hic ille dignus est liber  
Qui nunc teratur a viris  
Doctis, suis tegens jocis  
Quod ad bonos mores facit;  
Sic omne praemium meret  
Aevumque prorogat suum.

[Here is that worthy book now to be worn away by learned men, a book concealing beneath its jokes the wherewithal to produce good character; it thus merits every reward and extends its own life.]

M.D. Duthot to the Lord of Neri's Friends.

Someone told me that Sir Neri wrote his book after drinking a good deal, saying that the things he had read were what you might expect from a drunk. My reply is this: if he has sometimes seen a line, the author has not followed it; I know he wants to live very happily, that I have always known. What is more, it is not required that if he had been a reckless composer, his manners and morals be the same. For it suits the author to live a pure life, which is not necessary for his book, which is designed to entertain the lads.

The Lord of Neri to Slanderers

Away, away from here you rebel crowd, these speeches are too much for your brains. Once, beneath the boughs, Phoebus inspired their birth in the depths of my heart, while sitting on St. Catherine's Mount, near our reed-bound ponds, lulled asleep by the song of the birds and the soft murmur of the silvery spring; then I felt a black-winged dream which stole me away from the Cumean mansion

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where Apollo, singing uncertainly, filled my heart with divine anger. Everything is dark, away, nasty crowd, I do not wish to teach the wicked.

TO MY KIND READERS [from the earliest edition]

So, as they say, two useful words are enough, and yet I say quickly that it was not quite a hundred and a half years ago that being in Lyons, in flesh and bones, in the company of many boon companions, my good friends, while having a good feed at Mother Gillette's and drinking the freshest and the best, many merry stories and amusing tales, some fresh and others salty were told; there was as much crying as laughing over them.

Then, while I was having a good time, some of the company (who had thrown up some of the best tales) begged me to make a note of them in my tablets, in order to show them to our children at a future date. At once and willingly I agreed, after excusing myself for a while, wishing at one and the same time to present something agreeable to amateurs and sectarians of the unvarnished truth.

Considering what Solomon wrote in his Ecclesiastic, in which he affirms that the passing and turning of time regulates and directs all worldly and transitory things, putting forward his sentence in the following manner: "There is a time to build and a time to destroy, to laugh and cry, to plant and reap;" I follow this sentence and, not wishing to pass my time in laziness, the Mother of all vices, but to set free and reform those human spirits which are sometimes disturbed by melancholy passions, I took it upon myself to write down these merry tales, joining to them some excellent examples of truth, windfalls which I had faithfully gathered from the best trees in the forest of Lyons: for, A fructibus eorum cognoscentis eos. I know (at least I suspect, I resemble a bed-shitter) that many will say he is not



worth a testoon, he is a storyteller.

And why should he need to amuse himself by writing such fables? And I reply by telling them to listen.

Why can I not, by your faith and mine, just as well tell the truth while pretending to lie, when many claim to tell the truth but are more stinking liars than old devils?

If it is not true, just look at Brohon, Nostradamus, Broussart, Pileu, Maria, Colony, de Crox and many others, who make a living out of it.

Come, come, let me proceed; I am not breeding anything; if you don't want it, leave it. It will cost you as much, my Lord. All the same, my fine friends, if you wish to heed my advice, when you feel your spirits grieved by fanciful boredom and melancholic care, take up this little book which will change sorrow and anger into gait and joy, begging you to take it all in good part and God help you, our bread is in the oven.

#### THE AUTHOR TO HIS BOOK

Go, little book, press on, walk faster, and the further you go, show yourself everywhere, bringing joy and distraction. If some are unhappy with it, pass by and do not heed them, for such are times today; one man will cry and another will laugh.

The Editor [of the 1732 edition] to the Reader

Here once more is Philippe d'Alcrippe [sic]. Despite the continued reprints of his book, his Nouvelle Fabrique has become so rare that the memory of his joyful flights of imagination almost disappeared, living on only in the tradition of the people of his region. He was a monk, a Bernardin of Mortemer Abbey in Normandy, near the forest of Lyons (hence his title, Lord of Neri, an anagram of Rien [nothing], and of Verbos, that is to say Verd

Bois [Green Wood] ). A love of Bacchus' gifts had crippled him with gout. Between his bouts of pain, he would have a jolly good laugh with his friend M. Duthot, a local gentleman; then, when he was alone, he would dictate to his scribe all the amusing tales of his or his friend's invention. The Collection was favourably received by the public of the day. As good taste always prevails, and what was the pleasure of one century can still be the pleasure of another, we feel that these humorous tales, of a genre which still has many adepts, even of the highest degree, can still find a place in the leisures of people occupied by serious business. As for its style, if it seems to be but little polished, I desire to change nothing from the original because it is expressed in the natural style of the people and it also seems that the author really wanted to leave to those whose talent lies in telling tales, the merit of bestowing new graces upon these humorous tales and of embellishing them with ornaments which he could easily have furnished, had he so wished; imitating the Canon of Tours, Béroalde de Verville, a contemporary writer who, although quite capable of directing his Moyen de Parvenir in a very different manner (that 'globe of infinite doctrine,' to use his own expression), for there is no line, place or passage (just as in Master François) which is not stuffed with mystigorical science, he concludes, saying: "This must be mixed up in your brains. You must swallow it all mixed up. Others give you their books nicely ordered and then jumble it up in your heads; giving you this one all jumbled up, it might itself put things in order."

However that may be, having discovered a few examples in the same style, albeit from another hand, I felt that the public would receive them equally well.

Moreover, one may apply to this Nouvelle Fabrique what Béroalde said about his Moyen de Parvenir: "This book (he assures us) is full of faithful instructions and perfect meanings (contained in this book, at least, in the couplets at the end of each tale) so

that it is the same wherever you might begin." And again, "This could be the Breviary of many good volumes; a joyous repertory of perfection which one should neither compare nor oppose to the hyperboles of those bumptious persons who treat learning roughly and abuse it roundly; people who, seeing good folk desirous of filling a few gaps in their knowledge with good and profitable reading, are scandalized by it. Chase away, O Reader, those murderers of Latin, those dissectors of sentences, those pimps of poetic passages which they prostitute to all-comers. Beware of those quoters of allegoric theology, those shatterers of arguments, all those who sharpen their remonstrances on the grindstone of hypocrisy. Flee those pussyfoots and do not pass this rare treasure on to them but give it to good folk, just as good folk took the trouble to give it to you. It is not to be misused, like other books full of mad doctrine and chatter which misoccupy your mind with their beggarly pedantry, so grasp this volume of books of finely invented truth and with your eyes open, like dogs hunting for fleas; if you have a mind, sharpen it, like the wise children of knowledge, in seeing, looking, finding, inventing, opening, discovering what the skin of these memorials to reason hides, blindly reasoning, disguising beneath an apparently threadbare garb these teachings twisted in velvet, gold and silk; and these fine enigmas which will lead you to find the lantern of discretion and the fire of intelligence. With an effort, you will succeed."

So, I bid you farewell, or rather, au revoir.

## Tale 1

## ABOUT THREE BROTHERS, EXCELLENT WORKERS IN THEIR TRADES

...In the days of King Pernot and Queen Gillette, there was a man called Simonnet in our village whose fifth wife had born him three fine sons in a single bellyfull. On reaching the age when children raid orchards, the lads were apprenticed, the first to a barber, the second to a farrier and the third to a fencing master; in next to no time they had got on so well they were able to come home, accomplished craftsmen.

When their father saw this, he said: "My sons, I'm more or less certain I've got one foot in the grave, so I want to dispose of what little wealth I have before I go. As you know, my only possession is a cottage, a mere trifle to you three, so I've thought something up. Whichever one of you proves to be the best man at his trade shall have the house for himself."

Understanding exactly what their father meant, they unanimously agreed to comply to his way of thinking. "Well now," says old Simonnet, "bless me, if that's the way it is, you will each show a special trick of your trade."

The eldest, who was a barber, begins. Taking a newly-ground Guingamp razor out of its case he runs off after a hare which, as luck would have it, was being chased by two great hounds. In a trice he has its beard off its chin, without harming it at all, just as cleanly as if it had been sitting in a chair on its arse.

The second brother, the farrier, also shows what he can do. It so happens that a gentleman, passing by at that very moment, wants to get his horse shod. The brother says to him: "If you are in a hurry, sir, don't spare the spurs. I'll serve you well." At these words the said Lord spurs away, and the farrier runs after him, unshoes the horse, then promptly reshoes all four hooves, going poste-haste, as neatly as if the horse had been tied

up in the smithy.

The third brother, one in a thousand when it comes to sword-play, sees a heavy shower break and goes into the street, sword in hand, and starts swinging it about, thrusting, parrying, slashing, feinting, counter-parrying, twisting, turning and twirling it, guarding himself so manfully and with such dexterity that not a single drop of rain fell upon him: it was a marvellous and amazing sight to see.

To him who greater deeds records,  
From God's hand come his just rewards.

## Tale 2

### ABOUT A GENTLEMAN WITH A TASTE FOR MUSIC

I have often heard tell of a gentleman who, in his day, was as fond of music as he was of his lady wife. Now you ought to know that near his hall he had a grove of timber trees, consisting of oaks and beech. The grove was about nine acres in size and prettily laid out, and he would often go there to while away the time. One day when he was there, a man from some place or other came up to him and said, after bowing respectfully, "Rumour has it, sir, all over these parts, that you are the person who most loves music and the harmony of the different instruments; that's why I've come to see you, to find out if you would like me to make a fine organ for you, but not out of cast iron or pewter or tin, or any other metal, for that matter." "Out of what then?" says the gentleman. "Out of your timber here," replies the organist. Thinking the fellow mad, the gentleman says: "I think, my fine fellow, that your brain must be damaged, to come out with such a foolish idea, or else you are drunk." "No sir," he replied, "I'm telling the truth, and if you'll let me, I'll show you." "Just how?" says the gentleman. "Sir,"

replies the organist, "you judge a workman by his work."

Finally, after a great deal of haggling, they settled the price and the overall total; half the money was to be paid in advance. The organist at once trimmed and shortened the afore-mentioned trees, leaving some of them quite tall, others more middling and still others quite small indeed.

When the job was done, he took up his tools which were long and small, short and tall, wide and narrow, straight and heavy, warped and light, some made of iron, others of Libyan steel and all looking like borers and braces, twist drills and chuck drills, adzes, gimlets, bradawls and awls and other boring instruments, with which he hollowed out and emptied the trunks of the said trees from top to bottom; and then he made special holes in each one, near the roots, right where the four winds pass through.

So that when the winds blew through the various holes, the trees gave out a high-pitched and admirable sound, a sound so harmonious and agreeable, so sweet and delectable, on account of its joyous and perfect chords, that every man and woman who heard and listened to these harmonious notes was delighted beyond, and thought neither of food nor drink, finding in the music more comfort, pleasure and consolation than if they had been in the Elysian Fields.

When the noble gentleman had seen this most excellent masterpiece in action, he was so pleased with his organist that he paid for his shoe repairs, thus enabling the organist to recoup his losses.

Gold and silver are no treasure  
To lives without joy or pleasure.

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## Tale 3

## WHAT HAPPENED TO TWO TROLLOPS FROM ROUEN ONE WINDY FRIDAY

One windy Friday about forty-seven years ago, two girls of ill-repute, the best known and most tight-arsed in all of Rouen's brothels, whose names were Jeanne Cul-Jaune and Marion Bydon, were walking through the town looking for customers. They came into Herbanne Street just by the portal of our Mother Church, when suddenly the wind, in its impulsiveness, rushed violently under their skirts, and whether they liked it or not, it took hold of them and lifted them right up to the second gallery of the afore-mentioned portal.

Fearing certain death, they grabbed hold of the gallery's cornices and remained suspended in this way for all of two hours, with their skirts thrown over their faces and showing their cracks to whoever cared to look, for neither one had covered her crotch. Several young labourers had quite a struggle getting them down.

They often are in danger's way,  
To whom the wind dictates the day.

## Tale 4

## STORIES A SOLDIER BACK FROM THE WARS TOLD HIS FRIENDS

Back from the Boulogne war, a brave and fearless soldier was questioned by his relations about everything that had happened and how he himself had made out. After lengthily discoursing on all the killing he had done, he then told them how busy the English had been with their bows, saying, truthfully moreover, that the arrows had fallen thicker than rain.

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"'S'truth," he said, "a soldier had his horse shot from under him and when they totted up, they found two hundred and twenty arrowheads and darts in its head." Going on with his story he swore how one day, when the artillery was going hard at it from both sides, two great cannon-balls met head-on, so straight had they been fired, and stopped each other dead; they fell between the town and the camp and landed right on some poor devil of a pioneer's pickhandle, snapping it in two in his very hands and giving the fellow such a fright he shit his britches to the full; then he went off and wiped himself.

The lamb which 'twixt two wolves has lain  
Has had more good fortune than pain.

#### Tale 5

#### ABOUT A FIELD WHICH WAS BURNT

Around Midsummer's Day last year, a reaper bought a spanking new scythe, as sharp as a wool-comber's tongue. Wanting to try it out, he contracted to mow a small meadow, seven acres, three roods, two and a half perches, one foot and four inches in size. He turned up one fine, cloudless day and without so much as a word, sets to with great gusto and little care; but with his eleventh stroke his scythe happens to connect with a greyish-brown stone as big as a football, and he cuts it in half as cleanly as if it had been a turnip. Because of the scythe's fine temper, so many sparks were struck from the stone that the grass caught fire and the whole meadow went up in flames, with the result that everything was charred and burnt up; and it was not seen to because nobody came. Not a gladiolus, nettle, plantain, buttercup, marjoram, daisy, betony, cress, skirret, mint, vervain, water-pepper, chickweed, columbine, clover, sainfoin, burdock, patience or reed or any other plants which normally grow in





meadows remained.

When the fire had burnt the whole field and gone out, it looked as if someone had been making charcoal all over it, so black and lacking in greenness was the ground. When the poor reaper saw what he had done he took to his heels, setting off as if he had just stolen a hundred sheep.

Death, as it rushes blindly by,  
Indifferent reaps low born and high.

## Tale 6

### WHAT HAPPENED TO AN APOTHECARY

For the last year, my grandmother, who died twenty years ago, told me the day before yesterday how a young woman, who had been married for four months, became so ill they thought she was going to drop down dead.

The cause of her illness lay in her being constipated, which prevented her both from going about her business and getting it done for her. Thus it was that an apothecary brought her a violent purgative, on the strength of a doctor's prescription. Now as much as the young woman was obliged to lay herself bare and expose her posterior, so was she exceedingly bashful and embarrassed; so that when the apothecary approached her in order to administer his thingamajig into the hole near her doodah, she was so scared that she let rip a roaring brewer's fart which blew out the pill with such force and violence that the apothecary was thrown heavily to the floor, his syringe smashed, the purgative scattered in all directions and the whole operation ruined.

He will be reviled and shamed, he  
Who would harm an honest lady.

## Tale 7

## HOW A COBBLER CAUGHT TWO HARES

One day, a cobbler by the name of Huguet, on his way to a certain village to mend and repair the poor people's old shoes, entered a little copse and stopped dead in his tracks when, by good luck, he spotted in the distance a big hare coming towards him.

Having neither stick nor stone with which to do the hare justice, and seeing it drawing near all the while, the only thing he could think of was to throw a big lump of black wax at it, which he normally used for his ends; and so truly did it strike the hare that it lodged right between its eyes, whereupon the poor hare turned tail and fled back along the way it had come, going as straight as if it had the hounds on its heels.

Retreating in this way it met head-on with another hare which had been following it, and they crashed into each other so heavily that they stayed with their heads stuck together by the afore-mentioned wax. For all their tugging and heaving, they were unable to pull well enough to get free of each other. When the cobbler sees this, he runs nimbly up to them and without a laugh picks them up, puts them in his pocket along with his lasts, leather, awls and other tools, about-turns and goes off home to have a good feed.

A poor and wretched countryman  
Will meet his fellows when he can.

## Tale 8

## ON THE GREAT DEPTH OF A WELL

Just as the old gaffers in our forest relate, there is a well in the woods right where the sheep are sorted out for selling, a

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well which is considered to be the deepest in these parts. And here is why this is believed.

One day a man from Coudray, whose name was Pierrot Falot, climbed down into it to clean it out; and he swore on oath, and the devil take him, that if after having pulled out several basketfuls of rubbish, with the help of his companions pulling from the top, didn't he find quite a big, flat stone which covered the whole circumference of the well which, while digging, he banged, scraped, stared at and struck several times with his pick. All of which made a most frightening noise, no more and no less than if you had struck a big, empty cask fit to hold one hundred and forty-three hogsheads, so that he nearly jumped out of his skin, especially when he heard the voice of a woman coming from beneath the stone saying, "Hoy! hoy! Perrete, you old gossip, let's go and get our washing in quickly, it's going to rain, I've just heard it thunder."

Well, my friends, you must accept it as common knowledge that the bottom of the well is near the Antipodes and whoever would like to go there, well, it's the safest and shortest way by many a mile.

Who too high goes or down too deep,  
To peace and calm can seldom keep.

#### Tale 9

#### WHAT HAPPENED TO A FISHWIFE OF ROUEN

You cannot escape from your fate, although you may be on your guard often enough. I say this for the sake of a poor fishwife from Rouen who, while selling her fish in the old market last winter, got her poor nose frozen because of the excessive cold, so much so that she could not feel it move, and thinking to blow her nose she tore it right off her face without a thought and threw it to the ground, along with the snot hanging from the end of it. A duck

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which was there took it and swallowed it in one gulp. All the same, when it's a matter of telling the truth, I swear to you that it was a great pity, because when she went home her children did not recognise her and ran away from her bawling and shouting with fright, running like dogs which have had their things burnt. Nonetheless, their father calmed them down little by little, swearing to the devil that she was their mother; but after looking at her they could not restrain themselves, laughing one minute and crying the next.

Deformity of visage

Lessens not the personage.

#### Tale 10

#### ABOUT AN EDGE-TOOL MAKER WHO WANTED TO BECOME A SOLDIER

A much travelled edge-tool maker, greatly detesting the error of the Huguenots, promised God he would wreak vengeance upon them, to his last gasp. Thus it was that without any delay he sold his hammers, bellows and anvils, his buffing wheel and most of his other tools and instruments, which enabled him to amass a great sum of ready money with which he purchased arms and a brave horse trained to warfare.

Mounted in this way he came to the camp which was then before Rouen, where lots of artillery was being fired from both sides. At one moment the Catholics were striving to enter Rouen and the said edge-tool maker with them; but, by bad luck, a cannon-ball cut his horse in two behind the saddle, without the edge-tool maker noticing it. And in this way, as much through the boldness of the man as the courage of the horse, he went right into the centre of the town, killing loads of Huguenots over a period of three hours; and he would have followed his luck further, had not an ill-mannered foot-soldier struck his horse on the muzzle with his arquebus,

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so hard that the horse, meaning to retreat, was obliged to fall down along with the edge-tool maker; and that was an incomparable shame, because he was wounded to death by his fall.

There are always both joyous and sad people in war.

Let us flee vice, which wounds integrity,  
And follow virtue, whence springs nobility.

#### Tale 11

#### HOW A SOLDIER ESCAPED DEATH

During the above-mentioned war of Rouen, there was a soldier in the camp who was one in a thousand when it came to bravery; but he was condemned for some fault or other to go before the firing squad. Many soldiers and captains were greatly angered and grieved by this, but neither by prayers nor petitions were they able to obtain his pardon.

At last, however, through the good offices of a great lord who knew about the prowess of the said soldier, his sentence was reduced to being shot at with iron-tipped arrows from tall and sturdy Brazil bows; and he would have a sword (kiss my arse joyfully) with which to defend himself and cover the shots, if he could, and he was to be undressed except for his shirt and britches, and to stand about fifteen paces from the archers.

At the time appointed for the poor devil to be shot, several lords, captains, gentlemen, soldiers and other people came to witness this piteous spectacle, both angered and saddened on account of the friendship they bore towards him, as they would for any valiant man. Now after the signal had been given, the shooters and archers start letting fly at him; then you should have seen him cutting up the arrows with great energy and skill, here one second, there the next, so speedily and with such finesse that the spectators stood in awe

before him.

Some he cut in front of his chest, others in front of his face, then another in front of his belly; now at his side, then between his legs or over his head, so that all the arrows which had fallen to the ground in front of him looked like a swarm of bees trying to get together again on a tree after the impetuosity of the wind had knocked it down. What was the outcome of it all? He cut up so many of them that he made a great heap which finally concealed him completely. And even the archers' strength failed them, too. So, by this means he escaped death and for this reason he was restored to honour and grace and stood in high repute before his superiors.

In war, peace, game and divorce,  
Skilled hand is worth more than force.

## Tale 12

### A TRAVELLER'S TALE

During the great winter a poor devil arrived in Lyons dressed like a chimney-sweep, saying he was from Piedmont; and after sweeping the chimney of our oven, we questioned him while he was eating, about many things and amongst others about the countries he had been to. He replied that he had been to many places and seen many boiling pots whose broth he had not tasted: "And I assure you," he said, "that for the last twenty years I've been travelling in Turkey and other lands with Pierre Belon and Bartholomy Georgevitz. With these two fellows I've been sold and resold, bought, borrowed, given, exchanged, plundered, gambled, bartered and pawned ninety-nine and a half times by Moors, Arabs, Indians, Tartars, Albanians, Armenians, Persians, Egyptians, Scythians, Trogadians, Poles, Turks, Assyrians, Jews, Greeks, Carthaginians, Germans, English, Normans, Scots, Spaniards, Flemings and other kinds of people."

THE END OF THE TALE

"I've also lived for a very long time in the city of Calicut and crossed the perilous deserts of that land. After I left there, I went to sea with some Portuguese merchants on their way back from Melinde, loaded with spices, and we were fourteen months without sighting land. All the same, we finally landed on an island known neither to the pilot nor the sailors, which terrified us; but soon after, we set our minds at rest when we found the men there to be quite human, all with long green beards and violet hair. The women there are very beautiful and well-proportioned; but they cannot speak although they have two tongues, and that astonished us when we thought of the chatter of those in our country."

"They work at weaving linen so fine I was able to put a piece forty-two ells long on my tongue. There is, in this island of Ferriligain, for this is what it is called, a great river in which you can catch red herrings in all seasons, and they are at least as big as the codfish of Japhe. Without the help of a boat, it carries great millstones which float on the water like logs on the stream in this forest of Lyons. There is also another little island off the west coast called Lifredent upon which we found a great multitude of horned monkeys with orange hair; they are always as snotty-nosed as newly-weds and as soon as the snot falls to the ground it becomes a pearl and the local inhabitants come every day to gather up the pearls by the basketful, just as you do with windfalls. I brought thirty-eight back with me which I sold for sixteen crowns each to a lapidary in Turin, and I guarantee them to be better and finer than the ones growing in oysters which come from the East."

After he had discoursed for a long time on his fortunes, we asked him about his journey home. He replied that he had come down into Spain, travelling over the Pyrenees, where he had joined some chimney-sweeps who taught him their trade; and he assured us that he had seen in those same Pyrenees hemp as big and fat as the trees in the forest of Compiègne; but as much as we would not believe

him, so did he become bitterly angry and flying into a rage, says:  
 "Five hundred million casks, barrels, hogsheads, bushels, kegs,  
 butts, fourths, sevenths, beakers, baskets, bags, baglets, sacks,  
 pouches and double-sacks of devils take me if what I say isn't true  
 and exactly as I say and the proof, have a look at this!" So saying,  
 he showed them the rod he was carrying which, like the others, I  
 took and handled at leisure, confirming that it was a strand of  
 hemp and that he was not lying. The rod was fifty feet long and  
 only weighed three-quarters of a pound, which astonished everybody;  
 we wanted to exchange a threadpole for it, but he refused.

Upon the liar's word we place no worth;  
 The truth to tell, he gives us cause for mirth.

### Tale 13

#### ABOUT A DOG AND A FOX

There was a man in our forest who kept a great black-haired  
 mastiff at home; it was as ugly as a fine devil and used to frighten  
 little children. It so happened, one day, as it followed its master  
 who was going about his business, that it met a big fox on a narrow  
 path in the woods; seeing the dog, the fox sat down on its behind,  
 trembling like a leaf. Even the dog stopped in its tracks. Sitting  
 down in this way, facing each other, they began to stare at one  
 another, really, staring very carefully and without blinking or  
 making a sound, so that the fox forgot to run away and the dog to  
 chase after it; and so long, so keenly and with such ardour did they  
 stare at each other that their eyes fell out of their heads. The  
 good fellow, seeing these two animals snivelling at each other, came  
 up quickly and when he had had a good look at them discovered that  
 their eyes had come out of their heads through too much staring.  
 God forbid that such a thing happen to those who stare at each other

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scornfully! I don't know who would guide them along the way.

The eye, which is the envoy of the heart,  
Displays hostility or deep regard.

Tale 14

ABOUT A BITCH WHICH HAD ITS PUPS WHILE HUNTING

You have all met master Robert du Manoir, one of the first men of France, who greatly loved hunting and its pleasures, and who was so fortunate that he never came back from one without a young hare.

This was because he had the best little hounds on earth, amongst which was a bitch called Piette, and she surpassed all the others in goodness. Now it happened once that the poor creature, big with young, was chasing a hare when it was obliged to give birth to its pups. However, its great desire to continue the chase did not allow it to stop and so while still running it let them fall, quite far from each other; not smelling their mother near them, they began to run after her.

And so well did they run that they came up in time for the kill of the said hare, which merry master Robert gave to their mother who had caught it, and so they ate their share. This so enticed them that ever after they were keen little devils and nothing ever escaped them. He gave one called Friquenez to me.

Well-born children, be they near or distant,  
Help their parents when they are indigent.

THE END OF THE TALE

# A WAGER MADE BY AN INNKEEPER AGAINST HIS GUESTS

The three of them began spitting in such a way and so abundantly and copiously, so thick, so frequently and so steadily that they put out the fire so that it was as black as iron; four faggots, five bundles and eight logs were left, all of which had been well and truly ablaze and aflame. On seeing this, the innkeeper was greatly astonished and angry at losing and seeing his guests leave without paying; for when everything had been deducted, accounted and taken off, they had spent on fire, bread, wine and meat the sum and indulgence of forty-four pence, worth three silver coins each; it is true that they gave a double to the maid.

Venomous tongues are soon denied  
When others' honour is espied.

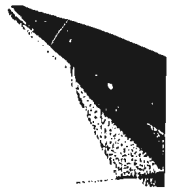
## Tale 16

## ABOUT A SOLDIER FROM MONFLAINES

Since it's a question of wagers, a soldier from Monflaines came back from the wars the other day, as thirsty as a hunter. His friends and relations, who wanted to feast him on his arrival, started roasting a good, solid, fat and heavy loin of veal; but when the soldier, who was as famished as a wolf, saw that it was barely enough for all the people who had gathered to keep him company and that he could easily eat it all by himself, he went and said to them: "I bet you all I can eat the whole of that loin of veal turning there on the spit without any trouble at all and without touching it with my hands." "Indeed," said one of them, "I bet you can't." "The Devil be damned," said the soldier, "I bet I can." "You can't," says one of his cousins, "And here's a testoon which says you can't."

"And here's mine," says the soldier, "And mine too." "No," says the soldier, who had made such wagers before, "I'll eat it while it's turning, down to the bones." "You won't!" "I will!" "You won't!" "I will!" Finally, after all their fine yeas and nays, and with the money in safe hands, the soldier gets down on his knees in front of the afore-mentioned side of veal, his hands behind his backside,--take a deep breath--and while it was turning on the spit, half-cooked, he valiantly charges at it with his teeth: tugging, biting, tearing at it (you'll get some) in such a way that you hardly had time to turn around than he had taken off a thigh or a leg. And he went on using his teeth so often, between turns of the spit, that neither flesh nor fat remained, nothing except the bones and they were so clean and spotless that even the dogs were not interested in them. And if the turner had not turned as quickly as he did, he would have swallowed the spit.

THE END



And when he had finished that lot, they had to put the pot on the fire to give him supper, you know him. The devil take me if he wouldn't eat iron-shod carts.

Excess is deadly poison  
To men in every season.

# Tale 17

## ABOUT A BEARDED MAN AND HIS BEARD

A few days ago some young men were playing tennis in a court and several people were watching them. There was an old man amongst them, as tall and stiff as a skeleton, and he had as bushy a beard on his chin as you have ever seen. Now while we were appreciating the fine players and the good shots made on both sides, here comes a ball which lodges in the said beard, and there it stayed while fifteen points were counted off; the scorer went after the ball but he could not find it.

This quite surprised the players and the spectators; the game was halted and they all came up to the fine beard to have a look in it and stare a bit, to see if they could recover the ball. Some felt around in it for a long time with their hands, giving it a good shake in the hope that it would fall out.

Others went to fetch sturdy rakes, sickles, combs and other instruments with which they very vigorously stirred it up to make the ball fall, and they combed for it very solemnly; but despite all their efforts they were never able to recover it; it could not have been more lost if it had been in a forest.

The players told him to leave, by God or by the Devil, so that they might not lose any more balls; the poor fellow departed shamefacedly, his tail between his legs.

Men are held in little esteem,  
If they have no beard on their chin.

THE END OF THE TALE

## Tale 18

## ABOUT A WOODCUTTER

During the recent great winter, a man from Perchay went off into the woods and climbed to the top of a beech tree in order to cut down the branches for firewood and indeed, he cut off quite a few, which he dropped to the ground.

But it so happened that as he was reaching out to one bigger than the others, his sickle slipped from his hand and fell down to the ground. At this, the good man was greatly annoyed, as he did not want to climb down and then up again. Anyway, while he was musing about it he felt an urge to piss, so he drew out his wicked codpiece from the depths of his britches and pissed right down onto his sickle; on account of the horrible cold, his urine froze while he was pissing, and he was greatly amazed.

Nevertheless, like any well-advised man, he took hold of the icicle which was attached to his black piece and drew up his sickle, which was attached to the other end of the icicle just like a rope; and thus he was able to go on working as before. The man is still alive; they are fine people in Perchay, you've only to ask them.

Your fortune in your hand lies true;  
But at your feet it troubles you.

## Tale 19

## THE PROFIT BROUGHT BY A SWARM OF BEES

During the season when you pull up thistles from your corn-fields, a certain Leonard Balle was doing this in the fields at Granfray, and as he was pulling up a thistle he happened to catch a young hare by its ears as it lay below in its form; he was quite pleased with

his capture. In order that he might tell the tale to his neighbours, he took the young hare and the thistle home with him at dinner time; he carried the thistle with great solemnity, as it was so perfectly fine, fat, large, great, bushy and in fine flower.

On his way home, with his wooden pincers over his shoulder and the said thistle hanging from it, here comes a swarm of bees flying around him; and after turning round and round for quite some time, it settled on the thistle which was very surprised; so was Leonard who, being a man with his wits about him, quietly carried off the said swarm to his garden and joyfully shook it into a hive which had been well rubbed with pimento, and there he let it prosper. After eighteen or twenty days it produced four swarms which, in the same year, about mid-July, produced about two more each, making a total of thirteen hives; the following year, each hive produced four swarms, so that about the feast of St. Michael, old Leonard sold enough to make sixty-nine pounds, eleven sols and seven Tours deniers.

It's a true saying, that a swarm in May is worth a milch-cow; it's worth money, and he who has money has shells, my belles.

From laziness comes poverty  
And from toil flows prosperity.

Tale 20

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GOATS OF LA BARRE

Sometimes the riches of the earth are ruined and lost on account of the thunderbolts and storms which often strike us. I say this because of a great and appalling shower of hailstones which but lately fell on our land, hailstones so heavy and so massive that they ruined the grain and fruit and lay on the land for three whole days without melting; at the very moment they were falling so

abundantly, three hundred and ninety-two horned goats from Biauficel and La Barre were in the fields in the care of a goatherd, and they all came back to their stables with smooth skulls, as the hail had cut their horns clean off their heads.

The women from Biauficel and La Barre did not recognise them, so that a great deal of quarreling went on among them, one saying: "Here's mine," another "Here's ours," "No, it's mine," says yet another, "You're a liar," "So are you," "I know mine," "So do I," "Mine has got a white behind," "Ours is brownish."

In the end, as they were all battling away with each other, something foolish might have happened, but Martin the Whistler reconciled them.

The highest placed in society  
Are often deceived by destiny.

#### Tale 21

#### ABOUT A DUCK WHICH FELL INTO A WELL

In our forest of Lyons, in a small hamlet called Goupillères, there is a well, quite close to a chapel dedicated to St. Maturin. One day, a spaniel (with its fleas) came into the yard (wherein lies the said well), and began chasing a crowd of ducks which it discovered on the manure; it so frightened them that one, flying off, fell into the said well. The good people to whom it belonged got a man to go down and fetch it out, but he could not find it; for as soon as it had reached the bottom, off it went down-stream, underground, to come out in St. Catherine's fountain in Mortemer valley, a good league and a half away. A few days later, some women from the hamlet came to do their washing in the Mortemer valley river, near the afore-mentioned fountain, and there they came upon the said duck which they easily recognised. So that after

washing their shitty sheets, they took it back to its owners.

They did say that it used to lay twice a day, and was an excellent brooder.

It happens, while avoiding one danger,  
That one often slips into another.

## Tale 22

### ABOUT TWO DICE-LOADERS

This true and ancient tale tells how one day two dice-loaders met each other in a certain village inn in which, having made each other's acquaintance, they began playing at the game of Chance. However, after playing for quite some time without either one winning or losing, one of them, who felt he was a better player than his companion, started saying to him: "Will you play, my brother and friend, with these two fine little dice, for twenty fine little crowns, with the lowest scorer in one throw to win?"

The other, who was not unaware of his own prowess and considered himself the other man's equal, replied: "Yes, I will."--"And I too. Let's put in the stakes: there are ten crowns." "Here are ten crowns to cover them." "Who'll throw first?"--"You, you challenged me, it's your throw."--"Agreed."

Thus agreed, without wasting any time the challenger throws the two dice on the table, and they show nothing more than two little aces. Whereupon he starts shouting out: "I've won, you can't throw less than that." The other replies: "Well done, my friend, but I want a throw for my money." So saying, he hastily picks up the dice and throws them so abruptly that one lands on top of the other, showing only a single ace, face upwards; on account of which he promptly flings his hand on the money, saying: "I've won and I'll take it, thank you very much, like a gentleman." The other,



crestfallen, judged for himself and admitted losing, seeing that from two dice thrown only one ace was visible.

See who people will put their trust in; the Devil take me, if you have to meet such wicked people everywhere you go.

He who is with little satisfied  
With all success will be supplied.

### Tale 23

#### ABOUT A MAN WHO KILLED HIMSELF

A most pitiful thing happened to a poor villager during these dog-days, dangerous days, indeed. On the feast-day of his parish he had decided to offer a meal to his friends and relations who had come to visit him, and taking a big household loaf, some three or four bushels in weight, he cut it in half with his fine blade, but did so with such strength that he cut his own body in half as well.

The knife, which he had pulled with too much strength, went right up to the handle in a sandstone wall against which he had been leaning. Thus was the feast disturbed, and his friends and relations greatly amazed. All the same, it was the poor devil who lost the most and never more did he speak or utter a word about it.

The man whose toil is well-controlled  
Sees his success grow manifold.

### Tale 24

#### ABOUT A WOMAN WHO WAS CAUGHT BY THE HAIRS

Many people tell of the year of the great frosts, when it was so horribly cold that the pots froze while boiling on the fire. During

this cold spell, a woman from Tronquay went out into her yard one morning to piss, and so furiously did she piss that the puddle she made was rather big. Now when she had finished and was thinking about getting up and wiping her front, as is the custom with women, the hairs on her cunt, she found, had been caught and frozen in the pool of piddle, so that she was trapped and could not get up. When the good woman felt herself hindered by her hairs because she had stayed there a bit too long, she began shouting for help, help. Hearing her cries, her husband came running out with all possible haste, to see what the matter was. Once he had had a brief account of it all, he rushed off to a blacksmith to fetch some shears used for trimming horses' manes. And beneath her arse (take a deep breath) he prettily cut off my gallant's beard which was (having been poorly cared for) as long as a Greek's. In this way she was liberated, and went off clean-shaven.

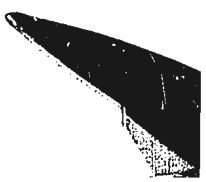
Be better housekeepers, good women, than this one, and sweep your chimneys regularly, both high and low.

A woman who is full of negligence  
Puts her husband to great inconvenience.

## Tale 25

### ABOUT AN EEL FISHED FROM THE POND AT MORTEMER

The old abbot of Mortemer abbey in Lyons once emptied the water from a great pond which is in that abbey, hoping to make a meadow out of it. Once the water was almost all gone, several people went in to do some fishing, both regular and secular, novices, slovens, cooks' boys and other servants of the establishment who, the truth to tell, caught more fish than had ever before been seen; fish such as pike, carp, roach, bream, prawns, minnows, mullets, barbels, shad, sticklebacks, bullheads, crayfish, loach, frogs and many eels, fat



and long, I might add.

Amongst which was caught one too marvellous and frightening to behold. Pliny says in his Natural History that sea-eels are three hundred feet long and only live for eight years; but as far as I am concerned, my only desire is to tell the truth and what I have seen.

The one I mention, according to those who judge by the teeth, was nineteen years, five days and two hours old by the top of its head. It was twenty-two feet wide, one hundred and twenty feet long, and from eye to eye, three and a half feet, two inches. In short, quite a bit of fish. The monks, of whom there are twenty-two both good and bad, lived off it for a whole year, on fast days. The abbot's servants ate so much of it they were ill.

The skin was flayed and fifty-two sacks made out of it; they were used to carry grain to the mill.

For great lords greater ransoms are deserved  
Than soldiers for whom none is reserved.

## Tale 26

### ABOUT TWO STAGS IN THE RUTTING SEASON

It is very true to say that stags in the rutting season (crying and bellowing) fight so furiously that they often kill one another. Whether it be so or not, a few days ago two were seen in a certain spot in our forest of Lyons, called the Big Holly valley (will you kiss my arse-hole), fighting to the death with their horns; and in such a way did they butt and push that their horns became entangled and they stayed that way, so entangled that they could not break apart. Feeling themselves thus caught and hindered, they began tugging away from each other with such strength and power that at the third tug they tore each other's heads off; their dead bodies went tottering off more than thirty spans apart from each other and

the heads, still caught up, fell right between the bodies.

Some of the game-keepers arrived on the spot, carried them off and made them into nice, tasty pies, such as they used to make in olden days.

Mad love always precedes a broken heart  
And causes all lovers to be torn apart.

### Tale 27

#### ABOUT A STEER WHICH WAS SOLD TO THE KING'S CATERER

Once, when the King of France, Charles IX, was in Lyons, it was reckoned that the court had never been so large as it then was. You know that wherever the court is, provisions come from all around.

Now amongst other things, a herd of cattle coming from Mortaigne arrived there one day, big and heavy beasts, one of which was even bigger, fatter, wider, longer and heavier than all the others.

Several people began helping me to look at it and they were amazed as I was; with great admiration they crossed themselves. Its head was as big as a seven hogshead barrel, its eyes as big as a bushel, its horns as long as a chimney-sweep's pole; they were so far apart that a gentleman courtier who was present was unable, using a great Brazil bow, to shoot from one to the other. It was sold to the King's Caterer who paid out four hundred and eighty-four pistoles in hard cash, on the nail in fine payment. As for the tallow, there was more than three hundred quarters of it, and as much tripe, brother Philippe.

Any lout may be often held in great esteem,  
More than a man of wit sublime, so it would seem.

## Tale 28

## ABOUT THE STRANGE DEATH OF A CAT AND A RAT

I have formerly seen described in writing, for which reason I will not hold forth very long, how a cat, during the great frosts, was chasing a big granary rat along the eaves; the rat, almost in the cat's claws, decided to jump down in order to escape and the cat followed, hoping to seize it. But both of them stayed frozen in the air, as stiff as spikes, at the mouth of the gutter. Thus it was that these two creatures died in the great frost and they did not fall to the ground. I don't know where it took place; but I do know that there assembled there (myself included), to see and contemplate them at their leisure, more than one million nine hundred thousand people all told, not counting the children.

The big thief is ready, oneway or the other,  
To pursue, despoil and rob his weaker brother.

## Tale 29

## WHAT HAPPENED TO SEVERAL PEOPLE PRESENT AT A WEDDING RECEPTION

After the harvest, I was invited to the wedding reception of a young man who claimed to be my first cousin, on the side of the sister-in-law of the brother's cousin to the aunt of the wife of the son of the first husband of his uncle Godefroy, who was the brother-in-law of his daughter-in-law on account of the nephew of my godmother Juliane; at which dinner were present several rowdies from the forest, and we were all seated and served in a low, ground-floor room, beneath which was a vault or cellar.

And while everyone was enjoying himself on the sumptuous fare, filling out his waistcoat, the floor gave way beneath us and fell

to the bottom of the cellar with us on top of it, you understand, but without anyone noticing or suspecting it. It was a wonderful thing that not one of us was moved or shifted from his seat.

"What's this," said some, "Where are we?" "At the bottom of the cellar," said others, "But how?"--"The beams have broken." "How did that happen?"--"I don't know."--"I don't either."--"Nor do I."--"Is anyone hurt?"--"No," said a certain Herman, "And thank God, I didn't miss a bite." I swear to you, my friends, on my word of honour, I have never been to such a wedding. One thing above all greatly surprised me, and that is that not a drop of wine was spilled, no glasses smashed, no roast spoiled, nor any mishap at all, unless it be the hurdy-gurdy man who lost the handle or crank of his hurdy-gurdy, which meant that the only dancing done was with our chops.

He who is constant, firm and very stable,  
Often falls into error damnable.

[The following is a variant of the introduction to this tale, included by Gratet-Duplessis in his edition (1853) and taken from the *Sieur du Moulinet's Facécieux Devis* (see Gratet-Duplessis' introduction).]

Several guests at a wedding were dining by candle-light in the downstairs room, beneath which was a cellar. Their only thoughts were to the sumptuous fare, and the conversation was appropriate. "Pass me some of that," said one. "Don't take this away. Bring in some more, but don't clear the table." "Would you like this pig's trotter, Madam, since you can't sleep?" "God forgive somebody, that was the morsel he fancied most; give me wine, or I'll ask for some. In the morning, straight, and no water with it in the evening; is this glass clean?" "Does it look as if a fly has been drinking out of it?" "Bring over those pigeons," said another, "I'll send them down the red lane." "Another drop of vinegar, my friend. The Devil!

These wenches have spoilt it!" "A tasty sauce with that wouldn't do any harm." "Who'll put this back on the spit?" "Ha! pretty hare, you are most welcome." "Well! This is only half done, give it here; I'll look after it in the late Queen Gillette's way." "That pitiful morsel, shall it stay on the plate? I won't allow it!" "By the way, I forgot to wash the veal tripe I dressed this morning." "Lad, something to drink, I'll serve you on your wedding day; no water, it's strong enough without it." "Raise your elbow, pour me out some of that (said another), fill it up: Nature abhors a vacuum, this is going down the valley." "Ex hoc in hoc, there's nothing magical about it, you all saw it." "If I went up like I swallow, I'd have been quite high for some time." "As for these chops, and trotters, let's copy the sergeants, open our throats! Is this ham meaty? Did the gallant eat his fill of acorns?" Holding forth with these and similar remarks, and filling out their waistcoats, etc. (The rest is the same in both versions).<sup>r</sup>

### Tale 30

#### ABOUT A CUT-PURSE CAUGHT IN THE ACT

One can regularly see many cut-purses at these fairs and markets doing nothing but stalking their prey and looking for ways to catch it. In this connection, one market day in Lyons there was a good and innocent fellow bending down rather low, selling turnips which he displayed on some straw on the ground. And as the top of his britches was torn, his poor balls were hanging right down; a cut-purse, noticing at once, came up to him, thinking (in all truth) that it was his purse, and very prettily cuts them off flush with his arse (ouch!). Having completed this fine and devoted execution, he hoped to escape immediately in the crowd; but he was unable to because the poor castrate, feeling the great pain in his beatifics, cried out so loudly that everyone came running up, and thus the poor gallant was

caught, arrested and tied up, being found in possession of the good man's purse. In this way he was delivered within the hour into the hands of the vice-bailiff and four hours later, or thereabouts, was hanged and strangled in his presence, by his fine little neck.

And of course, he had deserved it. You can't go around cutting off people's balls, can you, Madam?

If in your trade you are adept, don't push your luck;  
Often the cleverest plans of men may come unstuck.

### Tale 31

#### THE BRAVE DEED OF A YOUNG MAN WORKING FOR A WOOD-MERCHANT

A few days ago, a wood-merchant from our forest had one of his helpers float several cords of wood down the Lieurre river to the place where, going through Rosay and Charleval to Lyons, it meets the Andelle. And as this young man was walking along the river's edge, with a long hook in his hand to keep the logs on the move, he pulled up sharply when he saw an enormous lynx which, during the wars, had devoured many corpses between the villages of St. Jonin and Moncontour and which, having entered the forest of Lyons where it wrought great carnage, made itself greatly feared by all. When the said servant saw it towering before him, coming forward to devour him with wide-open jaws, he was not in the least dismayed, but with great calm walked towards it and thrust his hook vigorously down its throat and through its body, so that it came a good six inches out of the lynx's arse. And all of a sudden, using the great strength bestowed upon him by God and inherited from his ancestors, he withdrew the hook so vigorously that the said lynx was turned inside out, just like an eel when you skin it. He was much astonished at this and began saying to himself: "You've achieved nothing if you can achieve more." Thereupon he ran the hook back through the body,



then pulled it back with such strength that the lynx was turned outside in and restored to its natural estate. And what is more, it remained standing on all fours, which was an admirable thing. Doubting that it was dead, he tipped it over with his knee. It was flayed and its skin was tanned, and with it he lined his winter coat.

I must point out that this servant, although a poor man, is a descendant from father to son from Adam's noble lineage and on his mother's side from the good and noble Eve; so I give you leave to consider that if he is not a good boy, as soon as he gets married he will be a good husband.

He who beats the covetous and greedy  
Deserves the praise of which he is worthy.

## Tale 32

### ABOUT A STORM OF TOADS

Master Regné told us how one day, coming from Outrebosc to Mortemer, it had not stopped raining for a moment and he was so wet he was soaked through to the skin. Wishing (after the rain) to shake out his hat, which had been flattened on top, thereby allowing the rain to stay rather than to run off, he found eleven little toads swimming in the pool, and that caused him as much astonishment as if someone had given him twenty crowns for nothing. When he was asked where these toads had come from, he said they had fallen from the clouds (just as ready-roasted swallows fall into some people's mouths) with the rain. And somebody said that at the same time a great shower of them had fallen in their yard and on their dunghill, the smallest as big as horses' hooves; and that the people in the house found some so fat and horribly big which had fallen down the chimney into the stew cooking in a pot. For which reason they had

to throw out the soup and the meat and make do with bread and curds.

It is great ill for the unblemished  
When disapproval falls upon their head.

### Tale 33

#### WINTER AND SUMMER IN THE SAME SEASON

In the year 1571, there was such an abundance of acorns and beech nuts in our forest of Lyons that it was a real feast for the pigs, which often got lost in the woods after gorging themselves on them. One day amongst others, the venerable Lord Jean Fouber', and his gentleman son's swine-herd, after bringing back his pigs to his masters' sties, noticed that one sow was missing. So he promptly went back into the woods to look for it; and there he met a man tying up faggots who said he had seen it down in the Gloriette ditches, going into a hole.

The swine-herd straightaway takes to his heels, running to and fro, so much and for so long that he finally reaches the said ditches, into which he quickly jumps down; and by looking now into one, now in another, he found the hole just like a bridegroom; he went in calling his sow and shouting at the top of his voice, "Sooie; sooie, hey sooie; sooie, sooie, hey sooie." He listens for a while, shouts, walks, calls, gropes, looks around, cries, sends it to the devil, scratches his head, spits, coughs, flies away, farts, whistles, stumbles, falls down, gets up, runs, stops, listens, sniffs, cracks his whip, blows his horn, sneezes, yawns, belches, shits, pisses, chews the cud, swears and goes on his way for such a long time that he can see no more and does not know where he is going.

While he is in the dark, he ponders and considers how he must find the sow or replace it, or at any rate show some part of it. So he swore, by God, that he would go even further and indeed, he

went so far down into this hole that he ended up seeing daylight, and the further he went the clearer it became. After a while he finally came out into some fields where people in shirtsleeves were harvesting the corn, and there he found his sow gleaning among some hogs; she had littered fifteen big, fine little speckled pigs, which were following her about. Master Swine-herd, seeing his sow, was the happiest man in the world. Well? What a happy welcome she gave him! However, after contemplating these people at work for quite some time, he began to feel astonished and afraid on account of the season, as in this place it was the middle of summer in the month of December, and because he didn't even know where he was.

So, without saying a word to anyone, he took his leave and went back the way he came, taking with him his sow and her piglets.

Sometimes, when a fool uses his influence,  
He puts an end to matters of consequence.

#### Tale 34

##### ABOUT A WOMAN WHO WANTED TO HAVE A TOOTH PULLED OUT

Some time ago there was a young woman who suffered so much on account of one of her big molars, that she lost patience and ran about the streets like one demented. One day, because the pain was as bad as ever, she went to a village surgeon to have it pulled out. But for all his efforts he was unable to uproot it, and shouting and bawling, she tore herself from his hands, because of all the pain. On her way home she met an archer coming by with his crossbow over his shoulder. After enquiring about her ailment, he promised to pull it out without hurting her at all. The poor woman did not care what happened to her as long as the tooth came out, and she let him carry on. So he tied a good, strong piece of string to the tooth and then to a well-feathered arrow; when he had strung his bow, which

weighed seven pounds, he puts the arrow in it and the fool gets her to open her mouth; then he fired his crossbow, thinking that the bad tooth would fly off with the arrow; but it was so deeply rooted in her gums that the woman, who did not weigh too much anyway, flew off with the arrow and both of them landed in a pond half a league away, in the murky waters of which the poor patient would have drowned, had it not been for two fishermen who saved her.

The only way a meddler may be bested,  
Is when his neighbour sees he is arrested.

### Tale 35

#### ABOUT THE FERTILITY OF THE NEW FIEFS

The empty, vacant, hollow places in the forest of Lyons, in which no wood would grow, were given in fief some time ago, as you have heard, and are now bringing in good grain in large quantities, so it appears, year in and year out. And here is the proof: early one fresh morning when the cuckoo was singing, a messenger was travelling across the country, and to shorten his journey crossed one of the new fiefs in which oats had been sown; although they had sprouted, they were not yet very tall. And as the man was walking over it, without paying any attention about him, the said oats began to shoot up so suddenly and so vigorously that he was lifted a good six inches off the ground by it and got such a fright that he lost all his money and fell on his nose. All the same, he gets up and goes off. But before he had left the said fief the oats reached above his knees, so fast and so abundantly were they growing; when he had come into the fief they barely reached his ankles.

I shall not be at all surprised if they quarrel over who is to have these fine fiefs. Rich folk will get them. Poor people never get anything.

Youth must produce and fructify  
To feed the old and elderly.

### Tale 36

#### THE CAPTURE OF A COMPANY OF CRANES

Every year at the end of the month of September, you can see many flights of cranes passing over our poor forest, flying I know not where. It happened recently that when a flight of two hundred and forty cranes came and sat in the meadows at Menasqueville, a clever fellow by the name of Nicolas des Murs saw them there and went to fetch a cord or line which was twice as long as the length of the flight of cranes (they sit in the same formation as they fly). To one end of the line he attached a hook and sticks a bean on it, just as you do with a worm when you go fishing with a rod; this he throws down in front of the first bird, which promptly swallows it.

Now to explain the meaning of the word 'heredity' to you. Such is the nature of this bird that if it eats something which hurts its stomach, it immediately expels it through its arse, by allowing it passage through its guts, and this is what the first crane did. The one standing next to it swallows it in the same way, then shits it out just as quickly; the third does likewise, then the fourth and the fifth, and to cut a long story short, they all swallowed the bean, one after another, hook, line and sinker, so that they were all hooked, or to put it a better way, all hanging together like the beads on a rosary; thus rigged out they rose up from the ground hoping to fly away, but the bird-catcher, holding the line, stopped them, although he was lifted quite high off the ground. He gave

some away to many people, to gentlemen and suchlike, others he sold for more than six pieces of silver and a double. He gave one to me which I still feed in a little cage along with a lark, which is not a very modest bird; it gloats over its talking and calls people thieves.

Pilgrims and foreigners  
Often run many dangers.

### Tale 37

#### ABOUT WILD DUCKS AND HOW THEY BUILD THEIR NESTS

In the woods and on the slopes of Mortemer valley there is a great quantity of wild ducks which, in the season, build their nests there, because of the water at the bottom of the valley, near the abbey. I shall explain to you how they build them. First of all they look around, and thus looking, find branches of wild purslane, in other words, vilburnum, which they twist and fashion into the shape of a basket handle. These they carry in their beaks to the top of the tallest tree they can find and hang them on branches, just as one hangs a basket on a peg. Once this has been done, they go and get a lot more little withies and other slender green twigs which they shape, put together and make into nests which they attach to the said branches or vilburnum handles, as skillfully and exactly as even the basketmakers of Touffreville, so that to see them hanging thus you would take them for little baskets.

Therein they lay and then sit on their eggs; and when the season has come for them to hatch out and the little ducklings come out of their shells, the male bird puts its head through the handles of the nest and lifting it off the branch, flies down into the valley with it around his neck (like the cow and its bell) to the pond or pool. As soon as these fledglings feel the water they get out of their

nest and start swimming, leaving the said nest to float on the water; in the space of one year, a total of one hundred and sixty has been seen and counted, blown across the pond by the wind. I leave to your imagination how many ducklings there might be, when in every nest there is often as many as sixteen or seventeen. Duckling makes a marvellous dish, with sauce à la dodine; and ducks? What? Fine pies!

Nature's works contain more erudition  
Than the craftsman and his invention.

### Tale 38

#### ABOUT A THIEF WHO HAD HIS HAND CUT OFF

One day a man of the world, vigorous, alert, pleasing and as brave at least as Richard the Lion-Heart, was travelling along a narrow forest path when he saw a thief on the look-out, in among the trees, and he came out at him, putting his hand on the horse's bridle and saying: "Hold! Your money or your life!" The traveller, who was not easily frightened, immediately seizes his sword and gives him such a blow on the hand holding his horse that he cuts it clean off. Having done this, he spurs his horse and rides off so swiftly that he arrived home very soon after. His servant took his horse and led it to the stable; but when he came to unharness it, he noticed a hand hanging from the bridle, which gave him a nasty fright; surprised as he was, he dashed off into the house where, all a-tremble, he told him how he had found a severed hand still holding the horse's bridle. At first the master did not seem at all moved by his account, but after thinking about it for a while he recalled having hit out with his sword at a highwayman who had stopped his horse; whereupon he went to fetch the said hand, which he detached from the bridle with great difficulty and then nailed it on to his front door as a trophy.

He who is modest about his victory  
Is rarely incited to vain glory.

## Tale 39

## ABOUT A PRIEST WHO SWALLOWED A LARK

There is a priest in La Barre called master Tondet, tall, lean and of unusually large stature, but he is a good fellow nonetheless; one day, after mowing three acres of white peas, he hurried home to dinner, where his mother was awaiting him under a wild cherry tree in the middle of their yard, with a large and beautiful bowl of curds she had prepared. As he was gulping them down with a ladle it so happened that a lark, which was being chased by a hobby, dived so quickly into the bowl that he could not see what it was and thought (in all truth) that it was a cherry some jay had dropped from the cherry tree; so he paid no attention to it and went on eating his curds, along with the poor lark which was still in them, and without giving it a thought, my cousin.

However, a long time after he did confess that he could feel it flying around in his belly a good two hours after, and had he not closed his arse-hole and his mouth, it could have got out on several occasions.

One should eat in order to be nourished;  
Rarely have excessive eaters flourished.

## Tale 40

## ABOUT A HUNTER OF SMALL GAME

Quite a few people know an old man who lives in these parts, whose fun comes from taking, grabbing, snatching and catching every kind of game and other kinds too, especially such as you find on the water. And to understand, know and have an idea of it, hear, if you please, how when he sees and scents some birds on the pools and ponds, he takes all his clothes off as if he is going to be flogged;



and hairless and bald as he is (because of his old age) he puts the wings of a capon or goose over his ears, or some other bird, then he puts on a leather belt from which a linen pouch is hanging, which can be closed like a litigant's bag. In this outfit he throws himself into the water up to his chin, moves about exposing only his bald head, and squawks some sort of jargon or chatter like the other birds, and of which he is a master; cleverly mingling among them, he slips them some chewed bread or other bait which they gobble up as fast as they can, so that they become so well and truly tamed they take him for another bird like themselves. Thus he draws them close to him and grabs them by the feet from under the water, pulling them down so skillfully that the other birds think they are diving; he puts them in his pouch one after another until he fills it right up, then he closes it and goes away.

I swear on my faith (he who has no faith is no better than a dog) that I have seen him catch in less than an hour fifty-three dozens of ducks and drakes, wild geese, herons, snipe, marsh-hens, plovers, curlews, loons, cormorants, sandpipers and other small birds. It will be a pity when this poor devil dies.

God's rightful justice will punish the knavery  
Of he who leads others astray by trickery.

Tale 41

#### ABOUT THE BIRTH OF A CALF

A young chamber-maid from Thil, on her mistress's orders, recently took her cow to the bull to be mounted. Once they got there, the cow was tied to a post in case she went all coy (like a bride). The cowherd immediately came along with his bull which, without hesitating, throws itself on the cow with its weapon well-aimed; but it was so hot and hasty that it missed its mark, and the thrust was wasted.

To encourage it, the cowherd and the chamber-maid kept on saying: "Up Robin; up, up, up, Robin, up; up, up, Robin, up." And Robin, getting his breath back, joyously gets up and makes every effort to put Geoffrey in the bag; but he keeps missing the spot. Seeing this, the maid (whose little oyster was all a-tingle) took off her scarf and grabbed the said bull's instrument with it, putting it right on the edge of the breech. Whereupon Robin bravely takes his chance, pushing so hard that the poor maid's scarf goes in with the weapon, so far that she loses sight of it; but she didn't dare dig about in that hole to get it out.

Now the best part of it was when the cow had her calf; for to tell you the whole story, it came out of the cow's belly wearing the scarf, as neatly and as well-fitted as any little girl going to a dance. Everyone in the village who heard about it, and others, ran to see it, and in great admiration crossed themselves, saying: "What a marvellous thing. There's always something new happening." The calf's head was uncovered and it was found to have no ears. If they put hats on donkeys, they wouldn't have such long ears.

Girls never win acclaim or approval  
When they deride an individual.

#### Tale 42

#### ABOUT A VALUABLE DOG

One day, when he was in good company, a certain fellow gave an account of how a mad dog would have bitten him, but for a sorb-wood stick he had in his hand, with which he gave it such a good, pretty little wicked clout that he cured it of its madness in a jiffy. A farm labourer called Pierrot who was present, began saying: "Talking of mad dogs, more than a dozen have come to our yard in the last six months, but have all been throttled and happily devoured by a fine

little dog we have there, and without any harm coming to it.

"It is highly considered by the labourers, who claim it is the best dog for anything they use it for--hunting hares, wolves, boars, wild beasts, birds, fish, beating up game, for badgers, foxes, otters, in the burrows, retrieving arrows, in short, it is beyond belief. I have refused on many occasions (had I wanted to sell it) thirty-nine crowns and a colt." Someone in the company said to him: "Comrade Pierrot, would you not like to sell or give me one of its pups?" "It is impossible, now," he replied, "Its mother is dead, and she was given to a gentleman as payment for eight hundred and seventeen francs we owed him from his marriage, and I've just had mine castrated." "That's a great pity," said the other.

An object loved and greatly treasured  
Is highly valued and richly measured.

#### Tale 43

#### ABOUT THE FORTUNATE ENCOUNTERS OF A CERTAIN FELLOW

Mathelin Verveu, of whom you have heard speak, was a man who always went around wearing a pair of boots, and usually with a crossbow over his shoulder and a quiver of arrows at his side.

Thus attired, he often went off into the woods, fields and meadows looking for small game or other animals. One day, when he was down in a little valley in the woods, he came upon two wood-pigeons on the branch of an oak tree and shot at them; but he did not hit them, instead he only split the branch, in which they were caught by the feet and where they remained, flapping their wings. His arrow, which was tipped with iron, fell from the said branch into a nearby pool, on to the back of a great pike; it was pierced right through and died. When he saw this, Mathelin left his crossbow on the bank of the pool and waded in to fetch his arrow along with the pike,

which was well worth taking. As he was coming back carrying the fish, his boots filled right up with eels (because there were many of them in the said pool), and in trying to get out of the water, he caught hold of two tufts of grass on the edge of the pool to pull himself out; beneath them, two leverets had their form. He caught and killed them; when he threw them down, they fell on two young partridges which were there and they never had anything more to say. All this astonished Mathelin enough to cool him down. Extremely happy, all the same, about these fortunate encounters, he went off to fetch his two wood-pigeons, tucked up his britches and set off with wood-pigeons, hares, partridges, eels and pike; commissary's meat, flesh and fish.

Some people are content to win;  
Others think that losing is a sin.

#### Tale 44

#### ABOUT A FINE BELCHER

When a chimney accidentally catches on fire, one usually fires a few shots from an arquebus up it, in order to loosen it and put it out, because the explosion brings down fire and soot immediately. Be that as it may, not long ago I saw a tall, lean man called Roger who, after a full and satisfying meal, came across several small lads who were trying to bring down some swallows' nests from a chimney with a long pole; and to put an end to their troubles, he said to them: "Step aside, children, and let me do it, I'll get them down myself." So saying, he put his head up into the chimney, in a corner against the side; raising his head high, he opened his throat and let out a great, gross and horrible eructation, worth a hundred farts in exchange. Its frightening sound brought down from the chimney seven swallows' nests and more than five bushels of soot. In this way the little boys got their swallows and in

their own lingo thanked the man, saying: "Well, master Belcher, goodbye and thank you very much, Jacques, and when we find some other nests, you'll surely come and get them down for us."

We regularly see how man achieves  
All that he desires or his mind conceives.

#### Tale 45

#### ABOUT A BITCH IN HEAT

May what I have to tell be no displeasure, my treasure. It is about a sly and ugly bitch which became so amorous the other day she lost all her self-control; so that all the local dogs were after her, brandishing their tools. While this was going on, it came about that one of them (after a big fight) succeeded in mounting her, and while it was still stuck in to her another, wanting his money's worth, also came and mounted her, both of them staying there. After these two a third rushed up, and after cocking its leg and piddling over the others, heartily set to with them.

Many people began shouting and running after them when they saw such an ugly and misshapen thing. But the bitch, bigger and stronger than the three dogs she was dragging about, runs off with them so lightly that no one can catch her, and escapes over a stake fence which she boldly jumped with her three lovers who (as bad luck would have it), were left stuck and hanging by their necks between the stakes, where they were so well thrashed and polished with sticks and stones that as soon as they could get disentangled and run off, they gave up that particular job; for one of them had its leg broken, another lost an eye and the third stayed for two days and nights in the same place without moving hand or foot, and in great danger to its person; some say it will never get better.

Foolish and injurious delight  
Is loathsome in everybody's sight.

## Tale 46

## ABOUT ESTIENNE PENNEVILLE, CITIZEN OF THE LITTLE CLOSE

One of the citizens of the little Close, by name Estienne Penneville, was once in the woods of our forest of Lyons last May, killing time and looking for nests, and there I found him; as we walked along together, talking of many things, he noticed a vast number of squirrels up in a tall tree, jumping from branch to branch looking for food. Whereupon, without so much as a word, he at once climbs up it to chase them and there he beset them so hard that before they could reach the branches of another tree, he had caught eight of them; then, without coming down, he went after the others, jumping nimbly from tree to tree and branch to branch, now here, now there, chasing them for over a league, so swiftly that in the end he caught one hundred and thirty-nine, not without getting scratched, but nonetheless, he came out on top. I was greatly surprised at such a thing; to tell the truth, as I watched him, I thought that every time he went up and down, climbing and running in and out of the tall trees, he must surely fall and break his neck; for some moments are so perilous that if a man broke his neck, his life could not be saved.

'Tis madness to attempt some enterprise  
In which there lurks the risk of your demise.

## Tale 47

## THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF A LITTLE BIRD

In the Vexin-Normand, between Villers and Vely, there is a very great and beautiful expanse of fields in which, not long ago, a shepherd was watching his sheep; while he was playing his bagpipes

among them, he sees high up above him a great bird, wheeling and flying over his flock, which greatly frightened him. After flying and wheeling around for a long time, the bird swooped down with its wings widespread and caught a sheep, which it carried off in its talons, flying off, however, quite low and slowly. Seeing this, the shepherd tried to run after it to get it back, but this only angered the bird and it dropped the sheep and took the shepherd, carrying him off as easy as a kite would a chick; then it flew for such a long time with its prey that it grew tired and so it came down into the Preaux valley, where it swallowed the poor shepherd in one gulp. You might ask me, master, what the devil was this bird? I would say in reply that it was one of those African or Ethiopian birds which are as big as horses and which (according to Pliny) hardly ever leave the ground and run faster than hares, only flying rarely; but when they do, they fly as high or as low or as long as they like; they are nonetheless obliged, on account of their weight, to sit down and rest on the ground, as no tree can support them; and then they cannot get up any more, which is what happened to this one; and it was strangled by the vermin of the earth against which it has no defence, so many different kinds are there, such as slugs, grasshoppers, worms, cicadas, snails, horseflies, slow-worms, maybugs, spiders, rats, hornets, wasps, polecats, gnats, mice, bugs, field-mice, lice, fleas, flies, rabbits, moles, lizards, bumble-bees, caterpillars, weevils, butterflies, badgers, weasels, stone-martens, beech-martens, stoats, ferrets, squirrels, crabs, shrimps, woodlice, itch-mites, ants, nits, shrews, tortoises, moths, toads, earthworms, snakes, frogs, tadpoles and other such beasties; its feathers were the colour of gold around its neck, its tail was green and its head as grey as a leek; the rest of it sky-blue speckled with white. It was carried to Rouen to be shown to the gentlemen and they needed a waggon and sixteen horses to pull it; they groaned under the burden. On top of that, many people came running to see it, for such is the custom in Rouen. And while they contemplated it in great admiration

the shepherd crawled out, dazed as a maybug, and asked what time it was. This caused even greater astonishment amongst the spectators. He was asked who had put him inside: "By God," said he, "I don't know; but I've had a good nap." However, not long after, all the facts became known.

There is no devil here that you may see  
Who cannot show a bigger one than he.

#### Tale 48

##### WHAT HAPPENED TO A CARTER

A beautiful young woman from Lyons was piously going to mass early one morning when she met a carter coming towards her, leading five horses which were pulling a cart full of sheaves; as she went past it, the waggon began moving backwards, taking the horses with it despite strong resistance on their part; even the straw from the said sheaves flew around her in great abundance, so that she was covered in it. The more she walked on, the more the cart moved backwards and when she stopped, it stopped. The poor devil of a carter, seeing his team thus going backwards so well, was greatly astonished, especially as the more he drove his horses on, the more they went backwards towards the said woman.

Well, after he had shouted "Gee-up! Ho! By the devil, ho! Gee-up! Damn you!" for a long time, a fellow comes along and seeing the overturned cart and the mess all over the place, stops for a moment, and when he had had a good look round, discovered where the trouble lay; he noticed an amber rosary which the said woman was holding in her hand, and it was attracting the sheaves; for you are not unaware that amber attracts straw to itself. Thus it was that the young woman had to cover her beads with the front of her dress and put them down her corset; and she went into the next house,



where they closed the door after her. Meanwhile the carter, with the help of several people, set up his cart, got his horses rounded up and joyfully set off, cracking his whip there and back.

Beauty and ornament  
Will bring the heart torment.

Tale 49

#### ABOUT THE NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES

When it is a question of asking questions, while questioning you should ask questions, according to certain questioners, who began to ask questions about the characteristics of certain lands.

One person said that in Vinland they sold wind to mariners. Another told of having seen in Scotland a certain tree on the bank of a river the leaves of which, on falling in the water, soon after became birds. Another said that in Poland there are earthen pots fashioned by Nature which have the peculiar quality of drying as soon as they have been pulled out of the ground, and they are just like those our potters make. Another asserted that in Iceland neither ewes nor rams can live because of the excessive cold. Yet another said that in Iberia men cannot die because the air is so good, and that they have to be carried to another region when they are old and tired of living, so that they may die.

Someone else said that wolves cannot live in England and that when, in former times, someone had taken some there, they died immediately. Another, who was the last to put in a word, said he had lived for a long time in Piedmont and affirmed that the pigs there are all as black as ink, with long, hanging ears like bloodhounds, and that there could be no other sort there; he had once asked a Piedmonter why that was the case, and he was told that it was a characteristic of the country. Be that as it may,

he said, Monsieur de Langey, formerly the King's Governor in that land, brought some from France in order to experiment with them; they were as white as snow, but as soon as they arrived, they became as black as soot. It is well said: to each country its own manners, and all women are ill-bred; as many heads, as many opinions; as many little sows as field-mice. Go out, you've sold, fiddle-dee-dee, pointed hat, mother, I want Robin.

The deeds of God are admirable  
But to men, incomprehensible.

#### Tale 50

#### ABOUT A TREASURE FOUND AT LE ROULE

Between Villers and Rosay lies a little hamlet called Le Roule, where not long ago a treasure of inestimable value was discovered, without a doubt more valuable than the gifts sent by Selim, Emperor of the Turks, to Lord Don Juan of Austria, or the treasure that was found at St. Hubault in the Duchy of Urbain. The above-mentioned treasure had lain hidden in the ground for some time and was first uncovered by a certain Lansquenet, then again by an Italian from Valognes, and even more recently by an Egyptian. To confirm it and to supply yet more proof, our well known master Matthieu Fossé, or Griphon as he is known, that expert shepherd, bewitcher, wizard, doctor, deceiver, soothsayer, mis-user, necromancer, liar and true teller of fallals and folderols, came in person to show the place and location now known as the Little Hole, in which the treasure was hidden; and a gentleman from our forest who later profited from it, persuaded a certain Jean de Retz and Fat Jenneton to dig, pick, hoe, cut, scratch, shake and push about there so much in one place and another that they finally uncovered the noble and precious riches therein.

Firstly, a large wooden chest made out of a fine pinewood stone, full of smoke and fogs and smelling of fresh herring.

Item, the horns of a noble goat, inlaid with the bones of a fart.

Item, a bundle of good, fine and delicious matches, sulphured with snow.

Item, in a cabinet, iron-bound with tallow glue, they found one thousand six hundred and fifty white coats, dyed in violet-red of a brown colour and made of fine yellow bolting-cloth, lined with white moleskins.

Item, a pouch made of cobwebs full of fern seeds, which the above-mentioned master Matthieu took as his share of the spoils.

Item, a flag or war guidon made out of many butterfly wings of all colours, rich and beautiful in its perfection; one thousand one hundred gilded corselets and as many engraved murrions; all of it thunderproof; two thousand five hundred wheel-lock halberts.

Item, twelve old new pigskin gaiters full of coins that Samotes, the first King of Gaul, had minted, as bright as the snout of any monkey, upon which no face could be seen any longer as they were so rusty, and which were of fine quality, had they been worth anything.

Item, a pipe of salted maybugs which were given to the children of Rosay to use as windmills. In a spot which had never been searched before they uncovered a keg full of bat feathers.

Item, near the said keg they found a chain made out of barley straw, all in fine dog gold, from which was hanging the sword worn formerly by grandfather Gaudichon's father's old grandfather.

Item, some distance behind Bayart, coming down towards the river, a beautiful, pretty little case was discovered which nobody could open, in which they found eighty-six pieces of artillery, the smallest firing a ball as big as a puncheon. In the same place, there was a sideboard similar to the one given to King François by the Venetians, in which they found I don't know what, mustard.

Item, in a wicker covered basket, three hundred measures of salt in bad condition, because the worms had got at it.

Item, one thousand puncheons of gunpowder, neither blowing nor farting; one thousand eight hundred arquebuses and hooks, for shooting arrows with slings, with an infinity of crossbows, the bows of which were made of whale ribs. As for precious stones, they found good and valuable ones, so that the lapidaries never had so many.

On top of all this there was an abundance of truffles which were given to all who went to see the said treasure.

In hoping to improve this earthly mould,  
Man lives so long he finally grows old.

#### Tale 51

#### ABOUT A TAME KITE

Nicolas le Telier, sergeant of the guard at Tronquay, found a kite's nest while on his watch some time last summer, in which there was a certain number of eggs; these he took out and replaced them instead with fifteen freshly laid hens' eggs which the said kite sat on as if they were its own. Once they had hatched out, the said sergeant had the whole brood brought to his yard. When the kite saw its little chicks had been snatched away, it came flying into the yard where they now were, making as much fuss and bother over them as a hen with her chicks; through constantly frequenting people, it became as tame as a capon.

It is true that from time to time it would fly off, and on its return it always brought a few chickens with it which it put with its own, thinking they would feed from them; and so many did it bring and assemble in the said yard that sergeant le Telier finally ended up with seventy-nine dozen, all of which followed the kite, which was more bespattered with mud than an old eel-fisherman; I and my friends ate so many of them, boiled, roasted,

fried and in pies, that we were eventually quite upset by them and even shitted them alive.

We must love our adversary  
And deal with him amicably.

## Tale 52

### ABOUT THE STRANGE CAPTURE OF A WILD BOAR

The King of France, Charles IX, may God have mercy on him, once forbade hunting in the forest of Lyons and the carrying of firearms such as arquebuses and pistols, on pain of severe penalties. One fellow, who could not refrain from indulging in such sport, took a crossbow and an arrow and went off into the forest, looking for some wild beast; and it so happened that two wild boars came near him, to wit, an old one and a young one. The fact was that the old boar, cunning and expert at escaping from danger, be it in the shape of dogs, nets or sheets, had lived for such a long time that it had gone blind. Instinct, which commands youth to provide for the needs of old age, had led the young boar to offer its tail, which the old boar held happily in its teeth, and in this way was guided throughout the forest without any harm befalling it. The hunter, amazed at such a sight, shot an arrow at the young one, hoping to hit it in the body; but he cut off its tail clean at the arse without doing it any other hurt at all and causing it to run off at great speed; the hunter then crept quietly up to the old boar, took hold of the piece of tail hanging from its mouth and without making any noise, gradually led it to his stable, to which place it followed quite willingly as it thought it was being led by its customary guide. Once at the sties, and because its tusks were bent and could no longer do any harm, the hunter cut off its balls so that it would not smell so bad; the operation caused it so much pain that it began to squeal most

horribly. Hearing its cries, a great multitude of boars gathered together and came from the forest to the sty to help their grandfather, and they were all caught and locked in. I have never heard such grunting in all my life.

It is most commendable that a youngster  
Help and support his honorable father.

### Tale 53

#### ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF A FLIGHT OF STEPS

Some time ago, I heard from a passer-by how a gentleman from his part of the world had once had a beautiful flight of steps built in front of the door of one of his houses, upon which stood a great, massive lion holding the gentleman's coat-of-arms in its paws; around the lion were many magnificent things which cost more money than I have had to spend.

In order to see and examine these things carefully, one had to go up fifteen steps on each side of the flight. One could go on forever describing all the splendours and antique works in that place; but I can certainly assure you that it was beautiful to perfection. On the word of the master masons, fifty-four tons of stone had been required to construct it and shape it as it was. Now I leave you to consider at your ease just how much it must have weighed.

And nonetheless, it happened one day that a nasty, lousy, wanton mole which was digging underneath managed, as it threw up the earth, to turn it head over heels, so that it was broken, smashed, cracked and shattered into little bits, which was a great pity and an irretrievable loss. Do not be surprised if dung-beetles easily turn over shit.

The weakling often turns to dust  
The strong man, haughty and robust.

## Tale 54

## ABOUT THE CHARITY OF A MOTHER RAT

In a house of a farmer from the Caux region there was a she-cat as gluttonous as any hermit's which, after bringing forth its young, was throttled by a vagrant dog. Because of this, its kittens became orphans and suffered greatly for twenty-four hours; but (fortunately), a good old mother rat passing by heard them mewling, could not contain her tears and so she took care of them, as she still had milk in her teats, although her little baby rats had been eaten by the above-mentioned mother of these kittens. And wishing to show that it is best to combat evil with good, she gently and willingly suckled and fed them until they had grown up and could fend for themselves. And they were indeed grateful for the good she had done them and later on repaid her doubly, because for the rest of their lives they honoured her and saw to her every need as their wet-nurse.

When they could, they would steal some tit-bit from the cellar, kitchen or attic, which they would take to her diligently; in short, they fed her and kept her in plenty to the end of her days. But the other rats, field-mice, mice, shrews and dormice were crushed with hard bites and no mercy shown.

The widow, rich and honorable,  
Without fuss should be charitable.

## Tale 55

## JEAN DE BEAUX, WHO GOT HIS BEARD BURNED

A certain Jean de Beaux, a sergeant in the forest of Lyons, was one day having a good gnaw on a big veal bone, when he put it so far into his mouth that he gagged on it, that is to say, with his mouth

wide open and unable to shut it, so that he had to go and see Lord Antoine le Berrurier, a man most skilled in handling dislocated members, in order to put it to rights. When he got there, with his mouth as wide open as an oven door, he asked him by gesture, since he could not speak, to give prompt relief to his discomfort. On seeing this, the said Berrurier could not hold back his laughter, but all the same assured him that he would be cured. After examining him and ascertaining just where the trouble lay, he spent some time scalding the joints of his jaws and mandibles with hot water. When that was finished, he joyously raised his hand and gave him such a clout under the ear, right on the joint, that his mouth shut tight; but he had four rotten, yellow front teeth which came together so sharply that they gave off sparks, just like a tinder-box, which fell into his beard and burned it clean off, with no chance of saving it. The cause of this mishap lay in that he had recently fired an arquebus and that some powder from the primer had fallen into his beard. This then, was how it all happened; and poor Jean de Beaux went home with his beard shaven, his mouth shut, his arse open and as miserable as a bell-founder.

To lead a sober life, free of all censure,  
You ought to estimate how wide your jaws are.

#### Tale 56

#### ABOUT A SOLDIER WHO THOUGHT HE WOULD BE DROWNED

Last September, a poor devil of a soldier on his way back from the wars, came to the river Andelle and asked some men who were there to ferry him across; after being paid, they asked him many things, and even where he came from; he replied that he came from the garrison in such-and-such a town and had been there for three years, three months, three weeks, three days and three hours without ever having



undressed or slept in a bed; and as he was saying this, he was continually scratching himself and wriggling about.

You must understand that he was covered with hundreds and thousands of thirsty lice which (as it is easy to imagine) had always dined without drinking. Smelling the freshness of the water, they were taken by such a desire to drink that they began moving and dragging themselves towards the river, so sharply and with such energy that they dragged the poor devil right into the water and (to tell the truth) would have drowned him in those murky waters had there not been a big water-willow planted on the bank, which he spiritedly caught hold of. And all the others present grabbed him and pulled hard and firm against those nasty, stinging, thirsty lice. But in spite of all their efforts, they were obliged to take off his britches and other clothes with great speed and they were immediately dragged off in the water by that horrid vermin, may the Devil take their offspring.

The wicked always wish to see demolished  
Those kindly folk by whom they're nourished.

#### Tale 57

#### ABOUT A CITIZEN WHO KILLED A CAPTAIN

There was a garrison of gendarmes in a certain market town and some of them were making love to the ladies. There was one citizen amongst others who was very angry at the thought of someone stepping into his shoes. To be sure that such was the case, he kept so good a watch that he found out how the captain of the company was handling his wife, and he swore God to the four corners. All the same (after long reflection), he warned him not to come back ever again or else he would throw his hat in the mud. And at the same time, he also took his complaint to court, begging the judge to put

things right or else he would take the law into his own hands. Despite his pleas and warnings, neither the judge nor the captain did anything about it and in defiance of him, sir Captain went immediately to see his wife; forewarned about his coming, the citizen hid under the bed, in which place he heard the whole of their conversation and how they threatened to kill him if he came.

When the good fellow had put up with enough of it and heard his own field being ploughed, he came out of his ambush with a long, iron roasting spit with which he had armed himself, and in one jump and without a single word, he runs them straight through and boldly puts them over his shoulder just like you put a big loaf on the end of a stick, and in this way he carries them through the streets to the judge's house and says to the judge: "This is what I had complained to you about; here, make pasties out of them." When he had unloaded them on the floor of his chamber, he went out and ran off with a light step and a calm mind.

A woman corrupt and depraved  
Is like a cornered beast, deranged.

#### Tale 58

#### ABOUT TWO MEN FROM FRILEUZE

There is a little hamlet called Frileuze in our forest of Lyons, wherein dwell many simple and honest folk, two of whom had gone, on one occasion, to the market at Estrepagny; when they had concluded their business, they went off to a tavern for a chat, and once they were seated, began with a tankard of cider and a brioche, which they attacked with great gusto.

When they had finished that, they asked for another, which was swallowed down as quickly as the first, then yet another; our cider will wash them down easily enough, they said; then another one.

When they had demolished these four brioches, they began saying:  
 "It only makes us more hungry, eating them one after another. Hoy!  
 Landlady: bring us six together, so we don't have to ask so often.  
 Quick, girl, another three; the more we eat, the hungrier we get."  
 Said one, "I hardly ate a thing last night, just a cauldron of  
 cooked pears." "Neither did I," said the other, "I only ate six sols'  
 worth of tripe and drank a gill of perry, which isn't very much."  
 "You're not eating, comrade, I'm the only one who is." "With all  
 due respect, you are the one who is not eating well; eat! As much  
 as I can." "Let's have a go at the brioche: there now! Only big  
 eaters get nothing." In short, while they were chatting in this way,  
 they ate twenty-five brioches-quiocches worth three sols each, and  
 that was the year when wheat cost twenty-five francs the pound, and  
 they drank a good eight deniers' worth of cider. When they had  
 finished playing that tune, they counted out their money, paid up  
 and went off without lingering. Farewell landlady, farewell, good  
 people.

All creatures who eat heartily  
 Go to their labours willingly.

#### Tale 59

#### ABOUT THE FALL OF A FOX

Last August, along the shores of the pond in the great domaine  
 (which is under the jurisdiction of the sergeant of the Touffreville  
 district), a fellow was snaring small birds with lime twigs. As he  
 was looking out for them in a hide, he noticed a fox lying down,  
 flat out on the ground, pretending to be dead in order to catch  
 some bird or other small animal for its food. In a big beech tree  
 nearby, there was a great crowd of magpies, jays, crows and other  
 birds which (after tormenting it for some time) came right down on

to it, the ones encouraging the others, and they all began pecking it and tugging at its thick hairs, so often and so roughly, in fact, that it could no longer endure it. Whereupon it hotly set upon a magpie, hoping to make a meal out of it, but only caught it by the tail, which made it fly off all of a sudden, along with all the others; and so the poor beast was lifted high up off the ground, but did not let go of its mouthful. All the same, on account of its weight, the magpie's tail was pulled out; and so it was that master Fox fell to the ground (with his mouthful of feathers) from a good six spear lengths up, and in falling, was killed; chickens may laugh.

The one who lives by double-dealing and deceit  
May often fall a victim of his own conceit.

#### Tale 60

#### ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF CERTAIN MEN

The strength of certain men has been a notable thing in the past, greater in some men than in others. You may read about a man who with one hand held back a waggon so that three horses could not pull it forward. Hercules used to carry his great mule; Salvius could carry two hundred pounds on his feet, two hundred pounds in his hands and two hundred pounds on his shoulders. Thus burdened with six hundred pounds, he would climb up a ladder; so do not be amazed at the strength and power which some men still have today. Amongst whom there is a man in our forest called Guillaume Culdefer, who one day met a big, bad wolf, most horrible to behold, and he cast a stone at it from his sling; he hit it right between the eyes and the stone, which had been thrown with such force, went right through its body, finally coming to a stop at the end of its tail. Thus did the evil beast of a wolf die; in its belly they found a whole ewe which, two days

before, it had swallowed, gulped down, eaten, devoured and torn to pieces.

Man, who weak and feeble goes upon his way,  
Holds all animals and creatures in his sway.

#### Tale 61

#### ABOUT TWO EXCELLENT ARQUEBUSIERS

A broken, worn-out soldier told how once, during the war, he had seen two soldiers draw their swords against one another on several occasions, because of some old quarrel or other; but because they were well liked and highly considered by their comrades-in-arms, they were separated every time. One day, however, it happened that they met each other while alone and both with their arquebuses; this, it was impossible to stop them from shooting at each other. Anyway, the one fired faster than the other, and so straight did he shoot that his ball went straight into the other's arquebus; the other fired his shot at that very moment (or very nearly), sending both balls into his enemy's arquebus; he was still aiming his first shot. Those people who had just arrived were marvellously amazed.

Thus, on account of such a marvel, they were persuaded by many people to make up their differences and they became good friends. The captains came to hear about it and were of the opinion that here indeed were two crackshots. For this reason, they sent for the two men in order to have the pleasure of watching them; they had them shoot at each other using but a single ball, which they fired to and fro into each other's arquebus, so straight and so precisely that neither one was injured at all; that is not a harmless game.

Protection granted by your lord and master  
Often places you in mortal danger.

## Tale 62

## ABOUT A SEASON IN WHICH THERE WAS AN ABUNDANCE OF MAY-BUGS

Many people must recall (Gentlemen) the season in which there were so many may-bugs; I swear by the Devil in Hell that there were so many and in such great quantities that oaks, beech trees, willows, aspens, holly trees, birches, hornbeams, cherry trees, fruit trees, bladder-sennas, ashes, maples, service trees, thorn bushes, hazel trees, broom, raspberry bushes, lime trees, elms, yews, brambles, wild rose bushes, elder trees, apple trees, junipers, poplars, pear trees, quince trees, hawthorns, chestnut trees, privets, currant bushes, ivy, peach trees, mulberry trees, spindle trees, apricot trees, bushes, wild mustard and, generally speaking, all kinds of trees, were so loaded down with them that they broke under the weight.

Thus it was that in the Clos de la Mesangère there was an oak tree one hundred and six feet eight inches in circumference which broke, splitting down the middle because it was so loaded; the report it made was so loud it was heard in the two Andelis, at least three leagues distant; when the branches of the said tree fell to the ground, two great mastiffs, belonging to the farmer of the said manor de la Mesangère were there and they set to and ate so many of the may-bugs that they could neither move nor stand up, so full and swollen were they; so they lay down at once and slept until the following morning when the sun shone on them and as it was so hot, it warmed up the bugs they had swallowed so much that they flew off, carrying the two dogs far and away, right out of sight, so that nobody knew for the moment what had happened to them. It was later learned, however, that the bugs grew tired of flying and let the dogs fall, more than sixty fathoms down into Fleury wood, where they shat their last turd, it's the truth.

Many patients' remedies  
Cause their final agonies.

## Tale 63

## ABOUT SOME COWS IN A CORNFIELD

One day, because of the carelessness of a cowherd, a herd of cows got into a cornfield, during the season when the corn was springing up, and there they caused a good deal of damage. The owner of the field was notified and angrily ran there, sword in hand. He cut off the tails of all those he could catch, so short you could see their arses. The good women came rushing there as soon as they were told of this inconvenience caused to their cows, and found them running about in the field without their tails.

However, (as they were so startled), they tried to calm them down, calling out: "Come, come, Margot, come, come, come." The poor animals recognised their mistresses' voices and allowed themselves to be caught and tied by their horns. And the good women nevertheless went into the cornfield (despite its defender) and looked for the tails of their cows, shouting and cursing by the bad, bloody, cold, thin red stump the fellow who had so dishonoured their animals by having thus uncovered their roots. However, once they had found them, they followed the best advice of the village midwife and sewed them back on nicely with good twisted thread to the remaining stump; and as neatly as possible, so that in a short time they took so well that neither seam nor cut was visible any more than it would be in water, and so it is today that they use them to drive the flies away as well or better than ever, I promise you.

He who haunts suspicious places  
Has no respect for female faces.

## Tale 64

## ABOUT THE CAPTURE OF A BOAR BY A LOCKSMITH

A certain locksmith going through the woods in our forest, taking some locks to some village or other, met a big wild boar which Monsieur de Verniquet's dogs had been provoking, quite horrible to see, as its tusks came a good cubit out of its mouth; when it saw the man, it started furiously towards him. The poor devil was almost scared to death and could think of nothing better to do than scramble hastily up into an oak tree nearby. Once the said boar had reached the tree, but having missed its man, it began foaming at the mouth, looking up and turning around as if it wanted to climb up after him. So hot was anger, because it could not reach him, that it struck one of its tusks against the tree, so hard that it went right through it, and its tooth or tusk came a good six inches out on the other side; seeing this, the locksmith came quickly down and with his hammer, bent and riveted the tip of the tusk right into the wood, just as you do with a nail when you want to hold locks or hinges, so they will hold better.

In this way the said boar was caught and fastened and the poor locksmith escaped from this mortal peril and did as he wished with the wild boar. First of all he killed it, then trimmed it, then flayed it, sliced it, cut it, gave it, played with it, ate it, cured it, hid it, loaned it, wasted it, got stuffed on it, shit it, sold it and made good pies out of it.

He whose strength of arm is small or slight  
Must yield to his foe without a fight.



## Tale 65

## ABOUT A HORSE WHICH LOST ITS SHOES

A farmer in our parts had bought a horse not long ago which was quite a good puller and one day, as it was carting some wood through a certain district, it dislocated two bones and got its shoulder in such a fix that the load of wood had to stay right there on the road, because of the poor horse's shortcomings.

On account of this inconvenience, the farmer sought advice from his neighbours, who told him he should make it swim, as by this means the limbs would link up and get back into place, and this was done. Once it was pushed into the water it started swimming and crossed the pond two or three times, so bravely that its bones were soon back in their joints. But one thing amazed all those present: on account of its great strength and the power with which it was swimming, it had unshod all four hooves and its shoes had been thrown into the water; they had been newly put on and attached only the day before. When it got out of the pool, many carps and pikes could be seen floating on the surface, which it had killed with its feet while swimming; they were taken away and eaten.

He who makes unmerited profit  
Is angered and offended by it.

## Tale 66

## WHAT HAPPENED IN CROULEUSE POND

Between Massy-le-Gros and Les Abbatis there is a pond called Crouleuse which has never been seen dry, however much sun or heat there may have been, so that there is always water in it. One day,

a carriage happened to pass by the pond and following it at some distance behind, a coachman driving a coach and two in which there were three beautiful young ladies. Because of the great heat the horses went to the pond to drink and the coachman, up in front of the said coach, led them into it; but once they were in it, ladies and horses immediately disappeared beneath the waters, so that no one knew what had happened to them.

Seeing this, two gentlemen in their train who were riding behind them began shouting: "Help! Help! my friends, alas! All is lost, all is lost, they are drowned, mercy! Oh! What's happened? Unhappy day! Alas! What a calamity! Oh, good people, come and help!"

The simple folk harvesting the corn in the fields came running up to find out what was going on, and when they heard about it, they told the gentlemen that the said pond was a perilous one and that many others, people and animals alike, had perished and been engulfed in it. The saddened gentlemen cried and wailed for a long time when they heard these tidings. But to what end? There was nothing to be done; and as they stood thus, crestfallen, here comes a fellow who greets them and asks them why they are so mournful, and he was told the whole sorry tale. Thereupon he spoke up, saying: "Gentlemen, in Hauval valley, half a league from here, I've just met a coach, coachman, ladies and horses, the ones you are bewailing; so stop mourning. Ladies and horses begged me that if I were to meet two gentlemen, to tell them to hurry up and find them." Once they had heard this passer-by, they joyously spurred on, making such speed that in a few hours they reached them, and God knows how many caresses were exchanged.

He who would guide others with sound advice  
Should distinguish between virtue and vice.

## Tale 67

## THE TRICK PLAYED BY A HARE TO ESCAPE FROM THE DOGS

Two foreign merchants told how the other day, coming from Rouen, they had seen, on St. Catherine's Mount, four dogs racing after a big hare which, after a long run, went towards the valley where it was very nearly caught; for the dogs made it really jump about, so that it rolled and tumbled, enough to get itself caught, or very nearly, but it still made an honest getaway; for once it had found its feet, it ran so lightly it crossed the wide, long Mont road and jumping over a few hedges passed Eaupleu and came down to the banks of the river Seine, despite several carpenters who were adzing building timber there; and as it went by, it cleverly took one of their chips in its mouth which it threw in the water and sat on, upon its pretty little arse; with the wind catching its ears as if it were a raft, it crossed over to the other side of the river where, making fun of the dogs, it showed them its backside.

When strength and valour is missing,  
You have to use guile and cunning.

## Tale 68

## ABOUT A FOOTMAN

Many people are still alive who have seen and known a footman in the service of Monsieur de Boulen, the captain of the Tronquay Fifty, who was considered at the time to be the quickest, lightest, most hasty, vigorous, supple, diligent, brisk, swift, fast, rapid, pleasant, moving, alert, awake, lively and best runner who ever lived in those parts. I don't wish to lie about it and I swear to you on an honest man's oath, that on the shortest days of the year, the eleventh and

twelfth of December, he went from Tronquay to Paris and back, a full twenty-five leagues separating the two. Enough people can still testify today that they saw him start at six in the morning and be back by six in the evening, bringing back certain news of those to whom he had been sent. On several occasions he has been seen running after low-flying swallows for fun and catching them by the tail. He used to catch butterflies on one leg, swallowing them like a dog does flies. And he always went barefoot like a colt.

He who all his life runs after riches,  
Must one day stop and shed his mortal stitches.

#### Tale 69

#### ABOUT THE COURTESY OF A BITCH

In a gentleman's home there was a fine bitch which had five pups in one litter, and these were thrown into a marl-pit because they were mongrels. Now once she had lost her pups, she went looking for them in the woods and smelling here and there, came across three new born leverets in a bush and these, as soon as they smelled her, took hold of her teats so firmly that she was unable to make them let go; and so the poor creature went home with the three leverets hanging from her teats; she put them down in the place where she had had her pups and there she fed them and gave them her milk, until they were fully grown and able to gnaw at sow-thistles.

And it is worth noting that everywhere the bitch went, they followed her as if they were her own pups. It's no yarn, either, many people saw it.

It is rare for a tyrant  
To be kind to a peasant.

## Tale 70

## ABOUT PIGEONS WHICH EAT UP SEED

In the land between Autrebosc heath and Mesnil-soubs-Verclive a farmer was recently sowing vetch, and following at a good pace behind him were two or three flocks of pigeons which, as he scattered the grain, held up their beaks and caught it, so that not a single grain fell to the ground. Because of this the farmer complained loudly, as he found nothing to harrow once a passer-by had brought to his attention what he himself had failed to notice.

He swore by St. Malo that if he were a hawk, there would not be a single pigeon left alive in the land.

The wealthy man is much attended;  
When all is gone, the friendship's ended.

## Tale 71

## ABOUT THE FEATHERS PILED UP BY A BIRD-KILLER

When I was little I wasn't big, yet I well remember that a fellow called Fiacre du Coin was for a whole year so sick with a high fever that he completely lost his appetite, and everything he ate only seemed like so much crap. One of his brothers, seeing him so disgusted, asked him what sort of food he would like to eat, to restore his appetite. He replied that he would willingly eat, if he could, some small birds such as blackbirds, redwings, thrushes, fieldfares, house-sparrows, quails, turtle-doves, chaffinches, larks, crested larks, wood pigeons, swifts, partridges, linnets, greenfinches, stock doves, finches, goldfinches, robins, rock sparrows, wrens, tits, warblers, pipits, starlings, wagtails, hedge sparrows, cuckoos, nightingales, woodpeckers, swallows, widgeons, hawfinches, wrynecks,

nutcrackers, orioles, kestrels, jackdaws, coursers and other little birds which haunt the woods and meadows; "I beg you, bring me some if you possibly can."

"My brother," he replied, "I promise you you'll have some very quickly, for there is no better man in the forest than me for catching them." He took his crossbow at once and went off into the woods and the first time he fired, it was at a swarm of blackbirds which were eating caterpillars, and he killed seven of them, and the second time he killed four (big as well as small ones), then three; sometimes it was more, eleven with one shot, twenty-three in two shots; to cut a long story short, every time he fired he brought down a great number, and of every kind.


And thus it was; he went on the whole time his brother Fiacre was ill, killing, massacring, murdering, butchering, breaking, upsetting and shooting down birds; so many did he kill that the species almost disappeared from our forest; there were enough feathers from these birds to furnish seven beds with cushions, bolsters and pillows, and they were so heavy that two fat chambermaids could hardly manage them without a great deal of puffing and farting.

The true friend is always sure  
To help, lend and keep secure.

Tale 72

#### HOW A COMPANY OF MICE WAS CAUGHT

Just recently, when it was time to bring in the corn and other seeds of the earth, a farmer from the Vexin (a thriftier man than many) still had some small number of wheatsheaves which he had to move from his barn to another place, to make room for the new grain. And as the farmer's labourers were taking them away, they saw an infinite number of mice come out from underneath which immediately



ran off to hide under the remaining sheaves. So that when they came to take up the last one, beneath which all this vermin was hiding, everyone grabbed a broom to put an end to them, which they did with all courage. For in this conflict, this cruel defeat, so many of those which had been hiding beneath and inside the last sheaf were caught and killed that there were three bushels to a quarter of them, as the saying goes, and that with a good measure and a tall level--big and small, male and female, not counting forty-eight rats whose tails were one and a half ells long. They dug a pit in the ground, and buried them to pass the time.

Without a home to call their own all rascals wish  
To be clothed and fed and cared for by the parish.

### Tale 73

#### A QUARREL BETWEEN A SOLDIER AND A TAILOR

In the month of August a very nasty quarrel took place between a soldier and a tailor, as I shall relate. The soldier had given some cloth to the tailor to make a suit for him and when it was not ready on the day the tailor had promised, he angrily said to him: "By damn, sir Tailor, you are wrong not to have got my suit ready for the holiday as you swore and promised you would." "You really are angry," said the tailor, "He who can still kick out hasn't kicked the bucket." "By God!" replied the soldier, "Don't make me cross. I can see you're making fun of me." "Forgive me," said the tailor, "I wouldn't dream of it." "By the head on my shoulders," answered the soldier, "You are a worthless milksop, every man of honour keeps his word; and I'll still beat you up." "I'm not accustomed," replied the tailor, "to people coming and threatening to beat me up or insult me in my own home; if I have failed by a day or so to fill your order, does that still mean that you have to

swear, blaspheme and threaten people, and be so audacious?" "Shut up, you rascal," says the soldier. "What right do you have to argue with me?" "I'm not a rascal at all," replied the tailor, "I am an honorable man." "By God's body," says the soldier, "I'll soon see to that." So saying, he drew his sword in order to strike him. The tailor had nothing else to defend himself with than his scissors, which he held in front of him and with which he cut off the point of the soldier's sword, who immediately struck another blow. The tailor again met it with his scissors and at once cut off another piece, longer than the first.

For the third time the soldier charges at him in a rage, and the tailor bravely thrusts his scissors forward and cuts off yet another piece. So that for each stroke the furious soldier valiantly thrust forward, the tailor would cut off a good six inches of it with the result that finally, all he had left was the hilt and the guard.


So he went off shamefully, leaving the tailor with his sliced-up sword and his cloth.

The proud man is often undone  
By the peaceful and quiet one.

#### Tale 74

#### ABOUT THE DEATH OF A GREYHOUND

While I still remember, I ought to tell you about a gentleman from our forest whom I met the other day while I was with Rosay, riding a good little horse and chasing at full speed, with two powerful greyhounds, a great big hare which was giving him both a lot of work and a great deal of pleasure. However, after the hare had given them a good, hard run all over the place, and tricked them on several occasions in the woods and fields, and still thought it could get away, it tried to get back into the woods and in so doing (running very fast), it caught a





stone in one of its hindlegs and sent it so hard against the head of one of the greyhounds that it killed it on the spot, causing its brains to come out of its ears. But the other hound was on its heels and grabbed it by the ear; shaking its head, it sent it flying up on the horse's saddle-bow and right into the arms of the said gentleman who caught it alive, and was as pleased about it as he was sad about the death of his greyhound.

For following too closely on his heels,  
You meet the blade your beaten foe conceals.

#### Tale 75

#### ABOUT A WOMAN WHO LOST THE FEATHERS FROM HER PILLOW IN THE WATER

Last week, a woman from the Andelle valley was on the river bank washing a pillow which one of her children had shat upon (by your leave), and in order the better to wash and clean it, after she had rubbed it for a very long time with her hands, she began beating and banging it with her beetle, like you do with a cloth out from the steam; and so hard did she strike, beat and bash it that it burst, and all the feathers came out and went floating off down stream, straight to some mills where, passing through the buckets, they broke and smashed the fans, paddles, wheels, clappers, millstones, swivelpins, joists, handles, flaps, hoppers, ringbows and other secrets of the said mills. So that nobody, thereafter, was able to grind their corn or grain for the brewers or any other sort of grain, which was a great loss for the millers; even the fish in the river could be heard coughing a good two leagues away on account of the feathers they had swallowed, which made them extremely thirsty and they died of thirst.

Some children, by naughty deed or action,  
Bring many a good house to destruction.

## Tale 76

## ABOUT A DOG WHICH WAS SCALDED

In this same Andelle valley, between Perruel and Vascoeu, there is a little abbey of the Norbertine order called Isle-Dieu, in which one day the establishment's cook, while skimming his large pots, threw (accidentally) a spoonful of gruel on a big, old watchdog which was warming itself by the fire; feeling the heat of the said gruel, it began howling so very horribly it was painful to hear; and it immediately began running about in such anger and fury that an unchained devil could not have run faster. So that coming outside, and not looking where it was going, it bumped its head against a big walnut tree near the brewery, so hard and with such impetuosity that it knocked down more than fifty-nine bushels of big, husked walnuts.

There were pigs around, and how they ate! The dog was deafened by the bump and because of the burn, its arse was peeled like a monkey's.

If fire impels a bullet on its way,  
How may an offended creature stay?

## Tale 77

## ABOUT A SPANIEL

I shall tell you briefly, if you like, how in the above mentioned Andelle valley there is a certain gentleman who has a spaniel which, if it has not died since yesterday, is the most noble, courageous, clever, kind and well behaved dog to be seen, even when it goes into the water to fetch game. Above and beyond that, it has a way of catching crayfish which is common to no other animal. This is how it is. When its master wishes to take it down by the river, he says to it: "Into the water, Barbet, after the crayfish!" At once it jumps

in and in certain holes in the river it knows about, in which it knows it can find them, and which it even scents and smells in the water as well as on the ground, it digs with its paws like a terrier, and thus it throws out all the crayfish; then, wallowing and rolling over them, they get caught, tied up and attached to its coat and thus loaded, comes back to its master and shakes itself in front of him.

Once this has been done, it promptly goes back into the water and does the same thing again, only stopping when its master says: "That's enough, Barbet."

On a poor boy's oath, I've seen, without a word of a lie, the gentleman with eighteen baskets full in one day (from the catch of the said spaniel); it is good meat for harvesters.

He who gratifies each pleasurable desire,  
Goes backwards like a crayfish in the mire.

#### Tale 78

#### ABOUT THE STRANGE CAPTURE OF A WOLF

Last summer, during the hot weather, a poor man from our forest was keeping watch over a mare in the woods and one day, about eleven o'clock in the morning, while it was grazing, it was attacked by flies and horseflies, so furiously that the poor animal was farting and puffing and could not graze at leisure as its legs, head and tail were not enough to drive them away.

The good fellow, seeing the torment caused to his mare, cut a great pile of leafy and burgeoning beech tree branches, with which he covered and surrounded it, tying them together and passing them through the saddle-girth and the halter with another rope, so neatly that it was completely covered with it, and the dog-flies and horseflies had no way, thereafter, of picking and stinging it, and it began eating better than ever.

Four or five hours after noon, when it was full up, it lay down on its belly to rest and it had not been there too long when a goat came by and began browsing on the leaves and branches with which the mare was covered.

Then, from the other side of the wood came a big wolf which had espied the goat some distance away and thought it was browsing on a bush; thereupon it rushed up quickly in order to throttle it but, as God would have it, it got its neck caught between the two horns, and feeling itself stuck, began pulling in order to get itself free and out of the jam.

The goat, on the other side, raised its head and pulled to get rid of it, but they were both so well entangled one with the other that it was a waste of time pulling. Feeling itself pulled about, the poor mare which was lying between the two suddenly got up, lifting up at the same time Mr. Wolf and Mrs. Goat, each one hanging from one side and counter-balancing the other; then it began running fast, carrying its burden up hill and down dale, through brambles, bushes and thorns and farting for its pains. The poor wicked wolf shit with fear and the goat dropped turds from its pain, the good man ran like the wind and fell down like rain, shouting as much as he could: "Hoo, hoo, and ho and hoo: by the Devil, hoo, ho!" Nonetheless the said mare never stopped running and the more he shouted, the more it ran.

However, after a long run, it came out of the forest into a village called Lilly, where it was stopped and handed over to its owner who, taking it by the bridle, led it, all loaded down, through the villages to show off his catch, and he received so many things he did not know what he had most of.

He who contrives some infamous surprise  
Is often caught out by his enterprise.

## Tale 79

## ABOUT A MESSENGER WHO GOT HIS LEGS BROKEN

Now listen, folks, and wondrous things will you hear, my pretty ear. A few days ago, or very nearly, the weather was fine, dark, quiet, rainy, hot, cool and very damp and dry, with such an impetuous wind blowing that people were afraid to uncover themselves in the fields.

However, whatever the weather, many people still have to go about their business, at every hour of the day, early or late. And so it was that a messenger, on his way from Rouen to Paris, met a whirlwind which lifted up a pile of dust and carried and hurled it with great violence against both his legs and smashed them to pieces, patrac! Just like that.

So the poor devil fell to the ground and there he stayed, astonished, and he shat in his britches out of fear, blow hard.

Fortune often damages the man  
Who treads a straight path when he can.

## Tale 80

## WHERE THEY FOUND A TROOP OF SQUIRRELS

The Count was hunting a great stag last year in our forest of Lyons which, after running for eleven hours, threw itself into the pond at Tronquay windmill, where it was killed by the said Lord, the quarry being given to the dogs. Now the company greatly admired one thing, which was that they found between its antlers a piece of moss as big as a bushel which the hunters diligently observed and considered in order to discover what it was all about; after a really good look, they recognised a troop of squirrels, nine little ones in all, as big as mothers and fathers; they had built and constructed their nest on

the fork of the stag's antlers while it was asleep.

They were caught and presented to these gentlemen, who were quite pleased with the novelty of the thing; crowns and pistoles.

If you desire a lasting construction  
Set it wisely on a firm foundation.

#### Tale 81

#### ABOUT A NEW MEANS DISCOVERED TO CATCH A GREAT NUMBER OF FISH

It is certain and approved that in every pond in which there are fish, you can see and catch (as long as it is allowed), as many as you like, as I shall relate. You must note that where horses usually go to drink, fish gather readily, on account of the breathing and blowing. Having discovered and understood this fact, a curate's servant who often went to water his master's horse, thought of hanging a basket from its neck, in which he put a stone to make it sink.

So when the said horse put its head in the water, the basket would go down and never failed to be filled with all kinds of fish, and when the horse had drunk, as it raised its head it would bring up the said basket with it full of fresh fish, and in this way he caught all he wanted. He would provide for his master's table, upon which little was needed; he would give more to his friends than they wanted and he sold a lot, cheaply.

A gourmet always finds some agency  
Of catering to his palate's fancy.

## Tale 82

## WHERE THEY FOUND AN OTTER

Before the fish pond at Bray was turned into a field, they found and caught with nets and other instruments a pike of the most horrible, frightening, incomprehensible, admirable, marvellous and invaluable length ever seen since the Flood. Its head was bigger than an angler fish's and on it there was a bush or heap of grass and moss which, with time, had grown roots and pushed up; in that bush they found an otter, a master otter which had hidden in it for fear of fishermen, and that had them all amazed.

It was caught and seized by the neck and made to give account of all the fish it had eaten without salt.

The tyrant, pursued to his demise,  
Often brings sorrow where he hies.

## Tale 83

## ABOUT A HARE HUNT

A gentleman from the Boulognais country one day wanted to cross from Boulogne to England, which are separated by seven leagues of sea, and while waiting for the low tide in order to embark, two little dogs he had with him found a hare on the cliffs overlooking the sea; they set off, pursuing it so vigorously that the gentleman, riding behind them, obtained thereby a great deal of pleasure.

But it happened that the said hare, as it was being pursued and followed so closely, hurled itself down from the cliffs into the sea, with the two dogs right behind it.

Seeing this, the good lord was extremely cross and upset, as he thought he had lost his dogs which he greatly prized. Once the tide

was right he set off with full sail, and when he was about four leagues out from the coast, he looked over the side of the boat and saw the hare swimming there, with the two dogs close behind, so close they were almost stepping on its tail, and they swam so well that they managed to put the poor hare to death right alongside the boat (which was already near the harbour); the lord took it, along with his two dogs, aboard the ship. Everyone aboard was so astonished by this adventure they could not have believed their eyes, had they not eaten the hare, dorelot!

When the time comes for us to die, I say,  
We will not escape by running away.

#### Tale 84

#### ABOUT A STEEPLECOCK WHICH TOLD THE TIME

Sometimes, on holidays, the neighbours get together to amuse themselves and pass the time, talking of many things, such as their households, their businesses, what they have seen, where they have been.

Now one day, when they were together, one of them, who had done some travelling, assured them that he had seen in Auvergne (Up, Madam!) in a certain town, a most beautiful and finely decorated church. On its steeple there was a little cock which looked like a hen and which sang out on the hour, both day and night, so loud and clear you could easily tell the time a good two leagues away.

When he was asked how that could be done, he replied that he had seen the craftsman who had made and created that little cock; and in private, he had told him all about his work and how there were certain little wheels inside the said cock, pretty little magnets and small devices which are always on the move, going round and round like those inside a clock and it was the wind which made it all work. And, he



said, when it reaches the hour, instead of ringing dong! it sings cock-a-doodle-doo! as many times as it strikes the hours. At one o'clock it sings once, at two o'clock twice, at three o'clock thrice and so on for every hour, provided, however, that there is a little wind blowing. For the wind, which goes in through its beak and out by its arse, acts as a counter-weight and makes the wheels and other little gadgets work.

It is a masterpiece; truly, I bet anyone who will bet, by way of a bet, that we will soon have similar ones in these parts.

The true cock by the song from its throat  
Tells the time without a clock about.

#### Tale 85

#### ABOUT A MAD COCK

Talking about cocks (said another), I saw one recently going about drinking, eating, singing and playing hell with its claws; there was a great big mastiff at the home of a farmer of our forest which, either out of hunger or anger, went mad, as many do, and happily bit all the animals in the said farmer's home, dogs, sheep, cows, pigs and even birds, all of which had to be killed and buried, except a big, smart cockerel which courageously escaped; but nine days later it went mad with an evil madness and began running about the fields and woods, where it throttled sixteen foxes and eleven wildcats. It was the very devil of a cock, it died mad, which was a pity; for it crowed well and was a fine one with the hens; he would call them and lead them off amourosly; and he was a good in-fighter....

If lions are insulted and outraged,  
Let us flee and run from mad cocks uncaged.

## Tale 86

## ABOUT A DELICIOUS SOUP OR FISH STEW A GENTLEMAN MADE FOR THE POOR

A gentleman from the Bray country, considering the high cost of living in the year 1573 and the sufferings of the poor people, did a most commendable and memorable thing. He possessed a pond which was a good league and a half around, and this was so well stocked and supplied with all kinds of fish that they used to escape over the walls. This he had dug out below and undermined, as if he was building a cellar; then the whole thing was propped up with big, strong iron bars, to make it more secure. Once this had been done, all the fish were caught and taken out of the water, scaled, cleaned and dressed just right, then put back in the pond, after it had, of course, been completely scrubbed. Then he had the incoming water diverted and the exit blocked up, so that no more could flow out.

Once all these things had been finished, he had sixty-three thousand, eight hundred and eighty-nine jugfuls of butter put in, each one weighing seventy-six and a quarter pounds apiece, with seventeen thousand pounds of fresh butter; seven hundred and sixty-eight casks of elder-flower vinegar and as much pink; one thousand nine hundred and fourteen kegs of rock salt; six hundred casks of grove verjuice; a load of three hundred bags of herbs and vegetables to add taste and colour, they put in a round of turmeric and double of spices.

Then he had all the faggots and bundles of wood, logs, piles, cords, stacks and wood-shavings from thirty-two acres and seven perches of a wood of fully grown trees put under the pond, and a bright and shining fire was set alight, which in a short space of time began warming up this great cauldron, so well that it started boiling, so that all the fish were cooked in no time at all.

You must note that he had had it trumpeted all over the place for two whole days, that all the poor beggars should come and get

a bellyful around the pond, where everything would be plentiful. This they did, coming with all haste from as far as ten leagues away.

Then you could see them coming and arriving from all over the place, even from hospitals and leper colonies; and all the other bums and thieves on the lookout on the roads and byways rushed up and found a place around the preparation where, without waiting to be asked, they set to drawing from it with ladles long and large and wooden spoons the good gentleman had specially provided; and they all began sucking up, scooping out the gruel and swallowing vegetables and eating fish, some from bowls, others as they drew it up, some with their hands and with no manners, like pigs; some ate bread which they had asked for with it; others did not, although when they arrived they were all given three pounds of white bread and four pounds of brown; but they did not have time to cut it.

Many people went to watch them eat. Those who could not make it heard them chewing a good two leagues away. All in all, Robinet, they chewed, twisted, dined, swallowed, ate, drew up, yawned, bit and played so well with their chops that in three days and three nights the said pond was dried up. Then, without saying 'enough,' they went off as stuffed as dogs.

Charity to God's children doth conspire  
To put out sin like water puts out fire.

Tale 87

#### A GOLDSMITH'S MASTERPIECE

One morning recently, a young goldsmith became a master in his trade in Paris, and for his master's piece he made a gold chain which was so fine, slender, delicate and perfectly slim that all the other goldsmiths greatly admired such a piece of work. And as if that was

not enough, just to astonish, he chained up a flea by its thigh; a very vigorous and agreeable flea, doing more somersaults and tricks with its chain, and with more affectation, than does a boatman's monkey.

Moreover, he made a little silver box, no bigger than a barley corn, upon which he depicted with his engraver the destruction of the great city of Troy, in which he enclosed and locked the said flea with its chain, whenever he felt like it.

The goldsmiths, however, by common consent and with the permission of the young master, gave it as a present to a young lady from Paris, who very carefully looks after this most rare and magnificent gift.

Several times a day, and in the night, she opens the little box to feed her darling little flea, which nimbly comes out and jumps with its chain on to the white and delicate hand of its mistress where (without hurting her), it has its little meal, and when it is satisfied, jumps back into the little box as straight as a fart to your nose, so that it is a pleasure to everyone, cousin.

The most beautiful piece of work a man can do  
Is to beget children who are polite and true.

#### Tale 88

#### ABOUT THE STRANGE CAPTURE OF A STAG

The King of France, Charles IX, may God absolve him, was once hunting a stag in his forest of Lyons, accompanied by his nobles and their hunters, pages, lackeys, poachers and other such hunting people this sport requires. Some rode hard with the dogs, others blew their horns, some were posted in different places and many, tired of the chase, stood waiting at spots which they thought the stag might pass, and everybody had their ears pricked up.

And while these things were going on, it so happened that several gentlemen, who had come to a temporary halt in order to let their horses get their breath, heard the sound of barking dogs coming straight towards them, and so they kept silent. Being so quiet, they saw the stag come right at them with its tongue hanging out. And everybody tried to slow it down so that the King, who was riding to the fore, might kill it. Anyway, one of them took the strap holding his horn from around his neck and threw it over the antlers, hoping to stop it in this way, but it went past with the horn hanging in front of its breast.

And as it was running, raising and lowering its head like a horse going poste-haste, it got the end of the mouth-piece of the horn in one of its nostrils, so far in that it stayed there, and with its panting and blowing, you could hear the said horn as loud and clear as if a huntsman was blowing it. The result was that the poor stag was the cause of its own death, as they followed it by the sound of the horn which it kept on blowing loudly. In less than an hour, the King's dogs caught up with it, got hold of it and stopped it, and the King himself put it to death. Those are the facts.

Many, unwittingly, with their last breath,  
Tell, like the swan, of their impending death.

#### Tale 89

#### ABOUT THE CAPTURE OF A WOLF

In the Vexin Normand there is a village called Thil-lez-Estrepanny, where a simple fellow lived, quite alert in his old age and who used to get up very early each morning to thresh corn in the barn. And as there are many large gardens and enclosures in this village which have to be crossed by stepping over the hedges and fences, in order to get to the streets and houses you wish to visit, this simple

fellow was going across these places at daybreak, and just as he was stepping over or straddling a certain fence, a wolf came from the other side, also trying to cross, and upon which the fellow found himself astride and astraddle, just as if he was on horseback.

Feeling himself so loaded, brother wolf sets off running and farting: and the fellow spurs it on, shouting: "Hey! Wolf, hey! Wolf, hey! Wolf." Hearing these shouts, the villagers got up and ran out to see what it was all about; but seeing such a strange and novel thing, they began saying in amazement: "By our Lady! It's Pernot Herpin, riding a wolf!"

Meanwhile the said Herpin, spurring his wolf, bridled it with his belt and put his knife in its mouth for a bit, and was thus able to make it go wherever he desired; so that after going through the streets of Thil for some time and making all the dogs bark, he turned back and went all the way to Puchay, Noyon, Dodeauville and Estrepagny, where the curious laughed themselves silly, and to many other villages too.

Then he came home, tired as a dog of being carried and of the wolf going on foot; and the wolf, soon after and against its will, was divested of its skin and left to the village dogs, which treated it as a friend, following it everywhere, as its behind will testify.

No other creature is harder to master  
Than a woman, except when you mount her.

Tale 90

ABOUT THE LOSS OF A DOG

It happened one day that a gentleman from these valleys, in order to pass the time, was walking by a little river with a spaniel and his arquebus, looking for fresh or salt game. Now as it was excessively hot, the dog suddenly became extremely thirsty and went

out into the middle of the stream to quench its thirst and drink more comfortably; but as it was lapping up the water with its tongue, as all dogs do, a great pike rose up from the bottom of the water and getting a good hold on its tongue, dragged it down into the water and swallowed it in one gulp, without even chewing a bit, and the gentleman nearly went out of his mind, so bitter was his anger; but so what? He could not do a thing about it, tra-la-la.

That is how the spaniel was protected from rabies.

By ardent kisses, sad to say,  
Youth is ruined every day.

#### Tale 91

#### HOW A PRIEST WAS PULLED OUT OF A MARL-PIT

An old village priest was coming home from the market in Lyons quite late at night and to reach his house, he had to cover two leagues of bad road which passed through a wood; there, he got lost and spent almost the whole night wandering about, without knowing or being able to find the right way to go.

As he was wandering to and fro in these woods, he went and fell into a marl-pit, on top of which someone had once put thorns and branches to prevent just such an accident; and these alone held him up by his habit which got caught in the branches, so well and so firmly that he did not fall down to the bottom but stayed hanging and entangled halfway down, in which straits he gave himself up for lost.

All the same, after beseeching the Lord for some time, here comes a big, bad wolf up to the edge of the pit; it had followed his trail and had been smelling around the mouth of the pit for some time; it sat down on the edge and began howling so loudly and so horribly that the whole wood rang with it.

Hearing this, the poor priest became more frightened than a bell-caster and shit himself with fright. Thus shaking with fear, he looked up and saw the wolf's tail hanging down into the pit; without making a sound, he grabbed hold of it with both hands, for it was very long and the tip was close to him, and he shouted with all his might: "Hey wolf! Hey wolf!"

Feeling itself caught, the said wolf got so frightened that all the devils could not have held it, and farting like a whipped donkey was up and away, fast and furious, and pulling master Jean out of the pit; he held on to it so tightly that he only let go when he turned round and recognised his whereabouts, letting the wolf go after he had been dragged quite a distance.

Once he was on the right road he set off for home, all muddy, wet and with his clothes torn, and reached it half an hour before daylight, just as his maid-servant was going back to bed after having a pee. He got between the sheets just as he was and that was how he slept. The day after, he came and told me about his adventure, just as you have read it. Ding, dong, pewter jug, tomorrow we'll be married.

God forsakes not his intimates  
When they fall into dire straits.

## Tale 92

### ABOUT A STUDENT WHO FELL IN LOVE WITH THE SULTAN OF BABYLON'S DAUGHTER

In the days when the Sophi was at war with a Turkish lord called Ussen Caffan, there was a handsome young student from Paris, a nobleman from a great family, who, having seen one day a beautiful painting of the Sultan of Babylon's daughter, fell so madly in love with her that he lost his mind. Indeed, he became so thin, weak, pale and unhappy they thought he was going to die. Now it happened, after he had been in this state of mind for quite some time, that while he was alone in



his study, fanciful and lost in thought, a swallow came in through a hole in the window, which he caught quite easily as it fluttered and wheeled around his books.

And still thinking about the excellent beauty of his lady, he took it into his head to write a short letter to her, which he would sew on to the swallow's tail, and with good luck, it might reach the country and place of her abode. Once he had thought it out and planned it in his mind, he took pen, paper and ink and wrote, expressing his passionate love as concisely as possible. Then he let the swallow go, once the letter had been sewn on to its tail; within the hour it left Paris, along with many others of its fellows, as it was the last day of August; they did not stop flying until they came to India, where they separated and went their own ways. The one carrying the letter went and perched on a tall tower in a castle in which her father, the Sultan, had shut up the beautiful girl; threatening her with death because she would not marry the powerful King of Persia. Thus captive, she spoke to no one except a wise old lady in whose care she had been placed. As night drew near, the said swallow came down the chimney into the room in which the young princess was then all alone.

When she saw the little bird flying around her, she easily caught it and as soon as she held it, noticed the letter beneath its tail, which she immediately undid; soon after, the swallow escaped from her hands and flew off. The young lady opened the letter and saw that it was in French, a language she knew well, having learnt it from a certain French lord who had been a prisoner in the town of Alfarin; she was so pleased by the letter, she did not know what had happened to herself; she knew for certain that the letter was addressed to her and marvelled at the wonderful means by which the letter had fallen into her hands, seeing how far away was the country from which it came.

Anyway, after thinking it over and weighing it up, she made up her mind and decided that to pass the time, she would answer the letter. Which is what she did, tickled by I know not what new feelings, and then, with a smile, she sealed the letter, putting in it a little

gold ring on which a precious stone called an opal was mounted, which gave the wearer marvellous vision, but which when carried in the mouth rendered the person invisible to the eyes of anyone present. It protects the wearer from all poisons, water, fire and steel and from both dangerous and enchanting creatures; and it had many other beautiful and singular virtues as well.

When Spring came and the time for the swallows to come back to us again, the little swallow (which had never gone far from the castle) came down the chimney one fine, clear morning while the lady was still in bed and presented itself before her so that she might make use of its services; in all haste and with a happy face, she took hold of it and sewed her letter on to its tail, just as she had found the other one.

Once the kind and speedy messenger was ready with its little packet, it flapped its ready wings and lightly flew off, over the lands of the Barbarians, across the high seas, over land and desert places until it came to Paris, where it entered our scholar's study; he noticed it at once, whereupon he joyously gets up and takes hold of it and after looking, found the letter which he unsewed and took in his hands, whereupon the swallow flew off.

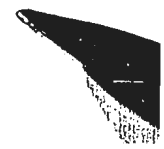
The poor student, trembling like a leaf, opened the letter which he read quite carefully, and seeing the precious gift which had been sent to him to help him in every sort of dangerous encounter, he pondered and decided to go to the lady, whatever perils might cross his path. Thus, without further delay, he fitted himself out, getting money from his books and furniture and he even wrote to his father, asking him to send a large sum of money to allow him to go on with his studies. Once he had dispatched these tasks, one fine, pretty little morning he left Paris at the crack of dawn, without taking leave of God or anyone else, and set off quickly, travelling with such haste that he soon reached Venice and set sail with a number of pilgrims who were going to visit the Holy Sepulchre; he visited all the Holy Places with them, made his devotions and then

took leave of them.

A few days later he fell in with certain Spanish merchants, who gladly took him on board their ships which were heading for the Spices in India, and when he arrived there, he diligently enquired and questioned about the nature of the country, as would anybody who spoke no Arabic, about the customs, laws, ways and means of livelihood of these peoples, even asking who was the Lord and King of this region. He was told that it was the great Sultan, a most cruel man who, for example, had had his eldest son Mustapha strangled by his mutes, and who even kept his only daughter locked up in a castle a hundred leagues from there and who swore by the great prophet Mahomet that she would never leave it, for the above-mentioned reasons.

Now when he had heard it all, he said to himself that she was the person he sought and so (after asking his way), he supplied himself with bread, salt and some hard-boiled eggs, and for drink, he relied on what springs he might find in the rocks; taking his courage in his hands, he set off across deserts and almost inaccessible places of great peril which, with God's help and the virtues of his precious stone, he crossed in ten days; and on the eleventh, he discovered the said castle standing on a great rock, the entrance to which was guarded by a large company of arquebusiers, which he nonetheless approached, little by little, and slipped through them without being seen, as he had his precious stone in his mouth, which made him invisible. Without stopping, he went up to the great door in the courtyard and passed through it pell-mell with some of the guards who were coming and going, and there he stayed for some time, hidden in a corner, waiting for something to happen.

And so it happened, at a certain hour, that the good old sempiternal dame (guarding the prisoner) came out of the castle through a small gate in order to talk to some caterers, and when he noticed this, the good student promptly rushes through the gate and then went hither and thither, now this way, now that, up and down until finally, as he was



going down a corridor, he heard, as he passed a door, the little sound of somebody's footstep. Very softly he knocked on the door, saying: "My most honoured lady, by your leave, let me into your room." On hearing this unusual voice and language, the young lady's heart fluttered with fear. Listening to hear who it could be, she opened the grill on her door. The student, afraid of being rudely received, kept quiet for some time, but when he heard, at last, a sigh coming from a sad heart, he began once more, saying: "Madam, it is I, your servant, come at your request, I beg you, have pity on me now I am so close to you."

This time the princess heard clearly, and without hesitating, opened the door and thus he went in, greeting her humbly and frightening her at the same time, because she could not see who was greeting her. Anyway, after listening and hearing for a long time, she knew for certain that it was the young student who had once sent her his burning love in his charming letter, to which, in another letter, she had replied; and at her call (never thinking that it would happen this way), he had endangered his life and undergone many afflictions to come and visit her; and so, after locking her door with two turns of the key, she begged him to show himself, which he did, and taking the ring from his mouth, he greeted her at once. When she saw him, she closely studied his countenance and good manner, his beauty, strength and youth, and greatly marvelled at it; and considering the nobility, excellence and magnanimity of the brave Frenchman, she could not contain herself or master her emotions and so she took his hand and made him sit down beside her. The noble and charming student, seeing the warm, honest and gracious welcome this most noble and serene princess had granted him, did his best to please her. So ardent was his love and good manner that she forgot all about the King of Persia and all the threats and orders of the Sultan, her father. Likewise, the student forgot his father and mother, parents and friends, books and studies, in order to serve his lady and mistress.

As for me, I left them there and came back; but I'm sure there were plenty of distracted moments.

The man who wishes to make his reputation  
Must steadfastly pursue excellence;  
Enduring anguish, boredom, pain and affliction,  
For busy toil brings rich recompense.

### Tale 93

#### ABOUT THREE YOUNG BROTHERS FROM THE CAUX REGION WHO DANCED WITH THE FAIRIES

In the days when fairies danced with people and people with fairies, three lads from the Caux region, brothers by the same parents, were passing through the forest of Lyons while on some trip or other, and at eleven o'clock in the night they met, in amongst the trees, three beautiful young fairies dressed like maidens, who had just reached that spot on their way from King Oberon's court. They asked them (to pass the time away) if they would have a few dances with them. The lads complied most willingly, on account of the great beauty of the fairies, as well as the place where they were and the fact that the weather allowed it. So each maid took her partner and each lad his, and up and in and you'll have some. To tell you what they did, I dare not, but anyway, for the best part of the night they enjoyed themselves dancing.

And so much did they dance that dawn came while they were still dancing. The eldest of the three fairies began to speak, saying: "Most handsome boys, my sisters and I have witnessed your good will, the efforts you have made for our sake and the pleasure you have given us, and as a reward for this we are granting a wish to each one of you. It is this: that the first thing you wish for will be inevitably realised, and consequently do not wish for something which will not

be to your honour and profit." Having had her say, they disappeared from sight, and they never saw them again. The three lads were quite astonished to find themselves all alone, but little by little they got over their surprise. Now while they were on their way home, they began talking about what the fairy had told them and about the wishes which were to come true for them, because of the fairies' grant and great liberality.

Anyway, after much discussion and deliberation, the eldest of the three spoke thus: "As for me, I don't have to wish for money, offices, clothes, lands or any other sort of wealth for, thanks be to God, I already have quite enough; for being the eldest I shall inherit everything, according to the law in Caux; but you would be well advised to make wishes which will provide for you and yours in the future." "And so shall we do, if God wills it," said the two younger brothers, "But we will not make our wish before you, our elder. Therefore, we request you to begin at once and wish for some honourable estate which will keep you in both good credit and esteem, because with all the wealth you will possess (after our father's death) you will be more honoured and highly considered than anyone." "No, I won't (he replied), I wish for nothing more than that our calf will cure of scurf anyone who sticks his finger up its arsehole." And so it happened, as many people afflicted with scurf have since discovered in practice, coming back from the said calf (after sticking their finger up its arse) as clean and proper as a twist of straw.

"Strewth, (said the next eldest brother), that's a fine wish for an elder of Caux! I'm surprised you're not ashamed." "What more would you have me wish?" he said, "I've got wealth aplenty; make a better wish if you can." In a rage, he said: "I wish, for your fine wish, that you be blind in one eye." And as soon as he had uttered these words, an eye fell out of his head. Whereupon, the poor, one-eyed brother began shouting and fretting, cursing his brother with the hump, epilepsy, coughing, ague, migraine, catarrh, gout, scurvy, cysts, boils, pimples, ulcers, tumours, blotches, scrofula,

clap, rabies, fevers, jaundice, blisters, anthrax, ganglions, hemorrhoids, madness, paralysis, chilblains, St. Vitus' dance, dropsy, venom, poison, sores, abscesses, St. Anthony's fire, St. Laurence's bells, St. Fiacre's plague, toothache, inflammations, fungus and stones, gravel, hernia, loose bowels, colic, pleurisy, frenzy, measles, gripes, convulsions, podagra, sciatica, wens, cavernous ulcers, leprosy, wrinkles, excrements, warts, corns, freckles, pimples, blackheads, scars, pustules, St. Main's illness, wasting sickness and a thousand other sorts of evil, upon the one who had wished this state upon him; the youngest of the three, seeing his eldest brother, whom he greatly loved, thus deprived of an eye, was so sorry for him he began crying bitterly and in great anger, said; "Oh you unhappy brother, who thus wished our eldest to be one-eyed, I wish you to be blind."

And as soon as he had spoken, he lost his sight. There, my friends, that is what happened. The tithe on the wishes goes to the priest at Transers; all is lost, by God, the Duchy of Milan.

Dances are naught but sorrow and pain  
And wishes a waste of time, and vain.

Tale 94

#### ABOUT A MAN WHO HAD HIS HEAD CUT OFF

You will remember (I think) reading and seeing how a man from Tarmonstier in Christendom, while going through a wood one day, was met by some thieves who, to get his money, cut his head off, or at least almost off, so that it was only held by the skin on one side, and how he pinned it together for fear that it might fall to the ground. And because it was winter and it was freezing hard, it stuck and did not bleed.

After the thieves had ransacked him and stolen everything he had, they fled off fast and far. The poor devil came home and told his wife (crying the whole time) how he had been robbed and everything that had been done to him, and then he sat down on a stool by the fire to warm himself. But wishing to blow his nose and remove a snot hanging from the tip of it, he pulled off his head and the pin which held it and threw the lot into the fire. Thus did the poor devil die, without even being aware of it, leaving a wife and four little children. Oh! What a pity! To the Devil and Hell with thieves.


While young and strong we think ourselves to be,  
We often fall down dead, for all to see.

#### Tale 95

#### ABOUT THE DEATH OF A NASTY RAT

By the way, I did not want to fail telling you how a chambermaid from Beauficel had set a mousetrap to catch a rat which often prevented her nightly repose. Now as she listened to it one day, while it gnawed the bacon-rind, she heard the trap snap shut and ran to it with two steps and a jump, but when it saw her coming towards it, caught as it was by the tail alone, it bravely took to its heels, dragging the mousetrap behind it.

The maid began shrieking and running after it and this noise brought out everyone in the house, as well as some of the neighbours, all of whom started chasing it, shrieking and running like the maid, brandishing brooms, sticks and stones. But however well they shouted, ran and rushed, it always managed to get away easily, slipping through everything with its tail stuck in the trap; gutters, attics, windows and chimneys; but after running for a long time up and down, and still hoping to get away, its feet slipped and it fell down to the ground, where a lad tried stopping it by putting his foot on the said





mouse-trap; but it pulled so vigorously that its tail came off and stayed in the trap, while the rat, somewhat shorter, fled away across the yard where it hoped to escape, until it ran into the feet of a big turkey cock which quickly took it and swallowed it in one mouthful.

But immediately, finding the passage free, it came out of its arse, only passing through; the people laughed and set off again after this devil of a rat; and as dazed and cross as it was, it still thought only of escape; but it fell into the claws of an old cat laying in wait in a corner of the courtyard, which took the rat, and growling, went off to have a good feed.

Although a thief may now escape  
New ruses to begin,  
There comes the day when he is caught  
And punished for his sin.

Tale 96

#### HOW A POOR MECHANIC BECAME A LORD

I would not wish to forget (fathers and brothers) to tell you how a gentleman in society obtained his nobility. Firstly: formerly a commoner possessing no more than I, he went out after dinner looking for owls' nests among the holes in the old walls of castles long since tumbled down, and in one of them he found five owls as close to each other as a mother and father.

You know that these birds rob and steal instinctively everything they find, which they take and pile up in their nests, hiding as much rubbish as things of value, as was discovered by this man who, while looking as I have said, found, along with the five little owls in the nest or hole, a purse of purple velvet in which there were two hundred and sixty double two-headed ducats and two gold chains

weighing a pound and a half. In the same wall, but in another hole, he found a clew of yellow satin in which there were four pure, fine gold bracelets and five solid gold rings in which two diamonds and a ruby were set, valued by the jewellers at three hundred and sixty crowns apiece. In two other holes he found some fine oriental pearls of inestimable value. Then, looking in other holes, he found quite a lot of things of lesser value, such as a butcher's knife, a shears, many daggers and knives, pewter pots and plates, a washing bucket lid, the cock from a church steeple and many household utensils these cunning thieves had brought there. That is what made the poor man rich; thereafter, his riches only increased. His sons joined the army and his daughters made good marriages.

In short, today his is a noble and great house, as his successors have more than forty thousand pounds of income. May God grant a good and long life to brother Guillebert.

Sublime nobility shuns poverty  
 And money follows money;  
 The poor lord is among the lowest of the low,  
 The rich rogue is said to be a noble fellow.

#### Tale 97

#### ABOUT THE ANCESTRY OF PIERROT LEROUX

In the summer, the neighbours are happy to get together after supper to pass the time talking about this and that, just as some did quite recently when, going from one subject to another, they began talking about ancestors and relations, upon which topic they remained for quite some time. One maintained that he had more than twenty relatives on his wife's side as well as on his own; another said he had more; yet another counted more than seventy as far as his family was concerned and somebody else claimed more than eighty, what with

cousins, uncles and aunts, and so they went on in this way for a good hour by the clock.

All the same, one of them, called Pierrot Leroux, in order to prove that he had more relatives than all his neighbours, swore by the Devil in Hell that there was not a town, borough, village or hamlet in France, Normandy, Brittany, Picardy or any other places owing allegiance to the King, in which he did not have some relation or other, brothers or uncles, nephews, cousins or other relatives; such was the case that three months ago one of our cousins (a young priest) was going to celebrate his first mass, and so that the whole family could be present to accompany him during the mass and at the dinner, his father sent thirty-two messengers across the fields to notify them and this took three and a half months to do.

And so that nothing should be left out, his father (who is my uncle) prepared one hundred and thirty-nine dishes for this great banquet; but I can assure you that when they sat down and the tables were full, with twelve people to a table, there were seventy-one people without seats and they ate afterwards. And I swear, without perjuring myself, or the Devil take me, as you wish, that there were only close relatives at the celebration, such as fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins male and female, grandfathers, grandmothers, nieces and nephews, plus a table of church people with the priest and curate of the parish. The collection in money amounted to two thousand seven hundred and thirteen pounds, not including fifty-eight chests full of house linen which could not be closed, they were so full. They drank twenty-nine casks of wine and eighteen of cider, and as much beer as wanted. I never saw so much dancing.

Many relatives and relations  
Bring few real friends or companions.

## Tale 98

## WHERE A LITTER OF WOLF CUBS WAS FOUND

Listen, brothers: in the season when strawberries are ripe, when you pick them and eat them, one was found by the gamekeeper in our forest of Lyons, at the Butcher's Tooth sorting place, of an incredible size, which a red slug had eaten and gnawed at so well that the inside was as empty as a big drum. A pregnant she-wolf, looking for a cosy place to give birth to her cubs, found it and went inside. Finding it a spacious place and clean enough for her needs, she stayed there and littered thirteen little cubs.

Now it happened, some time later, that some of the keepers on their way through the forest noticed the said strawberry and made straight for it; but as they drew near, they saw the she-wolf come out; then they went in and finding the cubs, took them away to the villages, asking for the bounty.

They received plenty of yellow lard, eggs, onions, thread, chitterlings, hempen ropes, ripe pears, over-ripe apples, mutton heads, soft cheeses, golden butters, walnuts, curds, loaves of bread, cider, perry, cakes, turnips, piecrusts, slices of meat, peas, kidney beans, black pins, old shoes and so many other things I could not tell you without tears coming to my eyes.

All this came at the right time, because they don't always have five sols in their pockets, the poor devils.

He who makes a profit, so I surmise,  
Is accused of selling bad merchandise.

## Tale 99

## ABOUT THE CAPTURE OF A MITE

Cousin Jean's wife's mother-in-law, in her day as bold a wench as the next one, once caught a big mite between her thighs as she was rummaging under her robes, right on the hump of her doe's foot, a mite which had been irritating her beard for some time; and at once and without delay, she swore it would die. In order to execute her desires, she squeezes it between her two thumbnails, so furiously it sounded like a shot from an arquebus, such a horrid noise and a frightening sound did it make; so that, my fine cousin, all the coppers, pans, basins, pewter dishes, piss-pots, bowls, tinware and other household utensils which were on the shelves fell to the ground and even the hens fell from their perches.

Now, what a devil that was. May God help us with our consecrated bread.

If woman could  
 As woman would,  
 So would she pursue all feuds to the bitter end  
 And wreak great vengeance on all foes she'd apprehend.

## TO THE LORD OF NERY

Your Philip. your puz. and your pic, and your art,  
 Are all pikemen, arquebusiers, soldiers,  
 Jousting, shooting, swinging from all sides,  
 Without a tear in your eye nor arms at your side.

## DESCRIPTION

Of the Republic of Nery in  
Verbos, by M.D.

If I should assemble all the misery here that the old unbeliever chases from his village of Nery in Verbos, I could talk for the rest of my life without stopping, about misfortune and misery. Justice is not honestly observed there, neither is religion entirely respected; citizens do not notice the connection, trouble and confusion reign there. Nobody is careful in going about his business; if he begins well, he cannot finish that way, so that there is no joy or jollity there; thus does old age creep up on them.

The Lord of Nery, avoiding such troubles to which destiny leads his subjects, had recourse to Phoebus who, taking his lyre, diminished his misfortune by making him laugh. It is for this reason that I wish, with these amusing tales, and as I do not belong to the Empire of Nery in Verbos, to take you and your fantasy far from care, boredom and melancholy.

[The original is in verse].

FOREWORD [To the eleven tales added in the edition of 1732].

If any hard-to-please critic finds the preceding tales incredible, he will be able to see in the following ones that Philippe d'Alcrippe [sic] is not the only one to have put such tales forward. Should he need other examples, then he ought to read Palephatus de incredibilis, he should look at Herodotus and his apologist, Henry Estienne; and as for the story of the frozen nose that was swallowed by a duck, have we not had, just recently, that fine story about an even more extraordinary nose, since it was bitten off, trampled in the mud, then picked up, washed in the gutter, stewed in warm wine and finally

stuck back so cleanly and skillfully that it took like a cutting on a currant bush; in short, so well that today it is perfectly in order. Look out, stand aside! Ho! Let it go, you say. But don't think of laughing, if you don't believe me, ask the surgeons in Paris; one of them will surely let you see it, or maybe not.

#### ADDITIONS TO LA NOUVELLE FABRIQUE

##### Tale 100

##### HOW A FRICASSEE OF TRIPES WAS SCORCHED

In our parish of Gonneville we have a cleric called Ecbin de Forest, whose father was the first man in the world to fry properly; for one day, as he was preparing dinner for his wife and children and fricasseeing tripes, it was thundering quite a lot outside, and it happened that a thunderbolt came down the chimney, landing right in the middle of the tripes; at which the said de Forest was at first rather frightened; but pulling himself together immediately, he courageously went on fricasseeing, and tossed the thunderbolt five or six times, and in living memory I don't think a thunderbolt has ever been in such a sauce; he and his children ate the tripes most heartily, although his son Ecbin said they smelled slightly burnt and tended to dry up his throat, which was cured by plenty of drink.

When danger presses hard upon his heels  
A stout-hearted man is nothing daunted;  
He oft' without a thought no fear reveals,  
No new risk deters, however vaunted.

## Tale 101

## ABOUT TWO LITTLE SPANIELS

A gentleman from our region of Caux, by name Monsieur de Bourbel, who had a distinguished career in the army, brought back two of the nicest little spaniels with him, of which he was extremely careful. But as these two little animals were always in the neighbouring woods and forests, and as he feared that they might be throttled by wolves, he decided to have a collar made for each one, to which he fixed nails, half of them bent out, the other half bent in, and the head inside; which was much to his profit, as one day, when the said spaniels had got out and gone trotting off into the forest of Socquentot, they were met by a great, ugly, starving wolf which charged down at the plumpest of the two, which was called Troussequeue, and grabbing it by the neck, it got the points of the nails so well hooked in its lips it could not get rid of them; Troussequeue, extremely startled, went charging off to the castle, dragging at its side the wolf, whose tongue was hanging a good foot out of its mouth; whether the master of the keep was pleased about it or not, I'll let you guess for yourself. The story goes that he got the wolf killed and gave it to his two spaniels, which took such a liking to this sort of hunt that the only thing they did was to go running off into the forest, and they never failed to catch some stupid wolf or other, in fact, on some occasions they brought back three or even four, and it served as a spectacle for all the peasants from Carcuit, Hugleville, Cohelle, La Meluque and other places, who would get together on Sundays and feast days to watch them.

People rush outside in every season  
To see a rascal taken to prison.



## Tale 102

## ABOUT THE GREAT WINTER

In the year 1608 the winter was so harsh that in our village the snot froze at the end of your nose even by the fire, and what was even more annoying, you couldn't even answer the calls of nature outside because the excrement froze in your hole (Madam) and could not come out. But when the snow and ice began to melt, the water flooded everywhere and caused much irreparable damage; amongst other things, I must not forget what happened in Rouen's city square, in which there was a great pile of free-stone, some stones cut and others rough hewn, which were carried off in the current and swam half submerged, right past Caudebec; and had those who had seen it not been witnesses, no one would have believed it.

People are never safe from the weather  
Either in summer or in the winter.

## Tale 103

## THE MARVELLOUS PROPERTY OF AN OINTMENT

Monsieur de Saint-Martin, Lord of Mesnil, whose château is up on the hill a quarter of a league away from the mill at Cohelle, had a box full of a fish-catching ointment which a soldier had given him; this he left in his room. He went off for a few weeks on business and the ointment swelled up on account of the heat, and as the box had opened, the smell that was carried down to the river was so powerful that all the fish jumped out of the river and the whole of the bottom of the hill was littered with trout, eels, carp, pikes, chub, tench, crayfish and above all, a prodigious quantity of red herrings with which the said lord had but lately stocked the river.

This all caused a great famine of fish in the surrounding parts  
which lasted for quite some time.

Force of reason is of little utility  
When matched against a powerful propensity.

Tale 104

#### A SUBTLE FLYING MACHINE

Many people still remember Jean Revel, a labourer from the hamlet of Carcuit. He was a big little fellow, stocky and thick set, the biggest swearer and greatest drinker of curds in the whole parish. Now one day when the fumes from the curds had gone to his head, he thought out a marvellous way to fly; in the execution of which, without saying a word to his wife, he went off to his barn and taking a winnowing fan, cut it in two and made wings out of it, which he fixed on to his back, passing his arms through some loops attached to the said wings so he might be able to flap them; but when he had tried it out, he realised he was missing a tail, a thing of great utility to birds when they fly. So after ruminating a while, he decided to fetch his baking shovel, which he fixed between his legs, tying the handle around his stomach; then he climbed up to the top of a pear tree, the better to catch the wind, but either he lost his balance, or a branch of the pear tree got caught up with his tail, for he fell headfirst into his dungheap and broke a shoulder, which never mended completely; he was troubled by it for the rest of his life, which prevented him from perfecting his marvellous invention.

Little is needed to disconcert  
Mankind's intention;  
The great expert  
Often causes his own destruction.

## Tale 105

## THE MARVELLOUS STRENGTH OF AN ESCAPING HARE

While on holiday in our parish of Gonneville, I was out one morning with the late M. Gueroult, a relation of the village priest, on the Bellemenil road, near a small wood, hoping to kill a hare or two. The said sir Gueroult had put his gun down against a small tree, and in order to satisfy a rather pressing need, bent himself in three at the edge of the wood, over the lip of the trench; but hardly had he begun than a big, powerful hare, hotly pursued, ran straight between the said sir Gueroult's legs, wiping his anus and perineum with its tail, so surprising him he fell on his nose, and in the hope of holding on to something, grasped with both hands the tail of the said hare, which ran off so straight and pulled so quickly that it dragged the man across the ditch and pulled him across the road, flaying his knees and belly so well he had to let go, and bought all the ointment he could in Bailleul to cure himself. A marvellous thing, which many people would not believe, neither on his word nor on mine.

When the danger of death presses closely,  
The weakest are given great energy.

## Tale 106

## A TERRIBLE STORM

It's not quite two hundred years ago that there was a most dreadful storm in the Caux country; the thunder was horrible and the wind furious; as is the custom, bells were rung everywhere; but while five or six peasants were ringing their parish bells, such a gust of wind beset them that it took away the spire and belfry of the church, carrying them more than a league away into the fields, and

the ringers had to let go of the ropes very quickly lest they break their clogs with the fall; all this deceived the people in the neighbouring villages, who said: "Ah! The Lord be praised, the storm is stopping; the wind has changed, we can hear the sound of the bells in such and such a parish."

One should not place one's reliance  
Upon deceptive appearance.

Tale 107

#### THE GREAT SKILL OF NOSTRADAMUS

I remember having heard Jacques Langlois, a thresher, tell a tale which he had learnt from a very old and persistent tradition, about Nostradamus who, in his day, was the finest almanac maker ever seen, and who was in the habit of observing the planets and stars sitting on a big stone on the top of a mountain near his home; from which location he had carefully calculated the dimensions and distance of the Sun from the Earth, so well that a malicious peasant, who raised the stone from its place and put a piece of paper under it, and having replaced the stone went to hide nearby, was seized with fright when Nostradamus, sitting on his usual seat to consider the sun, cried out immediately: "What's this? Either the Earth has been raised or the Sun has sunk down." For the peasant saw how the great astrologer knew the distance of the Earth from the Sun so well that the difference made by the thickness of a piece of paper had immediately jumped to his eyes.

The desire to mock a man like Nostradamus  
Is the hallmark of a fool and ignoramus.

## Tale 108

## HOW A JAY WAS KILLED

When I was in the presbytery at Gonneville last September, something happened which you will probably not believe, yet which is nonetheless true. There was this great cask of drink made from tithe apples and pears, which we call rough cider, and it started bubbling so violently that it blew out the bung with a frightening bang, the said bung being hurtled with such force that it went right through the ceilings of the cellar, kitchens, bedroom and attic and burst open the belly of an unfortunate jay which, by bad luck, happened to be flying high over the presbytery at that very moment.

When you observe one evil drawing near,  
Be ready for another to appear.

## Tale 109

## HOW SOME FLEAS ESCAPED FROM THE FIRE

When the houses situated on the bank of one of the arms of the river Seine, near the little Chatelet in Paris, caught fire, all the fleas in the said houses fled from room to room as the fire spread, down to the riverside, until there was an infinite number of them in the last apartments on the river bank; but the fire kept spreading and so when these little creatures, which have been endowed with some strength in their knees, found themselves between fire and water, they exerted themselves to the utmost and over the river they went, as the saying goes, from a standing jump; and so successfully, that a number of gapers on the other side suddenly found themselves covered from head to toe with them, just as if they had been swarms of flies which had flown

from one side of the river to the other.

The imminent danger of death and discomfort  
Invariably prompts a vigorous effort.

Tale 110

ABOUT AN ASS IN A FIELD

The ass belonging to a certain Jacques Farin escaped from its yard and got into a field where, finding plenty of grass, it set a-champing and a-filling out its belly, and as all its digestive organs were in good order, it was not long before the field began steaming, on account of all the grass it was stuffing itself with; then, earning its oats, as they say, by rolling in the grass and then eating lying down. A magpie which was following in its wake, picking at its dung, slowly drew near, pecking all the while, until it cockily came poking its beak into the ass's behind, which seemed to please the ass no end; but finally the magpie stuck its head in a bit too far, and unfortunately its beak pricked the hinny's arse-bowel and the ass immediately tightened its arse around the creature's neck, and its head was stuck; but it began beating backwards and flapping its wings so furiously that it dragged the said ass from one end of the field to the other, flaying its arse all the way, until the sphincter finally relaxed and the said magpie, because of the speed of its backward flight, crashed its arse into a big apple tree, bringing down more than six bushels of apples. The ass had its back flayed so badly it took Jean Gouin more than six months to heal it.

In every business one must always be  
On the look-out, behind and frontally.

## APPENDIX

[Additions made by the editor of the 1853 edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique].

## PRELIMINARY

It is not our intention here to consider the origin and foundation of the tradition, or, to put it a better way, of the legend of Prester John. This question has been sufficiently discussed by competent writers, and if it is not known exactly which particular fact gave rise to this tradition, it is known at least that the tradition is sufficiently vague to have no historical importance today. So we shall be content to refer interested readers to the excellent account by M. d'Avezac which precedes the Relation des Mongols ou Tartares, by Frère du Plan Carpin, published through the good offices of La Société de Géographie. In this account, they will find the résumé of the best and most plausible of what has been said on this question.

It therefore seems adequate for us to recall, in a few words, that it was about the middle of the twelfth century (1145) that the first mention is made of the existence of a sovereign, hitherto unknown, who united in his person the double authority of Church and State; that the residence of this sovereign was in the Far East, and that he himself was known by the name of Prester John. These more or less established assertions were accepted without discussion by most medieval travellers and historians, and the passage of time turned it into a generally accepted tradition.

The letter attributed to Prester John, which was published very much later, only towards the end of the fifteenth century, does not seem to have given rise to any objections or awakened any doubt. It first appears in Latin and M. Brunet, in his Manuel (Tome II, p. 722) quotes several undated editions, printed shortly before or after 1500. There also exist several French editions, an exact description of which we give here.

1. Cy apres sensyuent les nouuelles de la terre de prestre Iehan,  
small in-4, goth., 14 sheets (the last one blank), with 25 lines to  
the page; signatures A.-B.- No place or date of publication,  
neither printer's name nor selling house.

2. Sensuiuent plusieurs nouuelletes et diuercites estant en les  
bestes en la terre de prestre Jehan.--(At the end one may read:)  
Cy finissent etc.--Imprime a Paris par Iean Treperel. Small, in-4,  
goth., 8 sheets (including the title page, on which is to be found  
the mark and device of Treperel), with 29 lines to the page.

These two editions are very different in external appearance, in  
text and in spelling. The first seems to be the older. The language  
has obviously been renovated in the second. The first must date from  
the end of the fifteenth century (from 1490 to 1493); the second was  
probably printed between 1500 and 1520. Both editions indeed present  
in general a French translation of a common original; but they also  
present numerous variants. The first, less complete in some small  
details, contains quite a long passage which has been omitted in the  
second.

I shall also indicate, as a reminder, another French edition,  
mentioned by M. Brunet (Manuel, Tome III, p. 534) and published in  
Paris by le petit Laurent, 1507, in-4.

I shall finally mention, using the same authority, the following  
poetical opusculé.

--La gran magnificentia del Prete Ianni signore dell India maggiore  
e della Ethiopia.--(At the foot of the last page, recto:) Finito e  
questo trattato del massimo Prete Ianni pontefice e imperadore dell  
India e della Ethiopia composto in versi volgari per Messer Giuliano  
Dati Florentino, a laude della celestial corte et exaltatione della  
christiana religione. Amen. (Undated), in-4, four pages in double  
columns of forty lines each.



"A version in 59 stanzas of 8 lines. The first page has the title as above and a large woodcut plate, representing Prester John and his cardinals. There is also another woodcut on page four."

One may conclude from the above description of the two French editions, printed in gothic script, that, in order to give a new and correct edition of the curious Letter from Prester John, an attentive comparison has been made out of necessity, and to a certain extent, of course, a fusion of the two texts. This has been done with the greatest care, and we can assert, without too much presumption, that our edition offers both the most exact and most complete text to date of this curious monument to the naive credulity of our forbears.<sup>1</sup>

The copies of the Letter from Prester John which I have used were placed at my disposal with a kindness to which I am extremely obliged, by M. Potier, a bookseller whose willingness has never been at fault, and by an enlightened bibliophile, M. A. Cicongne, whom one always finds fully prepared to communicate to the studious the numerous treasures in the precious library he has fashioned with as much taste as perseverance.

I have but little to say of the two other little works which follow the Letter from Prester John; the first is a trifle I have included here because of its resemblance with the inventions of La Nouvelle Fabrique; the second, which I have translated from the Latin of the original, is written seriously; but the fact of which it tells is of such a marvellous nature that the account seemed to me to be worthy of inclusion at the end of a collection of wonders perhaps less extraordinary, although of pure invention.

X.

10th April 1853.

<sup>1</sup> The Letter from Prester John has already been reprinted in 1843, probably based on Treperel's edition, through the good offices of M. Ferdinand Denis, in a little volume which, beneath a modest exterior,

encloses some real erudition and excellent documentation which has been most useful to me. This little book is worthy of the attention of enquiring minds from every point of view; it has the following title: Le monde enchanté, cosmographie et histoire naturelle du moyen âge, by M. Ferdinand Denis, Paris, A. Fournier, in-32, 376 pages.

HERE FOLLOW SEVERAL NOVELTIES AND DIVERSITIES TO BE FOUND AMONG THE CREATURES IN THE LAND OF PRESTER JOHN

Prester John, by the grace of God King above all christian Kings, we greet the Emperor of Rome and the King of France, our friends. We hereby tell of us, of our state and of the government of our lands; that is to say, of our people and of the nature of our creatures. And in so far as you say that our Greeks or Grecian peoples do not agree to worship God as you do in your land, we hereby inform you that we worship and believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost which are three persons in one Godhead, and one true God alone. And we hereby attest and send you news under letters sealed by our seal, of the state and ways of our land and our people, and if there be anything we can do for you, tell us, for we will do it with good heart, and if you desire to come here into our land, because of the good we have heard about you, we shall make you lords after us and give you many estates, domains and residences as presents.

Item, be it known that we have the tallest and most noble crown in the whole world; <sup>1</sup> as well as gold, silver, precious stones and good farms, villages, cities, castles and boroughs.

Item, also that we have in our power forty-two mighty kings, all good christians.

Item, that we sustain and have maintained by our charity all the poor people in our land, be they our people or foreigners, and this we do for the love of Jesus Christ.

Item, that we have promised and sworn by our good faith to conquer the sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ and also all the Promised Land,

and if you wish to go there, we, if it please God, will help you on your way, for you are greatly daring and worthy, as we have been told, and are courageous, loyal and true; but there are amongst you Frenchmen some who are with the Saracens, in whom you have placed your trust and believe that they help you and must help you, but they are false and treacherous Hospitallers; we would have you know that we have burnt and destroyed all of them who are in our domain; for thus should it be with those who are against our faith.

Item, that our land is divided into four parts, for India is in it. In greater India lies the body of St. Thomas the Apostle, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ performed more miracles than all the saints in Paradise. This is the eastern part of India, for it lies near Babylon the Forsaken, and it is also near a tower called Babel. In the other region, towards the west, there is a great abundance of bread, wine and meat and all things which are good to sustain and nourish the human body.

Item, that in our land there are elephants and other sorts of creatures called dromedaries; and white horses and wild cattle with seven horns, <sup>2</sup> and white bears; and most unusual lions in four colours, red, green, black and white; <sup>3</sup> and wild asses with two little horns; <sup>4</sup> wild leopards as big as rams and horses which run faster than any other creature and have two little horns. <sup>5</sup>

Item, that we have birds called griffons <sup>6</sup> which can easily carry off a steer or horse to their nests, to feed their young.

Item, that we have other kinds of birds, which are lords over all other kinds of birds in the world, and which are the colour of fire; their wings are as sharp as razors and they are called Yllerions; <sup>7</sup> there are never more than two in the world. They live for sixty years and then go and drown in the sea. Nevertheless, they first lay their eggs and hatch out two or three which they brood over for forty days, and then they hatch out and become little birds. Then the big ones, that is to say the mother and father, go away and drown themselves in the sea, as has been said; and every bird which meets them on the way

accompanies them to the sea and does not leave them until they have drowned; and when they have drowned, the other birds go back to the little birds and feed them until they are big enough to fly and fend for themselves.

Item, that there are other birds known as tigers, which are so strong they can easily carry off a fully-armed man and his horse, and kill them.<sup>8</sup>

Item, there is another part of our domain, beyond the desert, where there is a kind of men which are horned,<sup>9</sup> having only one eye<sup>10</sup> in front and three or four behind,<sup>11</sup> and there are women just like the men.

Item, in our lands there is another kind of people who live only on the raw flesh of men, women and animals,<sup>12</sup> even if it is their father or mother, they eat them raw and say that it is a good and natural thing to eat human flesh, which they do in remission of their sins; and these people are accursed of God and are called Gots and Magots; there are more tribes of these people than any other and they will cover the world at the coming of the Antichrist. For they are his allies and followers, and these people are the ones who shut up King Alexander in Macedonia and put him in prison, and he escaped from them. Nevertheless, God will send thunderbolts and blazing fire from Heaven down upon them, and in such a way they will be foiled and destroyed; all the same, we do take many of these people to war with us, when we wish to fight, and give them leave and licence to eat our enemies when they can defeat them, so that out of a thousand, there is not one left who is not devoured and damaged, and then we make them return to their country, for if they were to remain for long with us, they would devour us all.

Item, we have another kind of people in our lands whose feet are round like a horse's,<sup>13</sup> and behind, their heels have four strong cutting edges with which they fight,<sup>14</sup> and so well that no armour can resist it; and they are good christians, ploughing their land and ours with a will, and they pay us much tribute every year.

Item, we have, in another part of the desert, a country sixty days' journey long and forty wide; it is called Feminate the Great. And do not think it lies in Saracen land; the one we speak of is in our country, and in this land there are three queens, apart from the other ladies who hold their estates from these three. And when these three queens wish to go to war, each one takes one hundred thousand armed women with her, apart from those driving the chariots, horses and elephants carrying weapons and provisions; and they fight as well as men.<sup>15</sup> Know that no males may live with them more than ten days, but during this time they can disport and take solace with them and engender, but nothing more, for if they stayed any longer they would be killed. But they can easily leave the country for ten days, and when the time is up, come back and spend another ten days, just like before.

Item, this land is enclosed by a river which comes from the Terrestrial Paradise, and is called Cyson.<sup>16</sup> It is so wide that none can cross it unless they do so in great ships or boats.

Item, near this river is another land called Piconia, which is quite small, only ten days' journey long and six wide, and the people there are as small as a seven year old child here,<sup>17</sup> their horses are as small as sheep, they are good christians and willing workers; nobody wages war against them except the birds, which come every year when they have to harvest corn and sow and gather in the grapes. And then the king of that land takes up arms against the said birds and there is great slaughter between them. And then the birds go away.

Item, that in our country live the Centaurs,<sup>18</sup> who from the waist up have the shape of men, and from the waist down the shape of a horse, and they carry bows and arrows in their hands, which they bend better than any other sort of people, and they eat raw flesh.

Item, be it known that there are certain other kinds of people in our land who stay high up in the trees for fear of dragons<sup>19</sup> and other creatures, and some people in our court capture them and keep

them chained up, <sup>20</sup> and people come to see them in great wonderment.

Item, that in our land are the unicorns, <sup>21</sup> which have on their foreheads a single horn, and there are three kinds of them: green, black and white as well. Sometimes they kill lions, but the lions kill them very subtly; for when the unicorn is tired, it rests against a tree and the lion goes round; the unicorn, hoping to strike it with its horn, strikes the tree so hard it cannot pull it out; thereupon the lion kills it. <sup>22</sup>

Item, that in another part of the desert live the Giants, who used to be forty cubits tall but are nowadays only twenty; <sup>23</sup> and they cannot leave the desert, for it does not please God. If they did get out, they could fight anyone.

Item, that in our land there is a bird called the Phoenix, the most beautiful bird in the whole world; but there is only one of them in the world, it lives for a hundred years and then climbs up into the sky, going so near to the sun that its wings catch fire, and then it comes down to its nest and burns up. From its ashes comes a worm which turns and becomes a bird after a hundred days, as handsome as its father was before it. <sup>25</sup>

Item, in our land there is an abundance of bread, wine, meat and all things which are good to nourish the human body.

Item, that there is a part of our land into which no beast which is naturally venomous may enter. <sup>26</sup>

Item, that between us and the Saracens there flows a river called Ydonis which comes from the Terrestrial Paradise, <sup>27</sup> and it is full of precious stones and runs through our lands as both great streams and small, and in them we find many precious stones, to wit, emeralds, sapphires, jaspers, chalcedonies, rubies, carbuncles and many other precious stones which I have not named, the names and virtues of which we know.

Item, that in our land there is a herb called Permanent; <sup>28</sup> and whoever wears this herb can bewitch the Devil and ask him who he is, where he is going, what he is doing on the Earth, and he can be made

to speak; for this reason the Devil does not dare come into our land.

Item, that in our land pepper grows and it is never sown but grows among the trees; and when it is ripe, we send our men out to pick it; they set fire to the woods and everything is burnt, and when the fire has gone out, they make huge piles of pepper which are winnowed in the wind, and then it is taken to the house and washed two or three times, and then it is dried in the sun; in this way it blackens and becomes good and strong.

Item, be it known that in our country is a mountain called Olimphas, and at the foot of this mountain there is a spring; whoever can drink the water thrice on an empty stomach will live for thirty years without sickness, and when he has drunk some of it, he will know that he has eaten of the finest meats and spices in the world, because the water is full of the Grace of God and of the Holy Ghost. And whoever can bathe in this fountain, be he two hundred or a thousand years old, he will assume the appearance of a thirty year old;<sup>29</sup> and be it known that we are five hundred and sixty-two years old and have bathed in the fountain six times.

Item, be it known that in our land is the sea of Arayne,<sup>30</sup> which runs most rapidly and makes terrible waves, and no man, whatever he may do, can cross it save ourself, and we are born across by griffons, as was Alexander, when he went to conquer certain places in this land.

Item, near this sea flows a river in which many precious stones may be found and many good herbs, useful in all cures.<sup>31</sup>

Item, be it known that between us and the Jews flows a river full of precious stones and it flows so swiftly that none may cross it except on Saturdays,<sup>32</sup> when it lies at rest,<sup>33</sup> and all it finds, it carries off to the sea of Arayne.

Item, in these parts is a stretch of territory we must keep hold of, because we have forty-two castles on this frontier, the finest and strongest in the world and with people to guard them, to wit, ten thousand knights and six thousand crossbowmen, and fifteen thousand archers and forty thousand horse-sergeants and sergeants-at-arms who

guard the entrances to these places, and so well that if the great King of Israel was to come with all his hosts, he would not be able to pass with his Jews, who are twice as numerous as Christians or Saracens, for they own both ends of the Earth, and let it be known that the great King of Israel has three hundred kings and four hundred princes, dukes and counts with him, all Jews, and all of whom pay allegiance to him.

Item, let it be known that if the Jews could cross this place everyone would be killed, Christians as well as Saracens.

Item, let it be known that we allow eight hundred to a thousand Jews cross over every Saturday in order to trade with our people. But they do not enter our forts, but do their trading outside, on account of the little trust we place in them, and they only trade with pieces of gold and silver, as they have no other money; when they have finished their business, they go back to their country.

Item, let it be known that we have forty-two castles which are no further from each other than the cast of a bolt from a crossbow.

Item, that we have, about a league from there, a city called Orronde the Great, the most beautiful and the strongest city in the world. And one of our kings holds it and there receives tribute from the King of Israel, for he owes us each year two hundred horses laden with gold, silver and precious stones, and, moreover, the expenses to maintain this city and the above-mentioned castles.

Item, that when we wage war against them, we kill all those we find in our country. And it is for this reason that they do not dare move or wage war.

Item, and let it be known that Jewesses are the most beautiful and hottest women in the world, and that near this river Arayne is the Sandy sea,<sup>34</sup> which no man can cross unless the wind blows on it; then it spreads over the land and it may easily be crossed, but make haste to get back! For if you do not, you will stay in the sea for good, and all the sand which cannot get back is turned into precious stones,<sup>35</sup> and no one may sell them until we have seen them, and if



we want them, we can take them from under the merchants' noses, and if we do not want them, they may take them where they like.

Item, in one part of our country there is a mountain on which no one can live because of the excessive heat in it, <sup>36</sup> and in that place feed certain worms <sup>37</sup> which cannot live without fire. And at the foot of the mountain we always maintain forty thousand people who keep a big fire going; when these worms feel the heat of the fire, they come out of the ground and go into the fire and there they make threads similar to those made by silk-worms; from this thread we make our clothes and those of our wives, to wear on festive occasions. And when we want to wash these clothes we put them in fire, and they come out as clean and as fresh as before.

Item let it be known that no christian king has such riches as we do, because no man can be poor in our country if he is willing to work.

Item, that our Lord St. Thomas performs more miracles for us than any saint in Paradise, for he preaches to everybody once a year in human form in his church, and preaches in one of our palaces, as you shall hear.

Item, in another part of our country there are some strangely fashioned people, to wit, who have human bodies and dogs' heads, <sup>38</sup> and their language may be understood. They are good fishermen, for both day and night they go down to the deepest parts of the sea where they stay a whole day without coming up, <sup>39</sup> and catch all the fish they desire, and loaded down, they come back to their houses, which are underground. <sup>40</sup> We spy on them to see where they put it, and we take as much as we want. And you should know that these people cause quite a lot of trouble to our wild animals, for they eat them and they fight against soldiers and archers. They often fight such battles.

Item, there is a kind of bird in our country which is of an infinitely hotter nature than the others. <sup>41</sup> For when they wish to lay, they do so at the bottom of the sea and lay thirty eggs, and when they wish to go back they rise up high into the sky, above their

eggs, and by their own heat and the heat of the air they hatch their eggs, which become birds; and after twenty days these come out of the water and fly off, and we catch many of them. For they are good to eat as long as they are young, and if a man or woman's ardour should fail, then they should eat these birds and their ardour would soon return and they would be stronger than before.<sup>42</sup>

Item, in our country grows the Tree of Life,<sup>43</sup> from which an elixir springs;<sup>44</sup> this tree is quite dry and a serpent protects it and looks out all the year round, both day and night, except for St. John's Night during which it sleeps, and during the day as well. Then we go to the tree for the elixir, and in the whole year only three pounds come out of it, drop by drop, and when we are near the said elixir, we take it and set off with a will, for fear that the serpent may wake up; and this tree is only a day's journey away from the Terrestrial Paradise. When the said serpent wakes up, it becomes greatly angered and screams so loudly it can be heard a good day's travel away; it is twice as big as a horse and has nine heads<sup>45</sup> and two wings,<sup>46</sup> and it runs after you, hither and thither. And when we have crossed the sea, it goes back, and we take the elixir to the Patriarch of St. Thomas who consecrates it, and we are all baptised Christians with it; what remains, we send to the Patriarch of Jerusalem who sends it to the Pope in Rome; and he consecrates it and increases it with olive oil and sends it to all Christendom over the seas.<sup>47</sup>

Item, in our country there are no local or foreign robbers,<sup>47</sup> for God and St. Thomas would confound them all and we would put them to a nasty death if we found them out.

Let it be known that we have green horses<sup>48</sup> which carry a fully-armed rider for three or four days without eating.

Item, when we go into battle we have carried before us, by fourteen kings adorned with gold and silver, fourteen standards adorned with diverse precious stones; other kings coming behind them carry very richly adorned sandalwood banners.

Item, that before us march forty thousand clerks and as many knights, and two hundred thousand footmen, apart from the carts carrying provisions and not including the elephants and camels carrying the armour.

Item, when we go into battle we commend our country to the Patriarch of St. Thomas.

Item, that when we merely go for a ride we have a wooden cross carried before us, quite simply because we remember our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered death and the Passion to deliver all sinners from death in Hell.

Item, at the entrance to each of our cities are three wooden crosses, which stand for the two crosses upon which the two thieves were hanged and the one upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, so that people may adore the Holy Cross.

Item, when we are out riding, we also have a golden bowl full of earth born before us, as a sign that we all come from the earth and must all return to it, and we also have another bowl filled with gold carried before us, to show that we are the most powerful and worthy king in the whole world.

Item, let it be known that nobody dare commit the sin of lechery in our country, for he will immediately be burned and consumed; this is why God established the sacrament of marriage.

Item, that no one may lie in our country as he would be killed or hanged.

Item, let it be known that every year we visit the blessed remains of St. Daniel the Prophet which are in our desert, and we take with us ten thousand clerks, as many knights, and two hundred castles which we have carried by elephants, and these we set up by night to protect ourselves from dragons, each of which has seven heads. <sup>49</sup>

And let it be known that in this desert are the best dates which grow on trees and which are good to eat, green or ripe, winter or summer; and the desert is one hundred and forty days' march long, and all the text to be found in parentheses belongs to the oldest edition

and thus fills the gap in Treperel's edition] (it must be crossed and whoever crosses the desert finds neither city nor castle for forty days, but there is no need to carry provisions as one may find sufficient fruit on one's way, enough to fill a man, and thus he is satisfied by the Grace of God.

Item, a messenger would need at least fifteen months to cross our country, it is so big.

Item, that our palace is as I shall describe it to you; the entrance is such that no fire can burn it, and on top of the palace there are two golden pommels and on each pommel there are two carbuncles, <sup>50</sup> so that it shines by day and by night; and the great gates of our said palace are constructed with chalcedony mingled with precious stones, the portal is made of cedar, the windows <sup>51</sup> are made of crystal and our tables of marble; <sup>52</sup> and in front of our palace is a yard in which our sons play every day.

Item, that the room in which we sleep is encrusted with gold and precious stones. <sup>53</sup>

Item, that the bed on which we lie is sown with sapphires, <sup>54</sup> because we are chaste, and we have beautiful women and we only lie with them during three months of each year, to wit, in May, October and January, and then only to beget children.

Item, that in front of our palace door there is a mirror in the middle of the square, which Virgil put there with his skill, and it can be seen fifteen days' march away; and in order to reach the said mirror, you must climb three hundred and seventy steps, which are made out of precious stones. <sup>55</sup>

Item, let it be known that every year, fifteen kings, forty dukes and forty counts come to our court in order to carry out the services they owe us each year, apart from the Frenchmen who serve us every day.

Item, we make every Frenchman who comes to our country a knight, giving them good walled towns and great estates, for they look after our land and our table and our chamber, and for this reason we trust them more than any other people.

Item, let it be known that every day twenty archbishops and forty bishops eat at our table and the Patriarch of St. Thomas who sits above us at a high table), as he represents the authority of the Pope in Rome, and we have as many priests as there are days in the year, and once a year each one comes to St. Thomas' altar and there we celebrate all the annual feasts; and for this reason we are called Prester John, for we are priest through the sacrifices at the altar and King through justice and righteousness. And let it be known that I was consecrated before I was born. For God sent an angel to my father, telling him: "To build a palace which would be, by the Grace of God, a room in Paradise for your coming child; for he will be the greatest temporal king in the world and will live for a long time; and whosoever shall be in the palace will never be hungry or thirsty and will not die." And when my father awoke from his sleep, he was overjoyed and began the palace, as you shall hear.

Firstly, the walls are made of crystal, <sup>56</sup> and it is roofed with precious stones; inside they are decorated with stars which resemble the stars in the sky, and the floor is made of crystal, too; in the said palace you will find neither door nor window; and there are four thousand two hundred gold, silver and gem-encrusted pillars in the palace. <sup>57</sup> Herein we hold our court and celebrate the annual feasts, and St. Thomas preaches to the people.

Item, in the middle of the said palace there is a pillar which God put down and God bestowed a favour on the said pillar, from which springs wine and water; <sup>58</sup> whoever drinks of it never desires temporal wealth; it is not known where it comes from or where it goes.

Item, there is another great wonder in our palace, to wit, that no food or drink is served except in a bowl, on a grill and in a trencher which hangs from a pillar. When we are seated and we wish to have some food, it is brought to us through the Grace of the Holy Ghost; <sup>59</sup> and let it be known that all the priests in the world could not list or take away the wealth in our palace and in our chapel. And know also that all we have written is as true as God, and we

would not lie for any reason, for God and St. Thomas would confound us, and we would lose our dignities.

If there is anything we can do for you, let us know of it; for we shall do it willingly. And we ask you that this should be in memory of the Holy Passage, and that it should be soon; and be of good heart, be brave, and remember to put to death those false templars and pagans; and we beg you to reply to us through the bearer of these gifts; and we ask the King of France to protect for us all the christians beyond the sea and to send us valiant knights of good French blood, begging Our Lord that he keep you in the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Given in this our holy palace, in the five hundred and seventh year of our birth.

Here end the diversities of men, creatures and birds in the country of Prester John.

[Arabic numerals refer to the notes to the Letter from Prester John].

THE GREAT AND MARVELLOUS CATCH MADE AT SEA BY THE BRETONS SOME THREE WEEKS AGO

My very dear Lord and friend,

I am writing to you of the news from these parts, and it is as follows:

News from these parts; some three weeks ago, as I recall, a marvellous whale was caught between two rocks at St. Remembre; it had horns like a sheep, and that is a sure and proven fact; inside its body they found, apart from the salt tack and biscuits, five hundred and seventy-eight brigantines, lacking their tackle, ropes and irons; what is more, it had twenty-eight top masts and eighteen other masts along its ribs, which tore its guts and innards. And

between its liver and lungs there were nineteen casks of gunpowder, fourteen or fifteen spans big; and its eyes were very big, because blacksmiths and carpenters took a fortnight to put them out of its head.

I want to mention the tail, which they wanted to salt; but as it is an honest member, the monks at Sezembre gave it to the parish of St. Malo, to make sprinklers, and they sprinkle as far as Dinan and up to the Doul, so it is said.

All those who were sprinkled with it, be they scurvy or leprous, were absolved from sin and guilt. Its hide, finer than the best Cordovan leather, was sent to be dyed in Rouen, in order to be made into cloaks and coverings. Its udders were opened and enough milk and cheese came out to feed the whole human race.

(A little work published, in gothic script, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, undated and without the printer's name, in-16).  
[In verse in the original French].

#### A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO NIGHTINGALES

"As I know, my dear Gessner, that you are, at present, writing about birds, I must let you know about the marvellous fact of several nightingales imitating the human voice to perfection, something I would never have believed but that this fact is rigorously exact, and had I not seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears what I am about to tell you. At the time of the last Diet of Ratisbonne, in 1546, I happened to be lodged in that town at the Golden Crown Inn, the proprietor of which had three nightingales, shut up separately, each one in a cage totally deprived of light. It was in the Spring, a time of the year when, as you know, these birds sing continuously if they are at liberty, and without apparently tiring of it. At that time I was suffering badly from gravel and subject to long and

distressing bouts of insomnia. About midnight and thereafter, while the house was plunged into a profound silence, I distinctly heard, between two of these birds, the liveliest of conversations and the most animated colloquies; they imitated human language to perfection, speaking German so well as to render me speechless with surprise and admiration. And so it was that they held forth, in the shadows and under the cover of the silence, about everything they had heard during the day and the various things they had been thinking about. Both these birds, which were thus giving proof of a rare talent for mimicry, were in their cages about ten feet away from my bed; the third was much further away, which prevented me from hearing it distinctly. As for the two others, it was indeed strange to hear them calling each other, provoking each other into conversation, and without their voices ever becoming confused together, so much care and attention did they seem to pay to speaking only in turn.

Apart from the common and vulgar conversations which they repeated, having heard and remembered them during the day as they came from the mouths of the inn's regular customers who ate in that room, they also held forth before me upon two particular matters of which I shall speak further on. Their conversation lasted until daybreak, that is to say, up to the moment when noise was once more to be heard in the inn. Then they began singing in their natural and ordinary voices, so that no one would ever have suspected them of possessing any other talent.

After two or three nights given over to curiosity and surprise, I asked the innkeeper if someone had cut these nightingales' frenum and taught them to speak. He replied that it was not so. I persisted and asked him if he had ever noticed the birds chattering in the night and if he had heard what they said. He again replied that he had not, and everyone in the house to whom I put the same question gave the same answer. As for myself, spending almost every night without closing my eyes, I never failed, at every opportunity, to eavesdrop on the conversations between these small creatures and I



never stopped admiring their skill and emulation.

One of the stories which took up their time concerned the inn's cellar-man, whose wife could not make up her mind to follow her husband, who was inclined to leave and rejoin the army. The husband, as far as I was able to judge from the nightingales' conversation, was sharply insistent that his wife leave the inn and had been trying to convince her with the prospect of booty, which he kept on promising. His wife showed herself to be very stubborn in this respect, announcing that she wanted to settle down in Ratisbonne or Nuremberg. The discussion had been rather agitated, heated even, so it seems; but it had taken place without witnesses and unknown to the innkeeper. In this debate between husband and wife, certain very vulgar expressions had probably escaped from both their mouths, rather offensive expressions to a sensitive ear, for both birds repeated them without the slightest care for their meaning, just like children unable to distinguish between what may be said and what should pass unmentioned. This adventure greatly impressed them, as it was the topic of their conversation for several nights in a row, and they always repeated it in the same way.

The other sustained conversation I heard turned on the war which was to be waged against the Protestants and it seemed to forecast and presage what in fact came to pass some time after.

With these remarks was mingled an account of what had recently been done to the Duke of Brunswick. All these facts and their details had probably been picked up by these little birds from the conversation of gentlemen who frequently dined together there at the inn, or who spoke at table about whatever interested them so keenly.

All these nightingales' conversations only took place, as I have said, in the silence of the night; during the daytime they were quiet or merely exchanged a few insignificant words, picked up from the conversations of the guests; most often they were dumb and seemed, so to speak, lost in their thoughts.

I never believed what Pliny said about these small birds or the wonders he tells of, and I would have been just as incredulous today about it had I not seen and heard myself what I have just told you. Therefore, my dear Gessner, I am writing to you at once and rather hastily, suppressing the details so that my letter will reach you in time."

This letter, written in Latin but unsigned, was inserted by Gessner in his book De Avibus, Vol. III, and reproduced by Franz Franzius) in the singular and curious work which bears the following title: Historia Animalium Sacra, In Qua Plerorumque Animalium Praecipuae Proprietates In Gratiam Studiosorum Theologiae Et Ministrorum Verbi Usum Iconologicum Breviter Accomodantur A Wolfgango Franzio. Wittebergae, 1612, small in-8, pagg. 561-64.

## NOTES TO THE TALES

Ideally, the notes which follow should show the character and prevalence of lying types and motifs within a given tradition area, to wit, France. They should show, for example, if the tales in La Nouvelle Fabrique are typically French variants and indeed, if they are widely distributed in France. But although it has been possible for me to read extensively, if not exhaustively, in collections of French folktales, French collectors, as I have shown earlier, do not seem to have been greatly interested in the genre. The rare appearance of tall tales in book and journal is no sure guide, of course, to the state of the tall tale in France. It is at best only negative evidence, and Gustav Henningsen has shown how insufficient collecting can give an entirely false impression of the distribution of tales in a tradition area.<sup>1</sup>

A truer picture of the tall tale in France might have been available had Paul Delarue lived to complete his Le Conte Populaire Français, which he conceived as a catalogue of tales from all areas of the world settled by Frenchmen and in which French is still a living language. But Delarue died before publication of the second volume of his great work, which is being continued by Marie-Louise Tenèze; until publication of the volume containing the section on tall tales, it will not be possible to benefit from Delarue's great erudition.

It is largely for this reason that I have turned to Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, supplemented by Ernest W. Baughman's Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America. Although Thompson had access to Baughman's catalogue, he only included a selection of Baughman's new motifs in the revised edition of his vast work. Where a type number is available in the ~~Aarne-~~Thompson catalogue The Types of the Folktale, I have given it.

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<sup>1</sup> Henningsen, "The Art of Perpendicular Lying," p. 192.

Since the Aarne-Thompson catalogue took into account most of the European national catalogues available at the time of publication of the various editions of The Types of the Folktale, tale types are well covered. I have not attempted, therefore, to provide an exhaustive coverage of either type or motif distribution. The chief aim of providing North American parallels has been to show that many so-called North American motifs have their origins in Europe.

Where possible, I have tried to show something of the relationship between the tall tale and other genres in French tradition, not as fully as one would have wished, but sufficient, I hope, to suggest grounds for further enquiry. To discover the exact role of the tall tale in a tradition area, one would surely have to consider the psychological attitudes of the population to lies and lying, and the extent to which the concept of the lie pervades the various areas of folklore. So while an exhaustive coverage of French material has been impossible, an attempt has been made in the notes to show something of the geographical distribution of lying motifs, their parallels in other genres and their historically recorded appearances. French material is supplemented with, for the most part, American.

## Tale 1

Three sons, sent by their father to learn a trade, return home. The father proposes a test to decide which son shall inherit his home. The first son, a barber, shaves a running hare without cutting it. The second son, a blacksmith, shoes a horse at full gallop. The third son, a swordsman, successfully parries raindrops off his body during a storm.

This is the international tale type AT 654, The Three Brothers. The Thompson motifs in this tale are: F660.1, Brothers acquire extraordinary skill. Return home and are tested. F665.1, skillful barber shaves running hare. \* F663.1, Skillful smith shoes running horse; and F667.1, Skillful fencer keeps sword dry in rain. Swings it so fast.

Thompson's version of this final motif is probably less common than the present one; it seems more logical for the fencer to wield his sword in protection of his body or some other object, rather than to protect the sword itself. This is what another soldier does in tale 11, using his sword with such dexterity that he cuts all arrows shot at him in half.

The tale appears to be widespread in Europe, according to Stith Thompson, but Baughman records only one version to represent both England and North America, which was collected in Kentucky. Baughman did find several variants of type 1920C\*, Speed in Skills. A Mississippi Negro version of 1920C\* contains two motifs which are variants of two of Philippe's: the third man shoes a running deer, the fourth shaves all the hair off a rabbit while it is running.

As Thompson points out in The Folktale (p. 82), this story is so similar to AT 653, The Four Skillful Brothers, "... as to suggest the possibility that it is a mere outgrowth of that tale...." He adds that "A version of this story somewhat different from that current today is found in the Scala Celi of Johannes Gobii, Junior, composed in France at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It

has been used in jestbooks from the sixteenth century and has been collected orally, though not frequently, from most parts of the European continent."

Although Paul Delarue was familiar with the Scala Celi, he did not consider the version of this tale to be found in it worthy of inclusion as a French type in his Le Conte Populaire Français; Delarue simply refers to Thompson's own note on the type.

Philippe's version is one of four cited by Delarue (Le Conte Populaire Français, II, 562-63) in French tradition. A version collected by Paul Sébillot in Haute-Bretagne in 1894 differs from this version in that the father offers a sum of money to the winner. A variant from Auvergne, first published in 1944 and given in full by Delarue, has the barber replaced by a cook, who tosses an omelette up the chimney, the omelette then landing in the father's dish. The third son's sword is replaced by a stick with which he prevents hailstones from spoiling the crops. The fourth variant, which I have not seen, is, according to Delarue, a literary elaboration of the preceding one from Auvergne. But its author, Henri Pourrat, although Delarue does not mention it, has long shown a serious interest in the folklore of Auvergne; it is quite possible that he was simply retelling a tale still current in the tradition of that province.

The following French variant of motif F667.1 (Skillful fencer keeps sword dry in rain. Swings it so fast) was sent to me by my father-in-law, Monsieur Roger Durand of Marseille. He had written it from memory, but could not recall whether he had learnt it from oral tradition or read it. Although the protagonist in this tale is the Baron de Crac (the French transliteration of M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen), the episode does not appear in any edition of M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen's adventures I have been able to see; it is possible, then, that my father-in-law's version comes from oral tradition.

"One day, said Baron de Crac, I happened to be at the field headquarters while a battle was raging. The general was studying

the map in order to better manoeuvre his troops, when it suddenly began to pour with rain. I did not hesitate a second: drawing my sword, I twirled it so furiously above the general's head that not a drop of rain fell on him or the map he was consulting. That day was a great victory for us, because the enemy, hampered by the rain, was not able to make the necessary manoeuvres."

The opening formula of this tale, "Du temps du Roy Pernot et de la Roynie Gillette..." is possibly a standard French opening formula, although I have been unable to find further examples of it. Gratet-Duplessis, the editor of the 1853 edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique, says, however, that King Pernot and Queen Gillette were "... two imaginary persons, fabulous heroes of olden times, often mentioned by our old storytellers."

\* Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, VII, 207), says this motif (F665.1.) is found in a well known story, but he mentions no source.

## Tale 2

A gentleman who is fond of music meets a man who claims he is able to produce music by most unusual means. Once engaged, he hollows out a stand of trees in such a way that when the wind blows, fine music issues forth from this unusual organ.

There does not seem to be a motif number covering this tale. The nearest would seem to be F675, Ingenious carpenter, and X994, Lie: remarkable carpenter.

Lucian in his True Story (edited and with English translation by A.M. Harmon, 8 vols., London, 1913 and reprint, 1953) visits the Isle of the Blest. There, "A rare, pure atmosphere enfolded the place, and sweet breezes with their blowing stirred the woods gently, so that from the moving branches came a whisper of delightful unbroken music, like the fluting of Pandean pipes in desert places." (1, 309-11).

## Tale 3

Two prostitutes are blown up to the second gallery of a church when a great wind catches their skirts; there they hang, indecently exposed to the common gaze, until they are brought down by some of the onlookers.

This tale fits under the general motif number X1611, Lies about the wind, and more closely to Baughman's X1611.1.5\*, Remarkable wind blows objects and living things about. Compare tale 106 in this collection, where a church steeple is blown away in a storm.

The divine hand is discernible, wrathfully punishing unwelcome women who attempt to enter a church, in the following anecdote related by C. Grant Loomis: "The rash females who tried to enter the church of John Nepomuck were struck by a blast of wind which caused their skirts to cling to their heads, shamefully exposing them to the eyes of the crowd." (White Magic, p. 97). In both cases the women are exposed to the public gaze by a blast of wind, and the moral reproof common to both tales provides a second link.

Propulsion through the air by using the wind in one's clothes is the motif common to Philippe's tale (where it is, of course, quite involuntary) and an episode in Lucian's visit to the Moon, where he meets the Volplaneurs who "... fly in the air without wings. As to the manner of their flight, they pull their long tunics up through their girdles, let the baggy folds fill with wind as if they were sails, and are carried along like boats." (True Story, ed. Harmon, p. 265).

## Tale 4

A soldier back from the wars describes a battle. Arrows fall thicker than rain; a dead horse is pierced by an incredible number of spears and arrows. Two cannonballs coming from the opposite camps meet head-on, and fall right on the handle of a sapper's pick, causing him to fill his britches in fear.



The most noticeable motif in this tale is the apparently accidental collision of the two cannonballs. Baughman has a new category for this motif, X981\*(d), Unusual occurrences in shooting. The logical development of this motif is implied in Baughman X981\*(da), Brothers shoot at each other's gun muzzles; the bullets meet and fall flattened to ground. The purposeful aiming of the projectile figures in the Adventures of Baron Munchhausen, in which the Baron sights the cannon so that the ball will meet the one fired from the enemy cannon. However, the most refined version of this motif is in tale 61 of La Nouvelle Fabrique; in this story, a musketeer fires his bullet down the barrel of another's musket, whereupon the latter fires both bullets down the barrel of the former's musket. The two musketeers are later called upon to give repeat performances of their skillful shooting for the entertainment of their superiors.

As an indication that the motif is not confined to the tall tale, Baughman mentions two saints who throw stones at each other, the stones colliding in mid-air. Elsewhere, giants are recorded doing the same thing. The step from possible occurrence to tall tale is made when the clashing bodies have been deliberately aimed at each other.

#### Tale 5

Scything a field, a man strikes steel to stone; the resulting spark causes a fire which razes the field to ashes.

There seems to be no appropriate motif for this tale, although the fact of exaggeration seems obvious. The tale should thus be classified under X1800, Miscellaneous exaggerations. The tale is noteworthy for the long enumeration of plants which are consumed in the fire.

## Tale 6

A young woman falls ill from constipation. When the apothecary comes to administer a suppository, she is so abashed at having to expose herself that she lets go a great fart, which hurls the apothecary to the floor and smashes the syringe.

This tale should have its place under the section beginning X930, Physical powers and habits of remarkable person. A parallel does exist in French tradition, appearing in a song collected in French Canada by Marguerite and Raoul d'Harcourt (Chansons folkloriques françaises au Canada, Québec, 1956, pp. 364-65). Entitled "Ecoutez, j'vas vous chanter" it is subtitled "Le pet" (The fart) and tells how a young girl breaks wind with such force in church she knocks the beadle over.

The tale also recalls motif G93, Cannibal breaks wind as a means of attack. One may relate this tale to two others in La Nouvelle Fabrique: tale 99, in which a squashed louse makes a great noise causing pots and pans to fall from the wall, and tale 108, in which the bung from an exploding barrel of cider flies through the roof of a house and kills a bird flying past.

One may note the topsy-turvy opening formula of this tale: "Depuis un an, ma mere grand, qui mourut il y a vingt ans, me conta devant hier." For an extensive illustration of opening and closing formulas, see Bolte and Polivka, Anmerkungen, IV, 1-40; for an illustration of such formulas in French language tradition, see George Laport, FF Communications No. 101, Les Contes Populaires Wallons, pp. 6-9; see also Elsie Clews Parsons, Folk-Tales of Andros Island, Bahamas (New York, 1918. Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, Vol. XIII), pp. x-xii; and Daniel J. Crowley, I Could Talk Old-Story Good: Creativity in Bahamian Folklore (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966. University of California Publications, Folklore Studies: 17), s.v. "Opening and Closing Formulae," pp. 32ff.

## Tale 7

A cobbler walking through a forest captures two hares by an ingenious method. Seeing one hare coming towards him he hurls a piece of wax at it, hitting it squarely between the eyes. Startled, it runs off, only to crash head-on into another hare coming in the opposite direction. They stick together, are unable to shake loose, and are caught.

This is the Aarne-Thompson type 1893A\*, Two Hares Run into Each Other and are Caught, motif number X1114.1. The Types of the Folktale records only five versions of this tale, none of which are French: 1 Irish, 2 English and 2 Flemish; the English examples are included in Baughman.

I have been able to locate two other French versions of the tale so far unrecorded. The first, in the form of a poem by M. Capelle, appears in the Porte-Feuille Français (Paris, 1807, p. 86), and is entitled "Le Cachet Gascon." De Crac, the hero, has no more ammunition. Seeing a hare, he smartly fires the seal from an old letter at it, and such is his good aim that the now boiling wax sticks to the hare's head. Another hare, startled by the explosion, runs head-on into the first and both are caught.

The second version, which was sent to me by Roger Pinon, appears in Wallonia (Liège), VI, 1898, 158-60, as one of several "Facéties de Chasseurs." Three hunters are boasting of their exploits. The first claims to have shot the head off a hare, and to have been surprised at the hare walking several yards to fetch its head. The second tells how, unarmed, he sees two hares in his garden. He throws one of his clogs at one and stuns it. The second hare, startled at this unforeseen event, dives into the clog and is likewise caught. (The third hunter shoots two woodcock some distance from a friend's château. Using fine shot, he shoots all the feathers off them. Such is the force of his shot that the birds were sent right into his friend's cooking pot. The hunter pauses, and adds that he

had promised him one, anyway. One may compare the foregoing, in its form, with the "Lying Contest.").

Carl Müller-Fraureuth records two German variants in his Die Deutschen Lügendichtungen bis auf Münchhausen, p. 118, note 151.

#### Tale 8

Cleaning out a well, a man finds a round stone blocking it. As he begins to break it up, he overhears two women talking to each other from beneath the stone, and concludes that it is the other side of the world.

This tale fits the general pattern of the motifs F718, Extraordinary well, and F721, Subterranean world.

Paul Sébillot quotes this tale: (Folklore de France, II, 323) and refers to a similar one from the Côtes-du-Nord. Villagers wishing to dig a well work hard for two months until a mysterious voice cries out "Deep enough!" They stop, believing it to be the voice of the Devil warning them not to come any nearer to his domain.

Lucian tells of a well in the land of the Selenites. Whoever descends into the well hears everything that is said on the Earth. (True History, ed. Harmon, p. 281).

The extraordinary well appears in tale 21 of La Nouvelle Fabrique. A duck falls into a well and appears many miles away.

#### Tale 9

One extremely cold winter's day a woman's nose freezes and when she blows, pulls it off and throws it away, unawares. A passing duck gobbles it up, and when the woman returns home, she frightens her children.

This tale fits under the general motif X1620, Lies about cold weather, and more particularly in Baughman's new category, X1622.1\*, Cold weather affects man. Cold weather exaggerations also appear in tales 18, 24, 28 and 102 of La Nouvelle Fabrique.

## Tale 10

A blacksmith sells his possessions in order to take up arms against the Protestants. In the heat of battle, his horse is cut in two by a cannonball. Horse and rider fight on for three hours, the soldier unaware of the predicament of his mount. Both are killed when the horse is forced to move backwards and falls.

Apparently unknown in North America except through chapbook editions of Münchhausen's adventures, this tale is related to the first part of the Aarne-Thompson tale type 1889P, Horse Repaired, of which few versions are recorded in The Types of the Folktale. The corresponding motif number is X1864, Lie: warrior whose horse is cut in two continues to ride on the half horse.

The tale seems to have been first told in print in Heinrich Bebel's Facetiae (Paris, 1516. The best edition, which I have not been able to see, is Albert Wesselski's Heinrich Bebel's Schwänke, 2 vols., Munich, 1907). Carl Müller-Fraureuth mentions other German versions as parallels to the best known version, that of Baron Münchhausen (see Carswell, Dover edition, pp. 19-21). The above version differs from both the Bebel and Münchhausen ones, in the first place by the manner of the horse's accident, and in the second by the absence of reparation; but the horse is not repaired in the Bebel version.

Ch. Thuriot has a version (Traditions Populaires du Doubs, Paris, 1891, pp. 470-71) which I have taken from G. Vidossi (In Margine ad Alcune Avventure di Münchhausen) and translated below, in which "... the tragicomic story is translated into an alarming legend."

## The Lord of Joux's Mare

Amaury, after many campaigns, was growing bored and lazy alone in his château. As an amusement, he would often go riding. One day, riding his proudest mare, he was crossing the drawbridge on his way out of the manor. As he went by, the portcullis fell down and cut the horse's body in two. Amaury did not notice it, and the

horse, on two legs only, continued its gallop across the countryside. It came to a wild gorge called the Combe, in which there was a spring. Consumed by thirst, the animal draws up at the spring and begins drinking without pause. Amaury tries in vain to make his horse raise its head. He jumps down in order to strike it; but at that moment he notices that his horse has only two legs and that as it drinks, the water falls to the ground through its gaping wound. Amaury runs off in fear to his castle. He tells the tale to his people. (The tale continues by explaining that the intermittent flow of water at the spring is caused by the horse, made invisible by the fairies, which comes many times each day to quench its thirst).

#### Tale 11

A soldier is condemned to death by arrow fire, but is allowed to retain his sword. So dexterous is he with it that he is able to cut every arrow fired at him in half. Amazed at his skill, his superiors spare his life.

This tale should be placed under the general motif number X980, Lie: occupational or professional skill. This particular skill is closely related to that of the third brother in tale 1 and, in fact, the closest motif to the present is F667.2, Man able to strike every arrow with his sword and reduce it to splinters; for this motif there is only an Indian parallel.

Since swords have long been out of fashion, it is hardly surprising that the many motifs Baughman records under the general category of occupational or professional skill should be concerned with skillful gun handling. In Philippe's day both bow and gun were in use, and in tale 61 similar skill is shown by two musketeers.

A modern French parallel from Eastern France is recorded as one tale in the repertoire of a tall tale teller named Jacquot Malavaux. As related by René Terrier, Jacquot had been visiting some lady friends in a neighbouring village, and on his way home some of the

village lads began hurling stones at him. Now Jacquot had been the baton swinger in his army regiment; every stone that was thrown at him by the lads he struck away; he swung so quickly that he won the battle (René Terrier, "Jacquot Malavaux--Conteur populaire et tisserand," Barbizier, Almanach Populaire Comtois, Besançon, 1962, pp. 451-54).

#### Tale 12

A traveller recites his journeys; the wonders he has seen include men with green beards and violet hair; two-tongued women who cannot speak but who weave linen so fine that 42 ells of it can be put in a man's mouth; huge herrings; a river which carries millstones without support; horned monkeys with orange hair whose snot becomes pearls when it falls to the ground, and hemp plants the size of trees.

The characteristic motifs of this tale relate it to AT 1930, Schlaraffenland. (Land of Cokaygne). Land in which impossible things happen. In inspiration, however, the tale owes much to the fabulous accounts of medieval travellers, as typified by Mandeville's Travels, the immensely popular fourteenth century fabrication.

Motifs include F545.1.1.1. green beards; F555, remarkable hair (compare also F555.5, Multicolored hair); F544.2, remarkable tongue; the fine linen lacks a motif number; X1301, Lie: The great fish; for the river carrying millstones one may compare Baughman X1741.9\*, Lie: anvil swims river; Baughman X1232\*, Lies about monkeys; for the snot which becomes pearls, compare D475.4.2, Transformation: lice into gems, recorded by C. Grant Loomis as a saint's legend, and D475.4.4, Transformation: peas into pearls, recorded in India; and finally, for the large hemp plant, there is only the general category X1400-1499, Tall tales about plants, fruits, vegetables and trees.

The Aarne-Thompson catalogue indicates the presence of this tale type in many parts of Europe, but in a limited number of variants; only in Sweden has it been found more than a dozen times. The oldest

version recorded is in Herodotus. Carl Müller-Fraureuth indicates many German versions in song, while Luc Lacourcière has found four versions in French Canada, also in song. Gustav Henningsen remarks in his collection of Scandinavian tall tales that one informant sent him a version of the Schlaraffenland theme in song form, but he found no others. An old French fabliau records the same tale as does an old English romance. I have remarked elsewhere that further study of the Schlaraffenland theme may show it to be more common in song than in prose narrative. The compendious notes to this tale given by Bolte and Polivka (Anmerkungen, III, 244-58) do nothing to deny this possibility, although I have not checked the many references the work provides. To do so would be to go beyond the scope of this note. At the same time, one may contrast the paucity of the French references included under "Das Märchen vom Schlauraffenland" with the large body of Italian material cited.

It should be repeated here that the Aarne-Thompson catalogue does not make a clear distinction between the Schlaraffenland theme, AT 1930, and AT 1935, Topsy-Turvy Land. Motifs usually associated with Schlaraffenland or Cokaygne include fanciful wishes about a Terrestrial Paradise, where roast fowl fall into one's lap and roast pigs run around with knives and forks in them crying "Eat me!" This is the tenor of French versions of the tale in both song and prose. The land of Cokaygne has become a proverbial saying in French tradition. "Un pays de Cocagne" is a land of abundance and good living. The expression is first recorded in France in the twelfth century in the chanson de geste Aymeri de Narbonne and is the central point of a thirteenth century fabliau, in which the author, having gone to Rome to ask the Pope for absolution of his sins, is sent in penance to a land in which dwellings are made of different foodstuffs, where rivers flow with wine, both white and red, and where it rains, thrice weekly, a shower of hot flans.

Jean Tournemille (Vie et Langage, 34, Jan. 1955, 2-3) describes later literary allusions to this fabled land. He refers also to



the mât de cocagne, a slippery pole on top of which a bottle of champagne might be placed on holidays, and which competitors try to fetch down. Charles Galtier (Le Trésor des Jeux Provençaux, Arles, 1952, p. 252), mentions l'aubre de Coucagno as a Provençal game. "La Cocagne est un pays imaginaire où tout vient à merveille, aussi n'est-on pas surpris de trouver au sommet du fameux arbre, dressé sur la place publique, toute sorte d'objet en guise de fruits: jambons, saucissons, bouteilles, gâteaux.... qui appartiendront à ceux qui réussiront à se hisser jusqu'à eux."

Jean Tournemille's brief discussion of "le pays de Cocagne" inspired an interesting correspondance with amateur linguists in Germany and Luxembourg. Tournemille had concluded his article by noting that there was no direct equivalent to the French expression in other languages; to express the same idea, the English used the "Land of Milk and Honey" and the Germans "Das Land wo Milch und Honig fliesst." His correspondents were quick to inform him that in German "Schlaraffenland" translated exactly the idea of "Cocagne;" it derived from Schlaraffe, High German shuraffe, 'an idle person, given to much eating and scoffing.' One informant referred to the expression "ein Schlaraffenleben führen," 'to live well without working.' The English "Lubberland" was felt by Tournemille to be no better than the Germanic forms in presenting the idea implicit in "Cocagne." (Vie et Langage, 40, July 1955, pp. 326-28).

Whatever conclusions Tournemille may have drawn concerning the value of the French expression, one point is clear: in the three languages he was dealing with, this fabulous country is a land where the joys of the table are preeminent, and they go hand in hand with laziness. All motifs of this nature should be grouped under AT 1930, Schlaraffenland, and motifs dealing with the reversal of normality should be reserved, for purposes of classification, to AT 1935, Topsy-Turvy Land.

Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, X, 92) provides two seventeenth century references to Cocagne, both of which are associated with

roast larks dropping into one's lap. Rolland also cites other proverbial expressions which are related to Cocagne; it is said of misers in some parts of France that they do not tie up their dogs with a string of sausages. He also cites an Italian saying, "El paese de la Cucagna, indove che i liga i cani co le luganighe," 'The land of Cocagne, where dogs are attached with strings of sausages.' (Faune Populaire, IV, 15).

Rivers of wine and fish which intoxicate are found in Lucian's True Story (ed. Harmon, p. 255 and p. 257); certain inhabitants of the Moon possess noses from which runs "... honey of great pungency, and when they work or take exercise, they sweat milk all over their bodies, of such quality that cheese can actually be made from it by dripping in a little of the honey" (p. 279). See also True Story, pp. 315-17 for another description of a true Land of Milk and Honey.

Rabelais was of course familiar with the medieval Fabliau du Pays de Cocagne as Lazare Sainéan points out in La Langue de Rabelais (Paris, 2 vols., 1922-23): "The Fabliaux of the Middle Ages belong to the genre of humorous tales. Rabelais knew some of them for example the fabliau du Pays de Cocagne, from which he borrowed this characteristic detail:

Le païs a a nom Coquaigne,  
Qui plus i dort, plus i gaaigne:  
Cil qui dort jusqu'à midi,  
Gaaigne cinc sols et demi...

(Ed. Méon, t. IV, p. 175).

which he placed in his story about Gorgias (Book II, ch. XXXII). Pantagrue, to protect his army from a rain shower, covers it with his tongue. Alcofribas, who climbs up on to it, goes into Pantagrue's mouth. There he finds a whole new world, has a conversation with a cabbage planter and earns some money there: 'Do you know how? By sleeping, because they hire people by the day to sleep, and earn five or six sols a day, but the ones who snore loudly earn seven and a

half sols.'" (Vol. I, pp. 226-27).

This particular motif appears in most of the songs about Cocagne in French tradition that I have seen.

For further nonsense motifs, see tales 49 and 50.

#### Tale 13

A man owns a great hound which frightens people. One day it meets a fox; they sit down and stare so hard at each other that their eyes pop out of their heads.

I find no precise motif number for this tale which fits equally well under three general headings: F980, Extraordinary occurrences concerning animals; X1215, Lies about dogs; and X1740, Absurd Disregard of Natural Laws.

#### Tale 14

A lord's favourite hunting bitch is pregnant and gives birth while running with the pack. As they fall to the ground, her pups miss their mother and begin running after her; they are in at the kill.

Baughman has created a new number, X1215.13\*(c) to accomodate the general theme of this tale. He has only one American version and refers to M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen (see the Dover edition, ed. Carswell, p. 15) for a parallel. Both Baughman's Arizona source and the version in M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen are more elaborate than Philippe's; in both cases, the animal which is pursued also gives birth to its young while being chased, at the same time as the pursuer. This tale is not included in the Aarne-Thompson catalogue under AT 1889, M $\ddot{u}$ nchhausen tales, and indeed, is not even mentioned. It seems therefore to be little known.

## Tale 15

Three men boast in an inn of being able to spit out a fire. The innkeeper wagers they cannot spit out his fire, but they do.

This tale fits under the general motif number X934, Lie: remarkable spitter. There is a difference in nature between this example and those included by Baughman, which tend to dwell on the potency of the saliva rather than its quantity. One may compare this tale with Baughman X934(ee), Tobacco juice puts out fire, for which he records only two versions, both from Arkansas.

## Tale 16

A starving soldier comes home from the war; he bets the welcoming friends he can eat a whole calf roasting on the spit without touching it with his hands. He wins his bet.

This tale, to which I have found no parallels in French tradition, fits under motif X931, Lie: remarkable eater. Compare also F531.3.4, Giant eats a prodigious amount; and F632, Mighty eater. The position of this tale in Philippe's collection, immediately following a tale concerning wagers, suggests the possibility that here is a case of 'one liar outdoing another.'

## Tale 17

Some tennis players hit their ball into the vast beard of an onlooker. Despite all their efforts they cannot find it.

This tale may be placed in the general category X1727, Absurd stories about beards. Baughman has no examples of tales about beards and I have found no parallels in French tradition. Compare F634.1, catching fish in beard.

## Tale 18

During a bitterly cold winter a woodcutter climbs a tree to cut branches, and drops his sickle. Unwilling to climb down for it, he pisses down upon it; because of the extreme cold his piddle freezes, and catching hold of the long icicle, he recovers his sickle.

Baughman has a new number for this tale, X1622.3.3.2\*, Man makes use of icicles; compare especially X1622.3.3.2\*(a), Man trapped in burning hotel pours pitcherful of water out the window, slides to safety on the icicle which forms. A Missouri version recorded by Baughman has the icicle made from the man's urine.

## Tale 19

A man finds a small hare under a magnificent thistle, both of which he carries home. On his way home, a swarm of bees attaches itself to the thistle and this he puts in a hive where it flourishes. It gives many swarms which he sells at great profit.

This is a variant of X1110, Wonderful Hunt, and is related to AT 1890, The Lucky Shot, variants of which are characterised by the lucky accident--in this case, the swarm of bees which attaches itself to the thistle. Compare tale 43 for a closer and fuller version.

Philippe concludes this tale with a proverb well known in French tradition: "Un essaim de May vaut une vache à laict." Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, XIII, 26) records variants of this proverb from other parts of France.

## Tale 20

A great hailstorm flattens the crops and knocks the horns off the heads of the goats. Their owners do not recognise them.

Three motifs are involved here: X1244, Lies about goats; F962.5, extraordinary hailstones; and, for purposes of comparison, Baughman X1652\*(a), Large Hailstones. Hailstone bounces off silo, kills calf.

#### Tale 21

A dog chases some ducks and one falls down a well. A man looks for it without success. It reappears in a fountain a league and a half away.

This tale falls under the general rubric F940, extraordinary underground/underwater disappearance.

Paul Sébillot quotes this tale in his discussion of the role of wells in humorous stories and folktales; he relates its theme to the once widespread belief that wells possess mysterious ducts which surface far from the well itself. He cites another example from Basse-Normandie, where it was believed that a certain well was the orifice of a subterranean channel, and that a duck which was thrown down it reappeared beneath a distant church. (Folklore de France, II, 323-26). Compare also tale 66, in which horse, carriage and passengers fall into a pond and reappear elsewhere.

For additional references to bottomless pools, see Herbert Halpert, "Place Name Stories Of Kentucky Waterways And Ponds, With a Note on Bottomless Pools," Kentucky Folklore Record, VII, 3 (1961), 85-101.

#### Tale 22

Two gamblers each playing with loaded dice decide to play for money; both are confident of victory. The first throws two aces and reaches for the stakes, but the other throws his dice in such a way that one stands on the other, exposing a single ace. He wins.

This tale fits under motif K92.2, game won with loaded dice; the unique method of this tale is not covered precisely, however.

## Tale 23

A man cuts a loaf of bread so forcefully that he cuts himself in two, thereby killing himself.

The nearest motif to this is X1726, Man cuts off own head, for which Baughman has no examples.

The following French version is told about the Baron de Crac, and was sent to me by my father-in-law, Monsieur Roger Durand of Marseille: "One day, said Baron de Crac, I was on a reconnaissance mission and happened to be in the middle of the forest while my comrades were dining. The only provisions I had was a fortnight old ration loaf, as hard as stone. Making the best of a bad job, I prepared to eat a slice of this famous bread. When I tried to cut it, I discovered that it was impossible to cut into by ordinary means. I damaged my pocket knife, a solid enough object, without even scratching the crust. So I made up my mind to take extreme measures. I placed myself between two close-set trees and held the loaf on the other side of the tree I was facing. Then I took my sabre, which the regimental sword-grinder had only just sharpened, and laid it horizontally against the loaf, holding each end of the sword. So you can see the situation: the sabre, the loaf, the tree, me, a second tree behind me. Bracing myself against the trees, I pulled my sword fiercely backwards, in order to cut this confounded loaf. It gave way with one pull, and I suddenly found myself standing with my sabre behind the tree against which I had been bracing my back. With a single tug I had sliced in two the loaf, the tree I was facing, myself and the tree behind me. However, the blade had sliced through so rapidly that only the loaf, which was not supported underneath, had separated in two. The two trees and myself had not had the time to suffer and had been stuck together instantaneously. Happily, some crumbs in the middle of the loaf were still soft and I was thus able to repair my strength and recover from my shock."

## Tale 24

In very cold weather, when boiling pots froze, a woman went out to pee; when she had finished she could not rise, because her hairs were frozen to the puddle. Her husband has to fetch a pair of blacksmith's shears to cut her free.

The first motif, the freezing of boiling pots, is as much an aside as part of the narrative, indeed, it has a formulaic quality about it. It is related, however, to Baughman X1622.3.3.1\*(b), Part of water in pot on stove boils; the part next to the door is frozen over. Baughman has no number for the main motif in this tale and it may be classified under the general heading X1620, Lies about cold weather.

Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 59) refers to a parallel in Codex Z of Marco Polo's Il Milione: "... his wife squatted down to urinate; because of the extreme cold, the hairs on her thighs froze and stuck to the grass, in such a way that the woman, unable to move, cried out in her distress...."

Philippe ends his tale by advising all housewives, rather vulgarly, to "... souvent ramoner vos cheminées haut et bas." I am extremely grateful to Roger Pinon, who referred me to the song "C'était un petit ramoneur" (He was a little chimneysweep). The meaning of this allusion to a popular song becomes clear on seeing the full context. The earliest version of this song, from 1543, includes the following verse:

Ramonnez-moy ma cheminée  
 Ramonnez-la-moy hault et bas.  
 Une dame, la matinée,  
 Disoit, de chaleur forcénée:  
 Mon amy, prenons nos esbas;  
 Ramonnez-moy ma cheminée,  
 Ramonnez-la-moy hault et bas. (J.B. Weckerlin,



L'Ancienne Chanson Populaire en France, Paris, 1887, p. 428).

Philippe includes snatches of popular songs and jingles in several of his tales, usually as a kind of closing formula. See especially tale 49.

#### Tale 25

A pond is drained and many fish are caught. Amongst the ordinary denizens of the pond is an enormous eel which nourishes twenty-two monks and their servants for a whole year.

This tale fits under AT 1960B, The Great Fish. Compare Baughman X1301.5\*(g), Cured flesh of great fish feeds whole village for several years.

Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," 60-61) suggests that Philippe is deliberately parodying Pliny (whom Philippe refers to in this tale) in order to further his own philosophy: that scepticism is better than credulity.

For notes on the eel in French folklore, see Eugène Rolland, Faune Populaire, XI, 186-200.

#### Tale 26

Two stags fight and their horns become entwined; they tug so hard that they pull each other's heads off.

There is no precise number for this tale; Baughman has, however, a new category X1234\*, Lies about deer. In spirit, this tale is related to the group X1204, Lie: animals eat one another up.

#### Tale 27

An enormous steer is sold to the King. Its head is as big as a seven hogshead barrel, its eyes as big as bushels, its horns as long as a chimneysweep's pole and so far apart an archer cannot shoot an arrow from one to the other.

Here is a prototype of Paul Bunyan's blue ox. Several motifs are present in this tale: X1237, Lies about oxen and steers. The great ox. Compare Baughman X1237.2.3\*(f), Distance between horns of blue ox. There are no motif numbers to accomodate either the size of the steer's eyes or the length of its horns.

The tale has, as a kind of closing formula, the interjection "... et tant de trippes, frere Philippes." Although this may justifiably be considered an aside to one of the narrator's companions, it fits a pattern which is repeated elsewhere in La Nouvelle Fabrique. Tale 45 begins "Ne vous deplaise, Blaise, de ce que je veux reciter." Other tales have similar rhyming formulas. This kind of rhyme, in which a proper name figures, is still very common in colloquial French. In A Dictionary of French Slang (London, 1935) lent to me by Professor C.S. Barr of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Olivier Leroy lists the following common interjections based on the rhyming phrase: "'Tu l'as dur, Arthur,' rhyming stock phrase without a definite meaning." (p. 15). It may be translated as "Hard luck!" "'Comme de juste, Auguste!' rhyming stock phrase expressing agreement: quite so! right you are! That's the idea. etc." (p. 18). "'Ça colle, Anatole?' How goes it, old cock?--a nonsense rhyming stock phrase." (p. 12). "'Tu parles, Charles!' --you may well say so, now you're talking." (p. 60). "'A la tienne, Etienne,' rhyming stock phrase for a toast." (p. 107). "'Elle est comme la poupée de Jeanneton/ Elle n'a ni cul, ni fesses, ni tétons' -- rhyming stock phrase applied to a woman who is the reverse of buxom." (p. 137).

There is a high degree of possibility that the phrase "Ne vous deplaise, Blaise," used by Philippe to open tale 45, is a traditional one. It was apparently in oral tradition as far south as Marseille, according to my wife, whose late grandmother, born in that city in the eighteen-eighties, often used it in much the same way as Philippe. Other examples of rhymes using names are found as part of children's lore in France. Eugène Rolland (Rimes et jeux de l'enfance, Paris, 1883 and reprint, Paris, 1967, p. 314) cites

two such rhymes without specifying their usage:

Tu ne m'attraperas pas,  
Nicolas. (No. 105)

Il est dedans,  
Comme frère Laurent. (No. 106)

Philippe's use of such traditional stock phrases underlines his closeness to the folk idiom.

#### Tale 28

In extremely cold weather a cat chases a rat. Both jump into the air where they are frozen to death and remain thus suspended.

Two motifs appear in this tale: X1622.2\*, Cold weather affects animals, a new number created by Baughman, and X1741, Lies about gravitation. Compare Baughman X1741.3(b), Petrified bird transfixed with arrow hangs in mid-air : the law of gravity is petrified.

#### Tale 29

Merrymakers are seated at table when the floor suddenly gives way; barely noticing it, they find themselves in the cellar, without damage or harm.

This tale is covered only by the general motif number X1731, Lies about falling.

For the opening formula, in the form of a nonsense genealogy, see the notes to tales 6, 27 and 49.

## Tale 30

A cut-purse mistakes a man's testicles for his purse and relieves him of them. He is caught on account of the victim's cries and executed.

Not surprisingly, there is no motif number to cover the gist of this tale. In a general way, it fits under J1770, objects with mistaken identity; and J1772, one object thought to be another.

There are, of course, numerous jokes about castration in oral tradition. Amongst several examples of jokes on this and related themes, G. Legman cites the following: "A wrestler sees his opponent's testicles hanging out of his trunks and bites them. They are his own." ("Rationale of the Dirty Joke," Neurotica, 9 (Winter, 1952), 49-64).

## Tale 31

A man confronted by a man-eating lynx quick-wittedly plunges a long hook into its mouth, turns it inside out and then back again.

This is the international tale type AT 1889B, Hunter Turns Animal Inside Out, motif number X1124.2. Baughman records nine American versions to add to those in the Aarne-Thompson catalogue from Germany (Bebel, Münchhausen), Finland (two versions), Catalonia (two versions), Serbo-Croatia (one version) and a single example from French Canada.

Nowhere is mention made of the animal being turned back again. In this respect, Philippe's tale seems to be unique.

Another unrecorded version appears in Edouard Dulac, Le livre joyeux: histoires gasconnes (Paris, 1925, pp. 2-3), in which a bear is turned inside out by hand.

The one French tall tale hero of real life and of recent times I have been able to discover, Jacquot Malavaux (see notes to tale 11) is the hero of two adventures cast in the same mould as the present one. In the first case, Jacquot, faced with a fierce wolf and armed only with his fists, thrusts his hand into the wolf's maw as far as

its tail and turns it inside out. In another somewhat related adventure, Jacquot thrusts a jointed pole straight through a wolf, snaps the bolt, and with the wolf safely skewered on the pole, carries it home (it is not mentioned whether he turns the wolf inside out).

A final French version appears in the form of a folk etymology, to explain the name of the hamlet of Retourneloup in Champagne. A shepherd, angered at the continual theft of his sheep by an old wolf, stalks the wolf; a man of herculean strength and proportions, he thrusts his arm into the wolf's mouth, right down to the tail, and with a mighty tug, turns the creature inside out. The wolf runs off holding its tail in its teeth; the place of this remarkable encounter acquires a fitting name. (Bulletin du Comité du Folk-Lore Champenois, 15 (March 1934), p. 222.

#### Tale 32

After a great rainstorm it is seen to have rained a multitude of toads.

Several motifs cover this tale in a general way: F962, extraordinary precipitation; X1654, Lies about rain. Compare Baughman X1654.4\*(a), Rain is so thick that fishermen cannot tell where lake ends and rain begins. Fish swim in air, birds fly under the water of the lake.

In Lucian's True Story (ed. Harmon, p. 277) the Selenites "... light a fire and cook frogs on the coals--they have quantities of frogs, that fly about in the air...."

Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, III, pp. 48, 68) twice refers to the belief that toads and frogs are born in the sky and come to earth in rainstorms. He observes that young toads rapidly appear when it rains, hence the belief that it rains toads. He cites the Dutch name for tadpoles, donderpaddetjes, which also reflects this same belief.

One may note Philippe's allusion to Cocagne; the toads  
 "... étoient tombez des nuës (comme font les alouettes toutes  
 rosties dans le bec de plusieurs) avec la pluie."

### Tale 33

Losing a sow, its keeper goes after it down a hole, and eventually finds it in a field at the other end, with a litter. In the field, men in shirtsleeves are bringing in the harvest, although it is December.

Motifs in this tale include X1605, Lie: mixed weather. It is summer in one spot and winter in another near by; and F111.O.2, swineherd finds terrestrial paradise while looking for lost sow.

One may note the cry used by the swineherd in this tale to call his sow: "Coinche, coinche, tien coinche; coinche, coinche, tien coinche." This apparent alliteration may well be an accurate transcription of what Philippe used to hear in his neighbourhood; for examples of other words used to speak to pigs in certain parts of France, see Eugène Rolland, Faune Populaire, V, p. 224.

### Tale 34

A young woman is plagued by a raging toothache; an archer offers to help extract the bad tooth and attaches it by a piece of string to an arrow, which he fires. Instead of the tooth alone flying off with the arrow, the woman flies off as well, landing in a pond in which she very nearly drowns.

This parody of tooth-pulling methods traditional in both Britain and the U.S.A. is related to AT 1881, The Man Carried through the Air by Geese, motif number X1258.1. Generically, the tale belongs to the family of yarns in which a person or object is carried through the air by implausible means. The Aarne-Thompson catalogue mentions versions from nine different national sources, without

saying if the agents are always the same. No French versions are mentioned, although Luc Lacourcière has collected five examples of AT 1881 in French Canada, to which Stith Thompson had access prior to the 1961 revision of The Types of the Folktale.

Tales 36, 47, 59 and 62 in La Nouvelle Fabrique are also about people or animals being carried through the air by various agents.

#### Tale 35

A man walking through newly acquired fields is surprised by the speed of growth of recently planted oats, which lift him right off the ground.

This tale fits under the general motif X1402, Lie: the fast growing plant, and Baughman's new number, X1402.3.1\*, Lie: speed of growth of cornstalk.

#### Tale 36

A great flock of cranes is caught by the following method: a hunter baits a long cord with a bean. The first bird swallows it, defecates it, and is followed by all the other birds. When the cranes try to fly off, they are caught with the cord threaded through them. The hunter is lifted high off the ground but succeeds in bringing the birds down.

This tale fits under the international tale type AT 1881, The Man Carried through the Air by Geese, motif number X1258.1. This version of the type seems to be a rather rudimentary form; although the hunter is raised off the ground he is not carried very far. The main point of the tale is more accurately covered by motif X1124, Lie: the hunter catches or kills game by ingenious or unorthodox method.

This particular method of catching birds does not seem to be very popular in Anglo-American tradition; Baughman cites three examples of it under type 1881. Of these, the earliest is from an English

publication of 1751, used to satirise hunting methods (see Emery, Hoosier Folklore Bulletin, 3, 23, 1944). Philippe's version precedes this English example by nearly 175 years. Richard M. Dorsen took another version from an 1833 publication of the joke book tradition (see Jonathan Draws The Long Bow, p. 229, No. 20), and William Hugh Jansen collected a third version from an informant who had worked in vaudeville (see Hoosier Folklore Bulletin, 2, June 1943, pp. 6-7).

Both Stith Thompson and Ernest W. Baughman refer to Baron Munchhausen's adventures for a prototype of AT 1881. While I have not seen the edition Baughman used, this tale is not found in the standard Carswell editions of 1948 and 1960, nor does it appear in an undated edition published by Illustrated Editions Co. of New York. On the other hand, it had certainly become attached to the Baron by the mid-nineteenth century in France, since P.A. Grattet-Duplessis, the editor of the 1853 edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique, refers to the analogous tale in Baron Munchhausen's adventures.

### Tale 37

Wild ducks build their nests in trees, in the shape of baskets. When the eggs are hatched, the male puts the handle over its head and carries the nest down to water, thus allowing the young birds to swim at once.

There is no precise motif number for this tale, but it does fit under the general motif X1261, Remarkable ducks.

Pliny (Natural History, trans. Rackham, X, 50, 355) relates a similar belief about magpies: "When magpies notice a person observing their nest with special attention, they transfer the eggs somewhere else. It is reported that in the case of these birds, as their claws are not adapted for grasping and carrying their eggs, this is effected in a remarkable manner: they place a sprig on the top of two eggs at a time, and solder it with glue from their belly, and placing their



neck under the middle of it so as to make it balance equally on both sides, carry it off somewhere else."

#### Tale 38

A rider is accosted in the woods by an outlaw, who seizes the bridle. The rider cuts off his hand with one blow of his sword; when he arrives home, his servant is astonished to find the hand still clutching the bridle. The hand is nailed to the door as a trophy.

There does not seem to be any adequate motif for this tale. A rather more sophisticated development of this theme has recently enjoyed wide currency in the U.S.A. It is usually in the form of a local legend, told as a "scary story." Linda Dégh gives a full example of this tale as well as mentioning some <sup>44</sup> variants from the Folklore Archives at Indiana University. The tale, referred to as "The Hook," I summarize below: A courting couple in a car hear a radio announcement to the effect that a dangerous criminal is at large. One of his hands is replaced by a steel hook. Later, the couple hears a scratching noise and leave. On reaching their destination, they find a steel hook caught in the car's body. (See Indiana Folklore, I, 1 (Fall-Winter 1968), 92-100).

#### Tale 39

A priest swallows a bird which falls into his soup; it flies around inside his stomach for two hours trying to get out.

This tale may be classified under the general motif number X1723, Lies about swallowing. For other lies about swallowing in this collection, see tales 47 and 90.

#### Tale 40

A man catches incredible numbers of water birds by disguising his head as a bird, submerging his body and grabbing his prey by the

legs.

This hunting tale fits under motif X1124, Lie: the hunter catches or kills game by ingenious or unorthodox method.

For a French-Canadian parallel to this tale, in which a hunter walks into a river up to his neck, catches ducks by their feet, attaches them to his belt and is carried off through the air (he lands by twisting their necks one by one), see William Parker Greenough, Canadian Folk-Life and Folk-Lore, New York, 1897, 49-50.

Diving under water and tying ducks' feet together is a similar method used by the Anglo-American tradition hero "Jack" in the Southern Mountains, and recorded by Richard Chase in his The Jack Tales (Cambridge, Mass., 1943, 154-55); see also Herbert Halpert's annotations to Chase's version, pp. 198-99.

#### Tale 41

A bull is taken to a cow. It misses the mark and a maid-servant uses her scarf to guide the bull to its goal; but the bull takes the scarf with it, and when the calf is born, it has no ears and is wearing the scarf neatly tied over its head.

This tale fits under motif number X1202, Lie: animals inherit acquired characteristics or conditions (e.g. a bear stuck in a barrel has baby bears born wearing small barrels; birds lose their feathers and are given sweaters to wear; little birds are hatched out wearing sweaters). Baughman has recorded seven variants of this tale in North America.

Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, IV, p. 179) records a version he collected personally in North Eastern France. A farm girl, unwilling to help a stallion to the mare by hand, uses her bonnet. The bonnet disappears inside the mare. The following year, a colt is born wearing a bonnet tied beneath its chin.

Transposed from animals to humans, this theme is a very popular modern joke. G. Legman (Rationale of the Dirty Joke, New York, 1968, p. 498) studies, to his own Freudian ends, a version from American tradition in which a baby is born wearing a raincoat, a straw hat and carrying a cane. On his wedding night, the groom has used a condom which slipped off inside his bride; he fishes for it, without success, with a broomstraw and a toothpick.

Philippe's tale is of further interest for the traditional words of encouragement used by the cowherd to the bull: "Sus Robin; sus, sus, sus, Robin; sus, sus, Robin, sus." Paul Sébillot (Le Folklore de France, III, pp. 78-83) discusses various practices concerning "Les Amours et la Naissance" of farm animals in French tradition. He quotes the above example as one of the incantations used, in this case, to encourage the bull, but generally to help promote fertility. He cites a similar example also from Normandy: "Elle est belle, elle est belle, sus, ô bure! elle est belle, elle est belle, sus, sus, sus, ô bure, sus!"

Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, V, p. 15) notes the common use of the name Robin for the bull and its application to girls who pursue men too assiduously.

#### Tale 42

A man owns a fine dog which kills and eats mad dogs without suffering any harm, and which can be used to catch any kind of game.

This tale fits under the general motif X1215, Lies about dogs, and is related to the motifs X1215.6, Lie: ferocious dog, and X1215.8, Lie: intelligent dog.

#### Tale 43

While hunting, a man shoots an arrow at two birds on a branch; he splits the branch which catches the birds by the feet. The arrow falls into a pond, killing a big fish. As he retrieves the fish,

his boots fill with eels. Pulling himself out of the water, he tugs at two tufts of grass beneath which are two hares; he kills them. Throwing the hares down, he kills two pheasants.

This tale is an amalgamation of the international tale types AT 1890A, Shot Splits Tree Limb. Bird's feet caught in the crack, and other lucky accidents bring much game, motif number X1124.3.1; and AT 1895, A Man Wading in Water Catches Many Fish in his Boots, motif number X1112. Compare also motif N620, Accidental success in hunting or fishing.

AT 1890A is poorly represented in The Types of the Folktale, only referring to thirteen versions recorded by Baughman (since increased to twenty-four) and one Franco-American; it was apparently unknown to Stith Thompson outside North America. AT 1895 is represented by six Finnish, three Flemish, two German, one Russian and three American versions, these last three recorded by Baughman and to which a further three have since been added. Luc Lacourcière has, however, recorded as many as thirteen versions of AT 1895 in French Canada.

Carl Müller-Fraureuth (Die Deutschen Mündendichtungen bis auf Mündchhausen, pp. 40-42) discusses German versions of similar hunting tales. Compare tale 19.

#### Tale 44

A man belches up a chimney and dislodges birds, nests and much soot.

There does not seem to be any close parallel to this tale, which fits under the general motif number X930, Remarkable person's physical powers; compare X935, remarkable blower, and X939, other motifs pertaining to extraordinary senses or bodily powers. Compare tale 6 for a related theme.

## Tale 45

An old bitch is mounted by three dogs at once; she runs off with them and each is punished by disgusted onlookers for its pains.

This tale may be conveniently placed under motif X1215, Lies about dogs, and X1720, Absurd disregard of anatomy.

For discussion of the opening formula to this tale, "Ne vous deplaise, Blaise..." see the notes to tale 27.

## Tale 46

An agile man climbs a tree and catches many squirrels by hand.

This tale fits under the general category X961, Lie: extraordinary bodily skills, and is related to Baughman's new number X962\*, Lie: remarkable runner, and its variants.

## Tale 47

A huge bird swallows a shepherd but is finally killed by countless vermin when it is forced to land. The dead bird is cut open and the shepherd crawls out, claiming to have had a good sleep.

A variety of motifs are present in this tale, notably X1723, Lies about swallowing; X1723.1, Swallowed person is discovered in animal's stomach still alive (compare F913, victim rescued from swallower's body); X1723.1.2, Man is swallowed by fish (or other animal); X1201, The great animal (compare B31.1, Roc); X1280, Lies about insects. The tale is also related to AT 1881, The Man Carried through the Air by Geese, in so far as the element of the unusual flight of a person is common to both.

Philippe's allusion to one of the great birds described by Pliny is enlarged upon by Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 52, note 4). The bird in question is apparently an ostrich. Compare tales 34, 39, 59, 62 and 90 for related themes,

## Tale 48

A woman wearing an amber rosary drags down a whole cartload of hay; the amber attracts the hay and must be concealed before the carter can get his horses to pull the cart away.

This tale fits under the motif D1429, Magic object draws person (thing) to it.

As Philippe rightly points out, amber is known for its ability to attract certain objects; it becomes electrically charged when subject to friction and might readily attract a blade of straw. The exaggeration lies in the amount of straw Philippe claims was drawn away by the amber rosary.

Also of note is the expression used by the carter to make his horses advance: "Hure-ho-dia, hay! de par le diable, hay!" See Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, IV, p. 132) for related forms used elsewhere in France. In this same volume (p. 126) Rolland shows how elements in Philippe's expression reappear in other parts of France in the formation of children's words for 'horse.'

## Tale 49

It is said that in Vinland (Finland) wind is sold to mariners; that in Scotland the leaves of certain trees become birds on falling into a river; that in Poland, naturally formed earthen pots, when uprooted and dried, are just like man-made pots; that sheep cannot live in Iceland because of the intense cold; that people cannot die in Iberia because the climate is too healthy, and they have to go to another place to die; that wolves cannot live in England and that some which were taken there died at once; that all pigs in Piedmont are black, and that white ones taken there become black immediately.

This curious enumeration, for it can hardly be called a tale, presents many points of interest. Its motifs relate it in a general way to AT 1930, Schlaraffenland, although none are actually included

under the description of AT 1930; indeed, to some of them I can find no parallels at all. The motifs seem to be generally characteristic of medieval literary tradition, recalling such classics as Mandeville's Travels and Giraldus Cambrensis' Topography of Ireland, written about 1185 (all references to this latter work are from the edition by John J. O'Meara, Dundalk, 1951).

It is in the Topography of Ireland that the theme of the healthy climate, in Philippe's tale set in Iberia, makes one of its earliest appearances. In an island in a lake in Munster, "... no one ever dies or could die by a natural death. Accordingly it is called the island of the living. Nevertheless the inhabitants have sometimes suffered mortal sickness and have endured the agony almost to their last gasp. When there is no hope left ... they get themselves finally transported in a boat to the larger island, and, as soon as they touch ground there, they give up the ghost." (pp. 42-43). This item fits under motif X1663, Lies about healthy atmosphere; compare also Baughman X1663.3\*(c), Man who lives in healthy climate has to go elsewhere because he wants to die. (Family brings back his corpse; he recovers when relatives open the casket).

The Scottish leaves which become birds on falling into a river (compare motif D451.8, Transformation of leaf to another object) seems related to the belief, also fostered by Giraldus Cambrensis, about the birds known as 'barnacles,' "... which nature, acting against her own laws, produces in a wonderful way. They are like marsh-geese, but smaller. At first they appear as excrescences on fir-logs carried upon the waters. Then they hang by their beaks from what seems like sea-weed clinging to the log, while their bodies, to allow for their more unimpeded development, are enclosed in shells. And so in the course of time, having put on a stout covering of feathers, they either slip into the water, or take themselves in flight to the freedom of the air." (Topography of Ireland, p. 22).

It is a short step from the last recorded death of a wolf in England to the belief that English air contains some quality inimical

to wolves. This belief is no doubt inspired in part by the similar one extant in Ireland concerning snakes. The absence of snakes in Ireland has engendered the belief that snakes and other reptiles brought to the island die immediately, a belief that Giraldus also helped propagate (Topography of Ireland, pp. 31-33). Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, XI, p. 83) cites a work published in 1692, Aventures de Jacques Sadeux, which repeats both beliefs--that wolves cannot live in England nor snakes in Ireland, even if they are taken there.

In his note to this tale, Gratet-Duplessis mentions the old and widespread belief that self-styled sorcerers living in Finland were accustomed to sell the wind to mariners. Icelanders enjoyed the same reputation according to a review of De la Marinière's Voyage des pays septentrionaux (1671, p. 174), which appeared in Mélusine (Eds. Gaidoz and Rolland, Vol. II, col. 237).

Remaining motifs include X1233, Lies about hogs; and X1620, Lies about cold weather, to accomodate Philippe's claim that sheep cannot live in Iceland. I have found no motif number to account for the Polish pots.

One may note the amusing nonsense formula with which the tale opens: "Quand il est question de questionner en questionnant, il faut qu'on questionne, disoient certains questionneurs, lesquels se mirent à questionner du naturel d'aucuns pays." To this tongue-twister I have found no parallel. For discussion of other formulas, see the notes to tales 6 and 27.

The tale also ends with an elaborate pair of formulas, or more precisely, a set of proverbs or proverbial sayings followed by a mixture of folksong and children's rhyme. The first proverb, "En tout pays toutes guises," comes as a kind of humorous rejoinder to the motif about the pigs in Piedmont, but is itself followed by another rejoinder, "... et toutes femmes mal apprises" which may have been added simply on account of the rhyme it furnishes. But it is as well to remember the context in which the tale was told, and it is not perhaps going too far to see the first proverb, 'so many countries,



so many customs' as a comment made by Mother Gillette, the proprietor of the inn where Philippe heard the yarns. '... And all women are ill-bred' would be a natural rejoinder from the men present at such an unwarranted intrusion on the part of a woman. The second set of proverb and rejoinder, "... autant de testes autant d'opinions" ('as many heads, as many opinions') and "... et autant les truyettes que les mulotz" ('as many little sows as field-mice') would fit the same pattern. In any case, each proverb and rejoinder has the stamp of authentic folk idiom upon it, and one at least is well known at a literary level: "Autant de pays, autant de guises," quoted by Augusto Arthaber in his Dizionario comparato di proverbi e modi proverbiali, Milan, n.d., p. 487, No. 967.

My suspicion that the closing formula proper was a mixture of children's rhyme and folksong was confirmed by Roger Pinon. The formula, which runs "Descharge, tu as vendu, turlututu, chapeau pointu, ma mere, je veux Robin" contains the element "turlututu, chapeau pointu" which frequently appears in counting-out rhymes collected from children in French language areas. For examples, see Jean Baucomont, Frank Guibat, Tante Lucile, Roger Pinon et Philippe Soupault, Les Comptines de langue française (Paris, 1961), pp. 140, 157.

The final element of the formula, "... ma mere, je veux Robin" is both the title and refrain of a very old French folksong, since Eugène Rolland (Recueil de Chansons Populaires, II, pp. 204-06) cites the text of a version published in Paris in 1556, just twenty-three years before the first edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique was to appear. For further notes on this song, see Georges Delarue, "Correspondance inédite de Patrice Coirault," Bulletin Folklorique d'Ile-de-France, 37, Spring 1967, 1130-33.

I have been unable to find any parallel to the first part of this formula, "Descharge, tu as vendu..." which may be part of an injunction to exit.

## Tale 50

A marvellous treasure unearthed by certain people includes: a large wooden chest made of stone containing smoke and fog; goat horns inlaid with the bones of a fart; a bundle of matches sulphured with snow; an iron box held by glue containing many coats of impossible colours; a pouch made of cobwebs; a flag made of butterfly wings, thunderproof armour and many wheel-lock halberts; bright new coins so rusted as to be unrecognisable; a pipe of salted maybugs and a keg full of bat's feathers; a chain made of straw; a small, unopenable case containing many pieces of artillery; a basket containing salt spoiled by worms; much military equipment of doubtful value, many precious stones and truffles.

The many nonsense objects found in this treasure relate the tale to AT 1935, Topsy-Turvy Land, motif X1505. The various motifs are characterised by absurdities, impossibilities and contradictions, and may therefore be included under the general rubric X1700-1799, Lying tales based on absurd logic or the lack of logic.

Unlike the preceding story, this tale does have a sketchy framework, but it is again difficult to distinguish between influences of the literary tradition, as exemplified by the Rabelaisian listing of extravagances, and material from folk tradition as typified by the nonsense motifs, some of which recall certain retorts to children collected by Eugène Rolland (Rimes et jeux de l'enfance, p. 43): "Que m'as-tu rapporté?--Un petit rien tout neuf bordé de jaune (Var. Un fusil de paille chargé de lait de beurre)." ('What did you bring me?--A brand-new little nothing trimmed in yellow. (Var. A straw gun loaded with buttermilk)').

The reference to a certain Matthieu Fossé--wizard, doctor, soothsayer, bewitcher and necromancer--the man who found the treasure, is also relevant. He is spoken of as a liar and storyteller. One suspects that he was one of Philippe's band of tale-tellers and that this was one of his party-pieces. This hypothesis is strengthened

by Gratet-Duplessis' note in which he correctly observes that the truffles which are found above the treasure do not represent truffles alone. The word truffe, trufe, meant, in the sixteenth century, a deceit, deception or joke. The word would thus have served as a kind of punning comment by the storyteller on the seriousness of his tale.

Gratet-Duplessis also cites an eighteenth century humorous work, the Art de désopiler la rate (Paris, 1756), in which there is a long list of items similar to Philippe's and which he feels may well have been modelled on this very tale. Such lists are not uniquely literary, of course; examples may also be found in folk plays.

#### Tale 51

A man puts some hen's eggs in a hawk's nest. When they hatch he takes them home. The hawk finds its supposed offspring and becomes partly domesticated, but brings back many other live chicks as proposed food for its step-children. In this way the fortunate owner soon acquires an abundance of fowl.

This tale fits under the general motif X1250, Lies about birds, and motif X1267, Lies about hawks. Compare tales 54 and 69 in which the theme of the foster-parent also appears.

Herbert Halpert suggests that there are scattered stories in American tradition on the theme of the unusual foster-parent, although none are listed in Baughman. Philippe's tale seems vaguely related to the few tales in which an animal thinks it is something else. Compare, for example, the turtle which was adopted by a cat and tried to spit, hiss and arch its back (Grace Partridge Smith, "Egyptian 'Lies'," Midwest Folklore, I, 2 (Summer 1951), 93-97); the link, of course, is provided only by the unusual foster-parent.

## Tale 52

A hunter sees a young boar leading an old, blind one, which has hold of the young boar's tail. The hunter shoots off the tail with an arrow and leads the blind boar home. When he castrates it, its squeals attract a great number of other boars, which are also caught.

This is the international tale type AT 1889A, Shooting off the Leader's Tail, motif number X1124.1. The tale appears in early jestbook tradition, notably in Johannes Pauli's Schimpf und Ernst (the best edition is by Johannes Bolte, 2 vols., Berlin, 1924), and Heinrich Bebel's Facetiae. These and others are discussed by Carl Müller-Fraureuth (to whom Bolte refers, see especially note 748) in his Die Deutschen Lügendichtungen bis auf Münchhausen (p. 49), in which the animal in question is a bear.

Otherwise, the tale appears to be little known in oral tradition. Baughman refers to two versions, in both of which the animal is a hog; it is a boar in the Münchhausen episode (in the Dover edition, ed. Carswell, pp. 7-8).

## Tale 53

An enormous and costly piece of sculpture is destroyed by a mole.

Although there is no motif number to cover the activities of moles, the tale may be conveniently placed under the general heading X1210, Lies about mammals.

Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 52, note 5) quotes an early French edition of Pliny's Natural History (VIII, 29): "Des villes et nations ruinées par petites bestes. ... Car Marcus Varro dit que les connils firent ruiner une ville d'Espagne, par le moyen de leurs clappiers; et que les taupes en firent autant en Thumenestie." Schenda's reference does not seem to correspond with that in Rackham's edition of the Natural History where this mention of the depredations of rabbits and moles is given

as VIII, 43, and the town destroyed is in Thessaly, not Thumenestie.

In a fool tale in the Revue des Traditions Populaires (V, 1890, p. 305), a mole which has caused much damage is buried alive as punishment. Two additional versions are recorded in G. Laport, Les Contes populaires wallons, FFC 101, p. 90.

#### Tale 54

Kittens belonging to a cat killed by a dog are fed and raised by a rat. The cats later care for their foster-mother, but kill all other rodents.

There is no appropriate motif for this tale other than the general X1227, Lies about rats.

For other tales of unusual foster-parents, see Nos. 51 and 69 in this collection.

#### Tale 55

A man dislocates his jaw while gnawing on a bone, and cannot shut his mouth. After scalding the joints, a doctor hits him so hard that when his jaws snap shut, sparks are struck from his bad teeth; grains of gunpowder in his beard are set alight and his beard is burnt.

It is surprising that there is no motif number for this tale; it is closely related to the Münchhausen episode in which the Baron strikes sparks from his eyes in order to fire his gun (see the Dover edition, ed. Carswell, p. 6), a tale for which no motif has been provided by either Stith Thompson or Ernest W. Baughman. Compare, however, F544.3.2, teeth of angered saint give off sparks. Carl Müller-Fraureuth (Die Deutschen Lügendichtungen bis auf Münchhausen, pp. 79-80) refers to a tale by Abraham a Santa Clara (born 1644) in which a slap in the face ignites the armoury at Constantinople--sparks fly from the eyes of a beaten man and fall into a powder keg. Müller-Fraureuth found no older example, apparently overlooking this version.

## Tale 56

An unwashed soldier is excessively lousy; he crosses a river on a ferry and when the lice smell the water they drag the man into the river. He is saved, but his clothes are taken away by the vermin.

This tale fits under the general motif number X1296, Lies about lice, and motif X1296.1, Rag so full of lice it can move.

Paul Sébillot (Le Folklore de France, III, p. 306) quotes this tale as an illustration of the widespread belief that lice are attracted by water. When children will not comb their hair, they are told that "... les poux entortilleront leurs cheveux pour en faire des cordes et les entraîner dans la rivière ou dans la mer, ou qu'ils deviendront aussi gros que des ânes et les emmèneront à l'eau." Both ideas are reported separately by Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, III, p. 255)--on the one hand that lice will drag children to water and on the other, that lice will grow as big as donkeys and then drag the children to water.

Paul-Yves Sébillot (Le Folklore de la Bretagne, Paris, 1968, 2 vols; see I, p. 35) cites the same belief, with the added claim that children have been dragged to water by lice which were intent on drowning their unkempt victims. None of these folklorists say how effective these threatening sayings proved to be.

The motif of a donkey dragging a person to water appears in Nicolas de Troyes' Grand Parangon des nouvelles nouvelles (No. 157) and in Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles (Tale XLVII). Rudolf Schenda refers to Bebel (III, p. 160) and a battle in the clothes of a philosopher between Alsatian and Hungarian lice.

One may note the formulaic "... trois ans, trois mois, trois semaines, trois jours et trois heures" during which time the soldier had not changed his clothes. For further remarks on formulas in La Nouvelle Fabrique, see the notes to tales 6, 27 and 49.

## Tale 57

A man warns a soldier to stop seeing his wife. The soldier refuses and goes to see her. Learning of his arrival, the husband hides under the bed. When he has heard enough, he skewers wife and lover, in flagrante delicto, on a spit and carries them to a judge who had refused to help him.

Except for the exaggerated ending, this tale is one of the few which may not be considered a tall tale. It fits under motifs K1271, amorous intrigue exposed, and Q411.O.2, Husband kills wife and paramour.

Rudolf Schenda refers to a similar tale in Pauli's Schimpf und Ernst (No. 230) in which the husband decapitates the guilty parties, and to a related version in the Comptes du Monde Adventureux (1555, No. 29).

## Tale 58

Two men eat enormous quantities of cake and drink copious draughts of cider.

This tale includes the motifs X931, Lie: remarkable eater, and X932, Lie: remarkable drinker. Compare F632, Mighty eater, and F633, Mighty drinker.

In French tradition, Gargantua is the great eater and drinker par excellence. For several descriptions of Gargantua's appetite, see Paul Sébillot, Gargantua dans les traditions populaires, passim.

## Tale 59

A man trapping birds sees a fox feigning death; it grabs an inquisitive magpie by the tail. The bird rises, carrying the fox with it, until gravity and loose feathers cause the fox to fall to its death.

Depending on one's point of view, this tale may be classified under Baughman X1218\*, Lies about foxes, or X1250, Lies about birds. The theme of the person, animal or object being carried through the air relates the tale, however, to AT 1881, The Man Carried through the Air by Geese. Compare tales 3, 34 and 47.

Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 52, note 7) claims that the theme of the fox feigning death originates in the medieval bestiaries, and refers to Rob. Reinsch, Le Bestiaire. Das Thierbuch des normannischen Dichters Guillaume Le Clerc (Leipzig, 1890, p. 98ff), and Goldstaub-Wendriner, Ein tosko-venezianischer Bestiarius (Halle, 1892, p. 403ff).

#### Tale 60

A man slings a stone at a wolf so hard that it passes between its eyes and goes right through the wolf's body to its tail, where it stops.

This tale fits under motif number X943, remarkable thrower, and is related to Baughman X943(e), Accurate throwing. The allusion made by Philippe to the strong men Hercules and Salvius implies that the hero of this tale should also be considered a strong man. The tale also fits under, therefore, motif X940, Lie: person of remarkable strength.

Philippe is not referring to the Hercules of Greek mythology but to a Roman named Rusticelius who, because of his great strength, acquired the nickname Hercules. Though Philippe does not say so, he had evidently taken the references to these strong men from Pliny's Natural History (trans. Rackham, II, Lib. VII, XIX, 559-61).

#### Tale 61

Two musketeers quarrel and fire at each other. The first man's bullet goes straight down the muzzle of his adversary's gun, just as the second man fires; both bullets are sent down the muzzle of the first man's gun. Other soldiers, amazed and amused at this great skill,



get them to use one bullet only, and to fire it to and fro to each other.

This tale is not listed in the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, but Baughman, who gives only American versions, has proposed a new motif number, X981\*, Lie: skillful marksman. Under this motif he gives references to two sub-motifs, X981\*(da), Brothers shoot at each other's gun muzzles; the bullets meet and fall flattened to ground (compare Philippe's tale 4), and X981\*(db), Brothers shoot at each other's gun muzzles. Gun of one misfires; bullet from other gun enters and plugs barrel of his gun. Obviously, Philippe's is an older and somewhat more sophisticated European version of the same story.

There is a related tale in Munchhausen, in which the Baron's skill in laying a cannon allows him to hit an enemy cannonball and send it flying back from its mid-air collision with disastrous results for the foe (Dover edition, ed. Carswell, pp. 46-47).

#### Tale 62

One year there is an incredible number of bugs which, by their weight, cause trees to fall. An enormous oak is thus split in half. Two mastiffs eat bugs until they are ready to burst. The heat of the sun the following morning warms up the bugs which fly off, carrying the dogs with them until, too tired to continue, they let the dogs fall to their death.

Several motifs are present in this tale. For the huge tree, see X1471, Lies about large trees (it is 106 feet 8 inches in diameter). The eating of the bugs and its effects fits under X1203, Lie: animal's food affects him in unusual way. The important theme in this tale is, however, that of the person, animal or object being carried through the air. It is thus related to the international tale type AT 1881, The Man Carried through the Air by Geese, motif number X1258.1, a popular

theme in La Nouvelle Fabrique; compare tales 34, 47 and 59. Compare also Baughman X1286, Lies about mosquitoes, for several tales about people or objects being carried through the air.

#### Tale 63

Some cows trespass in a man's cornfield. Furious, he cuts off their tails. The women who own the cows sew the tails back on successfully.

There does not seem to be any appropriate motif number for this tale. Compare, however, the Münchhausen episode in which the Baron's severed horse is successfully sewn together with laurel sprigs, which later provide shade for the Baron (see the Dover edition, ed. Carswell, p. 21). Vaguely related to this tale is the motif given by Baughman, X1241.1(e), Man skins horse by mistake, thinking it dead. Horse revives; man puts skin of other animal back on horse by mistake. It is a motif in the same order of improbability as Philippe's tale and the Münchhausen episode.

For other examples of the calls made to cows ("Tieu, tieu, margot, tieu, tieu, tieu,") see Eugène Rolland, Faune Populaire, V, pp. 28-31.

#### Tale 64

A locksmith meets a fearsome wild boar which goes for him. He hides in a tree which the boar attacks with its tusks; one of them pierces the tree. The locksmith jumps down and with his hammer bends back the protruding tusk so that it cannot be pulled out. He is thus able to kill the boar.

This tale contains two distinct motifs: the boar with the huge tusks and the unusual way of catching it, by clinching the tusk to the tree. For the first, X1233.1.2, The great wild boar: tusks go through tree, come out other side, Baughman cites a single Irish reference; but his description of the motif in Hull (Eleanor Hull, Folklore of the British Isles, London, 1928, p. 148) is incorrect;

the boar has tusks four feet long, but no mention is made of their use to penetrate a tree. For the second motif, the clinching of the tusk, compare the large group of American stories (Baughman X1286.1.4 (a, b, c, d), X1286.4.1\*, X1286.4.2\* and X1286.4.3\*), all of which deal with the clinching of mosquitoes' bills.

Rudolf Schenda cites the parallel in Bebel, Facetiae, III, p. 114, which I have not been able to consult.

Compare the legendary motif which appears in the Letter from Prester John, telling how the lion catches the unicorn by tricking it into running its horn into a tree (motif K771, Unicorn tricked into running horn into tree).

#### Tale 65

A man's horse dislocates some bones while drawing wood. He is advised to make the horse swim, as this will put the bones back in place. This he does and the desired aim is achieved. While swimming, the horse kicks off its shoes, newly put on, and kills many big fish which the horse's owner takes home to eat.

Two motifs are involved in this tale, X1241, Lies about horses, and X1156, Lie: other unusual methods of catching fish, but neither Thompson nor Baughman have parallels to this story.

Although there is a slight possibility of it being so, I have been unable to ascertain whether some traditional method of curing horses of dislocations is involved here. But even if it is, the results in this tale are obviously intended to be far-fetched.

#### Tale 66

Horses, coach and occupants disappear in a deep pond. Two men who had remained on the bank are told that this is a frequent occurrence and that all is lost. At that very moment, however, a man comes by saying he has seen coach and team half a league away; the passengers asked him to pass on the message.

Motifs in this tale include X1540, Lies about water features; X1545, Remarkable underground channels (compare especially Baughman X1545.1(a), Cow falls into pool; two days later she is seen swimming in to shore from out in ocean); and X1546, remarkable pond. Compare F713.2, Bottomless lakes (pools, etc.), F715.3, Rivers with marvellous underground connections; and F940, extraordinary underground/underwater disappearance.

Paul Sébillot (Folklore de France, II, pp. 447-49) quotes this same tale as an illustration of the widespread belief that certain pools possess underground passages; the belief is to be found enshrined in local legends as well as humorous tales, and Sébillot gives resums of several localised versions which have much in common with Philippe's tale. That certain wells are also reputed to possess such underground passages is also mentioned; see notes to tale 21.

For several British references to similar beliefs and tales, see Herbert Halpert, "Place Name Stories Of Kentucky Waterways And Ponds, With a Note on Bottomless Pools," Kentucky Folklore Record, VII, 3 (1961), 85-101, and especially notes 6 and 7 in this article.

#### Tale 67

A hare is pursued by dogs; it reaches the Seine where some woodcutters are at work. It picks up a chip of wood in its mouth, throws it in the river and jumps on it; using its ears as sails, it reaches the other bank and thus eludes its pursuers.

There is no precise motif number for this tale which may therefore be classified under X1200, Lie: remarkable animals, and which is related to Baughman's new number, X1231\*, Lies about rabbits.

Paul Sébillot (Folklore de France, III, pp. 43-44), discussing magical animals, suggests that Philippe's tale may be a humorous application or form of the belief that imps or sprites often assume the shape of a hare or rabbit (frequently to frustrate unwary hunters), and he refers to various examples in both tale and legend.

## Tale 68

An extremely fast runner runs to Paris and back, a distance of fifty leagues (approximately 150 miles) between dawn and dusk. He chases larks and catches them by the tail when they fly low, and swallows butterflies on the wing. All this he does barefoot.

This tale fits under Baughman's new number X962\*, Lie: remarkable runner. Compare F681, marvellous runner, and X1796, Lies concerning speed.

## Tale 69

A bitch has pups but they are drowned. Looking for them, she finds three young hares which she nourishes and treats as her own pups.

There is no precise motif number for this tale, which belongs under the general motif X1215, Lies about dogs.

The theme of the unusual foster-parent is also found in tales 51 and 54 in this collection.

## Tale 70

As a farmer sows, a flock of pigeons follows him and they are so voracious that each time he scatters a handful of grain, they do not allow a single seed to reach the earth.

This tale belongs under the general motif X1250, Lies about birds.

## Tale 71

A sick man craves for fowl; his brother goes bird hunting and each time he shoots an arrow, he brings down many birds--seven with his first arrow, four with his second, three with his third, nine with his fourth, eleven with his fifth, twenty-three with the next two. When the hunt is over, he has enough feathers for seven beds.

This tale fits under motif X1122.2, Lie: person shoots many animals with one shot. Although Baughman records several versions of tales concerning great bags of birds, he does not note any remarks on the amount of feathers gathered.

The opening formula used by Philippe in this tale, "Quand j'étais petit, je n'étais pas grand," is probably still in use amongst French children today. Eugène Rolland (Rimes et jeux de l'enfance, pp. 359-61) cites four examples of children's rhymes of which Philippe's formula is the opening line. Rolland was not able to indicate any special function for the rhymes, which he grouped under the heading "Formulettes diverses." For further references to formulaic patterns in this collection, see the notes to tales 6, 27 and 49.

#### Tale 72

Moving some old grain, a group of labourers uncover a huge swarm of mice and some enormous rats, all of which are killed.

The lying motif in this tale fits under Baughman's new number X1227(a), Big rat. Most of the tale is a realistic description of what may be found in old grain. An almost identical account, which lacks only the enormous rats, is given by Oliver G. Ready, in his Countryman on the Broads (London, 1967, pp. 130-31).

#### Tale 73

A tailor fails to have an order prepared on time for a soldier. They quarrel, and the soldier attacks the tailor with his sword. The tailor defends himself with his scissors; each time the soldier lunges at him, he snips off part of the sword, until only the hilt is left. The soldier retreats in shame.

It is difficult to decide upon the most appropriate motif for this tale. X940, Lie: person of remarkable strength, seems just as fitting as X980, Occupational or professional skill; compare,

however, D1183, magic scissors.

Part of the humour in this tale lies in the uncharacteristic reaction of the tailor; tailors pass for being notorious cowards in oral tradition. See, for a variety of rhymes which lend substance to this assertion, Iona and Peter Opie, The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, Oxford, 1951 and 1958, pp. 401-02.

#### Tale 74

Chasing a hare, a gentleman loses one of his hounds, killed by a stone kicked up by the fleeing hare. A second dog seizes the hare by the ear and tosses it up in the air; it lands in the gentleman's lap.

This tale fits under the general motif X1130, Lie: unusual experiences of hunter.

Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 53, note 2) refers to Pliny's description of the ostrich, which has a forked foot that it uses to pick up stones and throw backwards at whoever or whatever is pursuing it.

#### Tale 75

A woman, washing a soiled pillow, hits it so hard it bursts; the numerous feathers clog some water mills and cause them to break down. Fish swallow the feathers, which causes them to die of thirst.

This tale fits under two motifs, X1810, Tall tales about miscellaneous objects, and X1300, Lies about fish.

#### Tale 76

A dog, burnt by a spoonful of hot gruel inadvertently thrown over him by a cook, runs off blindly and crashes into a walnut tree. So hard does the dog bump into the tree that it causes 59 bushels of nuts to fall, already husked; it deafens itself into the bargain.

This tale fits under the general motifs X1215, Lies about dogs, and X1400, Lies about trees. The nuts which fall already husked is a motif related to the Schlaraffenland theme, AT 1930, land in which impossible things happen. Compare tale 110.

#### Tale 77

A man owns a dog which has a unique way of catching crayfish. It goes into the river, digs out the crayfish, rolls over them so that they catch in its coat and thus charged, returns to its master. The dog catches great quantities in this manner.

This tale fits under motif X1215.8, Lie: intelligent dog; and more precisely to Baughman X1215.8(a), Intelligent hunting dog. Compare Baughman X1215.8(ai), Dog fishes, and X1241.2.2, Trained horse as harvester and hunter. He rolls in the fields. Oats in his flanks; club in his tail kills birds (AT 1892, The Trained Horse Rolls in the Field, for which no French version has been recorded).

Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 52, note 2) refers to Olaus Magnus, De gentibus septentr. historia, lib. XVIII, De lutris: "... otters are tamed so that at a given signal by the cook, they go into the pond; catching the fish of the size he indicates, taking first one fish and then another, until his orders have been satisfied." (Zit. nach der Ausgabe Amberg 1599, p. 422).

#### Tale 78

A man covers his mare with branches to protect it from insects. When it has eaten and fallen asleep, an unsuspecting goat approaches, hoping to eat the greenery. A wolf sees the goat and creeps up on it from the other side of the sleeping mare. When it leaps at the goat, its head gets caught in the goat's horns; the tugging of each animal wakens the mare which gallops off, carrying wolf and goat on its back.



There is no precise motif number for this tale, which fits under the general X1210, Lies about mammals. Compare, however, AT 160A\*, The Pike Caught by the Fox. The fox catches the pike's tail and the pike catches the fox's tail. Peasant captures both.

A distantly related tale is told about Jacquot Malavaux, a tall tale hero from Eastern France. Two wolves lie in ambush for the unwary traveller, one on either side of the road. Jacquot sees them and jumps at the same time as the wolves, both of which miss Jacquot but seize each other in such a way that they cannot separate. Jacquot carries them home over his shoulder. (René Terrier, "Jacquot Malavaux, Conteur populaire et tisserand," Barbizier, Almanach Populaire Comtois, 1962, 451-54, No. 4).

#### Tale 79

During some very mixed weather, when it is clear, dark, calm, rainy, warm, fresh, very damp and dry with a strong wind, a messenger sets out for Paris. A whirlwind picks up some dust and flings it with such force at the traveller that it breaks both his legs.

Motifs in this tale include X1605, Lie: mixed weather; and X1611.1, Remarkably strong wind. Compare Baughman X1611.1.5.1\*, Remarkable wind affects man, and Baughman X1611.1.13.5\*, Rapidly blowing sand or dust. The series of contradictions about the weather which opens the tale is reminiscent of the group of children's nonsense rhyme of the kind "A barefooted boy with clogs on" and the like, examples of which also exist in French tradition.

For parallels to the opening rhyming formula to this tale, "Or, escoutez, les gens, et vous oyrez merveilles, belles oreilles" see the notes to tales 6, 27 and 49.

#### Tale 80

A big stag is killed; nesting in its antlers is a family of squirrels.

For the big stag, compare X1201, The great animal. There is no motif for the unusual home, which is the main point of the tale. But in the well known and widespread lying song, "The Derby Ram," a related motif appears, for 'eagles build their nests' on the great ram. The theme of the unusual home also appears in tales 82 and 98 in this collection.

Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 54, note 4) cites Pliny, who tells of a stag the antlers of which were resplendent with thick ivy.

#### Tale 81

When a horse drinks in a pond, its snorting and breathing attract many fish. A man attaches a basket to the horse's head and weighs it down with a stone. When the horse lifts its head from the water, the basket is always full of fish.

This tale fits under motif X1156, Lie: other unusual methods of catching fish.

#### Tale 82

An enormous pike is found in a pond, on the head of which a large bush has taken root and grown. An otter lives in the bush.

This tale belongs under motif X1301, The great fish; compare B874, Giant fish. The story is also related to AT 1889C, Fruit Tree Grows from Head of Deer shot with fruit pits, motif number X1130.2. The tale also exists as a saint's legend; as in Philippe's version, the growth is not rationalised by the firing of cherry pips or the like at the animal.

For other stories having as theme the unusual home, see tales 80 and 98 in this collection.

## Tale 83

A noble, awaiting passage to England from Boulogne, follows his dogs which chase a hare along the cliffs. The hare jumps into the sea and the dogs follow. Thinking all is lost, the man sets sail. Halfway across the channel, he sees his dogs swimming on the tail of the hare, which they catch just as the boat draws by.

The persistence of the dogs relates this story to motif number X1215.9, Lie: obedient or dutiful dog.

## Tale 84

There is a certain church whose weathercock is so ingeniously devised with moving parts that it sings out the time of day, as many 'cock-a-doodle-doos' as the hour requires, providing there is a little wind.

This unusual weathercock fits under the general motif X1810, Tall tales about miscellaneous objects. Although Philippe evidently regarded this as a tall tale, such an elaborate cock did exist in his day. Rudolf Schenda ("Philippe le Picard und seine Nouvelle Fabrique," p. 58, note 2) points out that Philippe is telling the truth despite himself. In the Rohan Museum in Strasburg there is just such a 'magical' cock, dating from 1354, which was part of the first astronomical clock in Strasburg cathedral. Schenda may have seen it, for he says its voice is rustier today than its feathers, but mentions testimony proving the admiration felt for it in its time. He feels Philippe heard reports of this clock, but could not believe them.

## Tale 85

A cockerel is bitten by a mad dog. Other animals bitten by the dog die; after nine days the cock goes mad and rushing into the woods, throttles sixteen foxes and eleven wildcats before dying.

The closest parallel to this tale is motif X1256.1, Lie: doves tear up wolf, AT 1930; it is also related to AT 1935, Topsy-Turvy Land, Land where all is opposite from the usual.

#### Tale 86

A gentleman has a large well-stocked pond; he digs beneath it, making a sort of cave. He catches and cleans all the fish and returns them to the pond which has also been scoured. Adding vast quantities of herbs and spices, he lights a great fire under the pond and cooks a soup, to which all the poor for miles around are invited. It takes three days and three nights to empty the pond.

This tale fits under AT 1960Z, Other Stories of Great Objects and the Like; and motifs X1031.1.1, Lie: the great kettle; X1031.3, Lie: remarkable cooking in the big kitchen. Compare especially Baughman X1031.3(d), Pea or bean soup made in lake (usually after load of peas falls through ice of lake).

#### Tale 87

A goldsmith makes an extremely fine chain, to which a flea is attached by the leg. He also makes a tiny silver box on which the Fall of Troy is engraved and in which the flea lives.

This tale belongs under the general motif X980, Lie: occupational or professional skill. While I am unable to find any references to parallels of this tale, I feel sure I have read elsewhere of similar exaggerated descriptions of fine workmanship. That the general theme is still popular today is born out by the frequent references to persons who devote their time to engraving the Lord's Prayer on postage stamps, and the like.

#### Tale 88

A stag is pursued by the King and his retinue; some of the hunters

are resting as the stag runs by and one manages to put his hunting horn on the stag's antlers, in the hope of holding it for the King. It escapes, but the mouth-piece of the horn lodges in its nostril, so that every time it exhales, the horn sounds. In this way it is easily tracked and caught.

This tale combines the motifs X1124, Lie: the hunter catches or kills game by ingenious or unorthodox method, and X1130, Lie: unusual experiences of hunter.

#### Tale 89

An old man finds himself stuck on a wolf's back and is forced to ride it. He improvises a bit and reins and is thus able to guide it to several villages before returning home and skinning the wolf.

This tale fits under motif X1004.1, Lie: man rides unusual riding animal, and is related to AT 1910, The Bear (Wolf) Harnessed, motif X1216.1. For another unusual use of a wolf, compare tale 91.

The words uttered by the rider to warn villagers of his predicament, "Hau le loup, hau le loup, hau le loup!" are recorded by Paul Sébillot (Folklore de France, III, p. 35) as one of several similar warning cries formerly or still in use. See also Eugène Rolland, Faune Populaire, VIII, pp. 24-25.

#### Tale 90

A hunter loses his dog which, while lapping water in a stream, is swallowed whole by a big pike.

This tale is related to AT 1889G, Man Swallowed by Fish, and fits under motif X1723, Lies about swallowing. The fish, while not great enough to swallow a man, obviously belongs to the same family as X1301, Lie: the great fish.

Rudolf Schenda refers to Bebel, Facetiae, III, 113, where a giant fish swallows horse and rider. This reference is not included in The Types of the Folktale. For other stories of unusual swallowings, see tales 39 and 47 in this collection.

#### Tale 91

A priest falls into a pit, but is held up by the branches in it which catch in his robe. A wolf has followed him and begins howling at the edge of the pit. The priest grabs its tail and hangs on as the frightened wolf runs off. He is thus pulled out of the pit.

This is a variant of the international tale type AT 1900, How the Man Came out of the Tree Stump (Marsh), motif number X1133.4. Compare also AT 1875, The Boy on the Wolf's Tail.

Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, VIII, pp. 92-93) repeats the version of this tale included in the Sieur du Moulinet's Facétieux devis (circa 1615), which P.A. Grattet-Duplessis believed to have been borrowed from La Nouvelle Fabrique, along with forty-one other tales.

This motif appears as part of a longer folktale (AT 1535, The Rich and the Poor Peasant) in Geneviève Massignon's Contes de l'Ouest (Paris, 1953, p. 223). In this incident, the hero, Cornancu, is placed in a deep hole by the servants of the deceived rich man, as punishment. A wolf, which conveniently passes by, lowers its tail into the hole and Cornancu seizes it, pulling himself out of the hole. He keeps the wolf, which is later used as part of a new deception.

The closing formula of Philippe's tale, "lire lire, pot d'estain,/ Nous nous marierons demain" seems to be a children's rhyme, but I have been unable to verify it.

For remarks on other formulaic openings and closings in this collection, see the notes to tales 6, 27 and 49.

## Tale 92

A French student becomes enamoured of an Eastern princess on seeing her portrait. He writes a love letter to her and attaches the letter to a bird which he catches when it flies into his room. Inexplicably, the bird delivers it. The princess, locked in a tower by her father, answers and sends the bird back with a magic ring which gives invisibility to its wearer. With the help of the ring the hero reaches the princess and they fall hopelessly in love.

One of the few tales in La Nouvelle Fabrique dealing with magic, this story fits, in its general form, under the group AT 850-999, Novelle (Romantic Tales), without any close parallels otherwise recorded. Motifs in the tale include T11.2, Love through sight of picture; H1381.3.1.2.1, Quest for unknown woman whose picture has aroused man's love; B450, Helpful birds (compare B351.1, Helpful lark); R41.2, Captivity in tower; D810, Magic object as gift; D1361.17, Magic ring renders invisible. Two of these motifs appear in the international tale type AT 516, Faithful John, but too many elements are lacking from Philippe's version to permit precise identification with any tale type.

The rather abrupt ending to the tale suggests it may be incomplete, lacking the usual elements of escape and pursuit which characterise many Märchen. Although there are many Märchen motifs in this tale, it lacks the logic of true Märchen. There is, for example, no justification for the help given by the bird. It may well be this lack of logic which allowed Philippe to consider the tale just as much a lie as others in the collection. One may also assume that it was one of the tales told at Mother Gillette's inn and noted by Philippe as part of the repertory heard there.

See also tale 93, which is equally out of character with the majority of Philippe's tales.

## Tale 93

Three brothers meet three fairies who invite them to dance. For so doing, each is granted a wish. The eldest brother wishes that anyone sticking his finger in their calf's rectum be cured of scurvy. The second brother, angered at this silly wish, wishes that the first brother lose an eye; the third brother wishes the second blind.

This tale is a humorous version of the international tale type AT 750A, The Wishes, and fits under motif J2071, The foolish wishes. Other motifs include F261, Fairies dance; F340, Gifts from fairies; F331.1, Mortal wins fairies' gratitude by joining in their dance (compare AT 503, The Gifts of the Little People).

Joseph Bédier, in his important study of this tale type, summarises its theme as follows: "A supernatural being grants to one or several mortals the gift of making one or several wishes, which he promises to fulfill. These wishes are indeed fulfilled, but, against all expectation, and through the fault of those who made them, they bring no rewards even when they do not cause any actual harm." (Les Fabliaux, études de littérature populaire et d'histoire littéraire du moyen âge, 6th edition, Paris, 1964, pp. 212-13). On the basis of this succinct analysis, Bédier describes five basic sub-types, in twenty-two variant forms.

It is the fourth sub-type which interests us (pp. 215-16 and note 1), since it deals with a version differing only in a few details from Philippe's. Bédier gives a résumé of a version collected from oral tradition by Colin de Plancy in his Oeuvres choisies de Perrault (Paris, 1826, p. 240). The eldest son wishes that his calf cure of colic anyone who seizes it by the tail (this may be a euphemistic way of saying what Philippe says bluntly); the second wishes that the calf's horns sprout in the eldest's head; the third wishes a dog's head on the shoulders of the second (the fairies later revoke these wishes).



Paul Sébillot (Folklore de France, I, pp. 264-65) quotes, in his discussion of woodland fairies and their dancing, a version of this tale which appears in Nicolas de Troyes' Le Grand Parangon des Nouvelles nouvelles (1535); he does not state what the wishes are, although he says that Philippe d'Alcricpe "paraphrases this tale some thirty years later."

The wishes from Nicolas de Troyes' version of the tale, omitted by Paul Sébillot, are included by Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka in their notes to Grimm No. 87, *Der Arme und der Reiche* (Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm, II, 210-29): the second brother wishes that the eldest lose an eye; the third, that the second be blind; the eldest brother uses his wish to repair the first two (p. 220). For other references to this tale, see Lazare Sainéan, La Langue de Rabelais, I, p. 225.

A related contemporary variant of this tale, with obscene motifs, appears in a book given to me by Herbert Halpert, entitled Histoires gauloises de Champi (recueillies par Lucien Viéville, Paris, 1939, pp. 61-63). A conscientious husband can no longer fulfill his marital duties; he is advised to see a fakir who magically bestows upon him the power to perform three times. To produce the desired effect, he must say "Hep!" To reverse the process, he has only to whistle. Sceptical of the fakir's power, he says "Hep!" in the street. The result passes all expectations, and he whistles so as not to be inconvenienced on his way home. He hails a taxi--"Hep!"--and is reduced to a final use of his power when a policeman blows his whistle. He arrives home, and he and his wife undress. "Hep!" His wife whistles in admiration....

I am most grateful to Roger Pinon for his help in the interpretation of the expression "toute bigore frelore" which partially concludes this tale. A variant form, "Tout est frelore bigoth," recorded by Huguet in his Dictionnaire de la langue française du XVIe siècle (Vol. I, Paris, 1925, vol. VII, 1967) and Philippe's version, derive no doubt from the German "verlorener Bei Gott"--'all is lost, by God.'

Thus frelore would derive from verlorener by metathesis and bigore by consonant harmony with frelore, from Bei Gott = Bigot.

#### Tale 94

A man is robbed and his head severed. He pins it back and the cold freezes it, so he does not bleed. While telling the tale to his wife in front of the fire he blows his nose, but in so doing pulls off his head and throws it in the fire.

This tale is closely related to both Baughman X1722.1\*, Man has head cut off in encounter with enemy; he taunts enemy for missing him. The enemy tells him he will realise his condition when he tries to turn his head around; and Baughman X1722\*(b), Skater falls through ice hole, strikes neck against sharp ice; head scoots along ice, meets body at another air hole [the implication is that it freezes back in place]. That night the man sneezes; the head flies behind the backlog in the fireplace.

For other lies about freezing in La Nouvelle Fabrique, see tales 9, 18, 24 and 28.

#### Tale 95

A chambermaid sets a trap for a rat. The rat escapes; a boy tries to stamp on it, but only pulls off its tail. A turkey swallows the rat whole, but it goes straight through the turkey; finally, an old cat eats it.

This tale fits under the general motif X1227, Lies about rats. For a distant parallel to the unusual escape route of the rat in the turkey, see tale 36.

#### Tale 96

A poor man goes hunting for owls' nests in a ruined castle and finds all manner of riches in them.

Motifs in this tale include N527, Treasure (money) carried by bird to nest; N534, Treasure discovered by accident; and Baughman X1273\*, Lies about owls.

The fact that certain birds are known to steal bright objects is enshrined in a variety of proverbial sayings in French tradition; Paul Sébillot (Folklore de France, III, pp. 178-79) mentions this belief and quotes two proverbial comparisons in which the owl passes for a thievish bird.

#### Tale 97

A number of people boast of having many relations. One man outdoes them all, describing a party to which his relations came from every village in France.

This tale is related to motif X1070, Extraordinary man's family. Compare AT 1961, The Big Wedding. (Giant with sixty daughters).

#### Tale 98

An enormous strawberry, hollowed out by a slug, offers refuge to a she-wolf; she bears thirteen cubs inside it. Later, they are caught and bring a splendid bounty to the hunters.

Motifs in this tale include Baughman X1401.1(d), Animals find shelter in great vegetable, and Baughman X1410(d), Large strawberries. Compare AT 1920B\*, Big Strawberries. For the theme of the unusual home, see tales 80 and 82.

#### Tale 99

A woman catches a mite on her body. When she cracks it between her thumbnails, it makes such a noise that pots and pans fall to the floor and chickens off their perches.

In relation to the absurd nature of the reaction the noise produces, this tale is very vaguely reminiscent of Baughman's new motif X1767.1\*, Absurd disregard for nature of snores. For other stories involving noises, see tales 6 and 108 in this collection.

This, the ninety-ninth tale, was the last in the original edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique. In its deliberate avoidance of the standard one hundred tales, one cannot but be reminded of the American lying motif widespread in oral tradition: in which the hunter shoots ninety-nine birds with one shot, and when asked why he did not make it a round figure, replies that he would not lie for the sake of one bird (X906, Would not lie for a trifle).

The eleven tales which follow this note, as I point out in my introduction, were first added to the collection by the editor of the 1732 edition, a physician named Adrien Larchevesque, according to Rudolf Schenda.

#### Tale 100

A man is frying tripe during a thunderstorm; a thunderbolt comes down the chimney, but nothing daunted, he tosses the mixture five or six times; his son complains that the tripe is a bit burnt.

This tale seems distantly related to Baughman X1617\*, Remarkable lightning, but I find no parallels to this tale. Compare F968, Extraordinary thunder and lightning. The most noticeable feature of the tale is the father's coolness in face of the unusual and dangerous. This is, apparently, a characteristic of most tall tale heroes, the sine qua non of their daring feats; without his sang-froid, Baron Münchhausen might have been no more than an insubstantial boaster.

#### Tale 101

A man makes a special collar for his pet dogs, with nails turned forward and back, as a protection against wolves. One day, a wolf

seizes one of the dogs but is caught on the collar and dragged home. This method of hunting wolves becomes a favourite pastime of the dogs.

The motifs in this tale may be classified under X1215, Lies about dogs; and X1124, Lie: the hunter catches or kills game by ingenious or unorthodox method.

The use of nail-studded collars as a means of protecting dogs from wolves may be both a traditional and still common practice. In Carlo Levi's Christ Stopped At Eboli (New York, 1964), an account of a year spent in the poor southern Italian town of Gagliano, there is a description of just such a collar, without, however, any humorous overtones: "In the village there were only wretched, beaten mongrel hunting dogs and occasionally, following a shepherd and his flock, a fierce sheep dog from the Maremma, his collar bristling with nails to protect him from the wolves." (p. 116).

#### Tale 102

One winter it is so cold that snot freezes on the nose, even in front of the fire; people cannot relieve themselves out of doors as the excrement would freeze at the exit. When the thaw comes, the river overflows its banks and carries off great blocks of hewn stone.

The opening exaggerations of this tale which serve as a kind of formula (compare the opening sentence of tale 24), fit under the general motif X1623, Lies about freezing. Compare also Baughman X1622\*, Effects of cold weather. For the floating rock, compare Baughman X1741.9\*, Lie: anvil swims river; type 1930. For this last motif, see also tale 12.

#### Tale 103

A man is given a drug which catches fish. He leaves it in a box and goes off. Hot weather causes the drug to expand and the fumes which escape are sufficient, on reaching the river, to kill all the fish in it.

This tale belongs to the general motif X1156, Lie: other unusual methods of catching fish; and X1150.1, Lie: the great catch of fish. For the remarkable drug, compare A2834, Origin of fish drug. While Stith Thompson talks about the fish drug, there are no motifs about remarkable drugs or drugs designed to catch fish in the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature.

#### Tale 104

A man whose head is turned by fumes of the curdled milk he drinks, thinks of a way to fly. He makes wings out of the fan of his winnowing machine and a tail out of a spade. He climbs a tree and falls headfirst into a pile of manure.

One of the few fool tales in this collection, the story fits under the motif J2133, Numskull falls. There does not seem to be a motif concerning the fool's attempt to fly, although such stories occur in modern collections. I am grateful to Herbert Halpert who draws my attention to two such examples.

The first appears in A Mountain Township (New York, 1933) by the New England poet Walter Hard. "A Test Pilot" (pp. 135-36) is the title of a poem which tells of a would-be flier who carries his wings on to a hay barn, straps them on and falls to the ground, without serious injury.

The second example is described by V.J. Buchan Watt in The Book of Banchory (Edinburgh, 1947). "Mr. Davidson of Inchmarlo and his Flying Machine" tells of the gentleman who "... invented a machine made of wood which had affixed at the side 'wings' which flapped up and down ... the strange machine vigorously flapped its wings. Then it half rose into the air and crashed to the ground. The 'pilot' was luckily unhurt, but the machine was badly damaged." (p. 40).

## Tale 105

Two men are hunting hares. They pause so that one may relieve himself. While he is bending down, a hare runs through his legs, wiping his behind, but also causing him to fall forward in surprise. He catches the hare's tail and is dragged a long way before letting go.

This tale fits under motif X1130, Lie: unusual experience of hunter; it is related to those tale types and motifs which involve persons or objects dragged along by some unusual means (for example, X1133.1, Lie: man uses remarkable means of getting out of tree stump; AT 1900). Compare tales 89, 91 and 110.

There would seem to be some relationship between this tale and various proverbial expressions about liars in French tradition. Eugène Rolland gives two examples in his Faune Populaire (VIII, p. 187): "S'il lui sortait du cul un lièvre, toutes les fois qu'il ment, il ne mangerait pas souvent du pain sec." ('If a hare came out of his arse every time he told a lie, he wouldn't eat stale bread very often.')

The second puts it more positively: "Quand il dit la vérité, un lièvre lui sort du cul." ('When he tells the truth, a hare comes out of his arse.')

## Tale 106

A violent storm carries off the spire and belfry of a church; the bell ringers let go and are saved. People in the next parish think the storm is over when they hear their neighbours' bells ringing as they pass overhead.

This tale may be classified under Baughman's new number X1611.1.8\*, Wind blows objects. Compare X1611.1.8\*(a), Wind blows house.

## Tale 107

A peasant tries to play a trick on the astronomer-mathematician Nostradamus. Beneath the stone on which Nostradamus habitually

sits to do his calculations, he puts a sheet of paper. When Nostradamus sits on it, he detects the change in height.

This tale includes motifs X939, Lie: other powers pertaining to extraordinary senses or bodily powers; and X1010, Lie: remarkable mental skills. Compare F600, Person with extraordinary powers, and F647, Marvellous sensitiveness.

Nostradamus (Michel de Notredame, 1503-1566) was one of the most celebrated men of his day. His prophetic powers made his services sought after by notables of every degree. His reputation as a great astrologer-astronomer spread to the most distant confines of France. That Nostradamus still manages to fascinate lesser mortals is attested by studies and interpretations of his prophecies which appear even today. For a recent example, see Prophecies on World Events by Nostradamus, translated and interpreted by Stewart Ross, New York, 1961.

#### Tale 108

A great barrel of cider explodes, the bung of which is blown through the cellar ceiling, kitchen, bedroom and roof, killing a jay which is flying over the house.

This tale may best be classified under motif X1810, Tall tales about miscellaneous objects. For other tales concerned with explosions of different kinds, see nos. 6 and 99.

#### Tale 109

Fire threatens a part of Paris and fleas rush from the burning houses. In desperation, they all jump right across the Seine, covering the passers-by.

This tale fits under motif X1285, Lies about fleas. Although these fleas are not particularly large, their jumping ability may be



compared favourably to those recorded by Baughman, X1285(ab), Large fleas jump over gum trees.

#### Tale 110

A donkey eats much grass in a field and lies down to rest. A magpie, which has been pecking in the donkey's droppings, reaches its rectum and still pecking, gets its head caught. It flaps so hard in an effort to escape that it drags the donkey right across the field. When it is released, it bumps against an apple tree with such force that a great load of apples falls to the ground.

Although there is no motif to cover this tale exactly, other than the general X1250, Lies about birds, it is related to those tales involving an object or person being carried through the air. Compare tales 59 and 105 in particular. For the manner in which Philippe's magpie is caught, Herbert Halpert draws my attention to a similar method used to catch a buzzard; this and related motifs are mentioned by Richard M. Dorson in his Negro Folktales in Michigan (Harvard, 1956; see note 12, p. 207).

For the falling apples, compare tale 76, in which a dog crashes into a tree and causes many nuts to fall.

#### The Letter from Prester John

P.A. Gratet-Duplessis included this medieval work in the 1853 edition of La Nouvelle Fabrique because he felt that the wonders of which it treats were akin to the tall tales written down by Philippe d'Alcripe. I do not feel that the relationship between the Letter and Philippe's work is sufficient to warrant a detailed study of the text, but since many of the motifs in the Letter do or have existed in oral tradition, I give here, as a convenience, a list of motif numbers according to Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk-Literature. It is the traditional nature of the material and

the evident rarity of the work which has prompted me to retain it in my study.

The first mention of Prester John dates from 1145 according to Gratet-Duplessis, who adds that it was only towards the end of the fifteenth century that The Letter was first published. Lazare Sainéan, however, writing some seventy years later in his rich and important study La Langue de Rabelais (Paris, 2 vols., 1922-23), attributes the spread of the tradition of Prester John directly to the Letter itself, which he says was first hawked about the courts of Western Europe in 1165.

Many of the early medieval travellers refer to Prester John, and most of their imitators include long descriptions of his court, lands, customs and manners of the empire and other wonders, in their spurious accounts. Most notable of these imitators was Sir John Mandeville, whose Travels, written between 1322 and 1357, were so popular that Rabelais considered it a most worthy and notable book. Sainéan refers to various medieval and renaissance writers who mention Prester John, and he comments on the protean nature of this Christian monarch, whose empire was variously placed in almost all Asian lands known to western geographers, before being relegated to Ethiopia in the sixteenth century.

The whole background to the accounts of medieval travellers and their imitators, with references to Prester John, has been discussed in the following works: Sir Henry Yule, Cathay and the Way Thither, revised by H. Cordier (London, 1914, and the Kraus reprint edition, in three volumes, of the 1914 Hakluyt Society edition, 1967); and the more recent work, edited by A.P. Newton, Travel and Travellers of the Middle Ages (London, 1926), which I have not seen but which is cited by P.H. Reaney in The Origin of British Surnames (London, 1967), pp. 12-13. Dr. Reaney finds thirteenth century surnames of the type Prestreiohan current in different parts of England, a fact which reflects how widespread was the influence of the Letter from Prester John.

Arabic numerals and the motif numbers which follow them refer to the text of the Letter from Prester John which follows the main body of tales of La Nouvelle Fabrique.

- 1 F828. Extraordinary crown.
- 2 B15.3.1. Many-headed animal.
- 3 B731.0.1. Animals of strange and varied coloring.
- 4 B15.3. Animal unusual as to his horns.
- 5 B15.3.4. Animal usually harmless has horns.
- 6 B42. Griffin. Half lion, half eagle.
- 7 B39. Other mythical birds. Eugène Rolland (Faune Populaire, IX, pp. 14-15) suggests that the Yllerion or alerion was a fabulous eagle or even the name of a real bird.
- 8 B33. Man-eating birds.
- 9 F511.3. Person with horns.
- 10 F512.1.1. Person with one eye in center of forehead.
- 11 F512.4. Person with eyes in back of head.
- 12 G11.18. Cannibal tribe. Compare also G13. Spiritual exaltation from eating human flesh.
- 13 F517.1.6. Person with horse's hoofs.
- 14 F517.1.4. Person with claws on the feet.
- 15 F563. Women warriors or hunters.
- 16 F715.1. Extraordinary source of river.
- 17 F535. Pygmy. Remarkably small man.
- 18 B21. Centaur: man-horse.
- 19 B11. Dragon.
- 20 This whole passage seems to refer to arboreal monkeys.
- 21 B13. Unicorn.
- 22 K771. Unicorn tricked into running horn into tree.
- 23 F531. Giant.
- 24 B32. Phoenix.
- 25 B32.1. Phoenix renews youth. Compare B32.1.1. Phoenix renews youth when 1,000 years old.

- 26 Compare A2434.2.3. Why there are no snakes in Ireland.
- 27 F715. Extraordinary river.
- 28 D978. Magic herb. Compare G272.2. Magic herb protects from witch.
- 29 D1338.1.1. Fountain of youth.
- 30 F711. Extraordinary sea.
- 31 F715. Extraordinary river.
- 32 D915.4.1. Sabbatical river. Dry on Sabbath.
- 33 D915.4. Intermittent river.
- 34 F711.2. Sea of unusual substance.
- 35 D452.3. Transformation: sand to another object. Compare D452.1.4.  
Transformation: stone into jewel.
- 36 F753. Mountain of fire.
- 37 B99.2. Mythical worm.
- 38 F511.0.9. Person with animal's head.
- 39 F639.2. Mighty diver. Can stay extraordinary time under water.
- 40 F771.3.5. Underground house.
- 41 B39. Other mythical birds.
- 42 Compare D1032. Magic meat; D1347.5. Magic meat (eaten) causes  
fecundity.
- 43 E90. Tree of Life.
- 44 E80. Water of Life.
- 45 B15.1.2.8.2. Nine-headed serpent.
- 46 Compare B91.2. Plumed serpent.
- 47 F708. Countries with one conspicuous lack.
- 48 B731.2. Green horse.
- 49 B11.2.3.1. Seven-headed dragon.
- 50 F771.1.5. Palace of jewels.
- 51 F782. Extraordinary doors and windows.
- 52 F784. Extraordinary table.
- 53 F781. Extraordinary rooms.
- 54 F787. Extraordinary bed.
- 55 F789. Extraordinary buildings and furnishings--miscellaneous.
- 56 F771.1.6. Crystal castle. Compare F771.1.6.1. Castle with glass  
wall.

- 57 F771.1.5. Palace of jewels.  
 58 F774. Extraordinary pillars.  
 59 D1652.1. Inexhaustible food. D1652.5. Inexhaustible vessel.

The Great And Marvellous Catch Made At Sea By The Bretons Some Three Weeks Ago.

A giant horned whale contains a great many ships, spars and other nautical appurtenances. Its eyes are so big it takes a fortnight to gouge them out. The tail is made into sprinklers which cure scurvy and leprosy. Its udders give enough milk and cheese to feed all mankind.

This tale, in the form of a poem in the original French, is related to the international tale type AT 1889G, Man Swallowed by Fish. Ships and many people inside. Motif number X1723, Lies about swallowing. See also AT 1960, The Great Animal or Great Object, and compare motif X1301, Lie: the great fish. Compare also Baughman X1301.5\*(a), Man ties big fish to tree, eats from it for six weeks; and Baughman X1301.4\*, Other remarkable dimensions of large fish. Compare F910, Extraordinary swallowings, and F911.4, Giant fish. The motifs of the creature or object of extraordinary size is by no means restricted to the tall tale. Quite apart from the giants of Märchen, compare the creatures in the lying songs "The Derby Ram" and "The Crocodile."

A Conversation Between Two Nightingales.

A traveller relates how he overhears two nightingales repeating word for word, with impeccable accent and pronunciation, the arguments between a husband and wife they overhear during the day.

Two motifs appear in this quasi-serious account: B211.3, Speaking bird; and B122.2, Birds as reporters of sights and sounds.

Though Pliny (Natural History, trans. H. Rackham, III, X, XLIII, pp. 345-47) stresses the premium placed on nightingales as songsters,

for their apparently inexhaustible supply of song and the great degree of variety they were allegedly able to introduce into their voices, he gives no hint of their parrot-like ability to talk or reproduce human conversation, in the manner suggested in this tale.

## TABLE OF TALE TYPE AND MOTIF NUMBERS

Tale type numbers are those given in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's The Types of the Folktale (Revised edition, Helsinki, 1961). Motif numbers are from Stith Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk-Literature (Revised edition, Bloomington and Copenhagen, 1955-58), and Ernest W. Baughman's Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America (The Hague, 1966).

Baughman's new motif numbers are distinguished from Thompson's numbers by a following asterisk or, in the case of new variants, by small letters in parentheses, or both. This is, of course, Baughman's own method.

Following each type or motif number is the number of the tale or tales in which it appears. In the case of certain tales for which there is no precise number, I have provided the nearest related number, and in some cases, type or motif numbers to which such tales are only vaguely related. On such occasions, the collection number is in parentheses. I have adopted this procedure mainly to provide researchers with comparative material which might otherwise be overlooked.

Motifs include those in the three additions to the 110 tales of La Nouvelle Fabrique : the Letter from Prester John, The Great And Marvellous Catch Made At Sea By The Bretons Some Three Weeks Ago, and A Conversation Between Two Nightingales. References to these additions under 'Tale Number' are respectively to the abbreviations PJ; TG&MC; and Conv. The abbreviation PJ followed by a number refers to the note number in the text of the Letter from Prester John.

## TYPES OF FOLKTALES

## I. ANIMAL TALES

Tale Number

## 150-199 Man and Wild Animals

- 160A\* The Pike Caught by the Fox. (78)

## II. ORDINARY FOLKTALES

## A. 500-599 Supernatural Helpers

- 503 The Gifts of the Little People. (93)  
 516 Faithful John. (92)

## 650-699 Supernatural Power and Knowledge

- 654 The Three Brothers. 1

## B. 750-849 Religious Tales

- 750A The Wishes. 93

## III. JOKES AND ANECDOTES

## 1875-1999 Tales of Lying

- 1875 The Boy on the Wolf's Tail. (91)  
 1881 The Man Carried through the Air by Geese. (34, 36, 47,  
 59, 62.)  
 1889A Shooting off the Leader's Tail. 52  
 1889B Hunter Turns Animal Inside Out. 31  
 1889C Fruit Tree Grows from Head of Deer shot with fruit  
pits. (82)  
 1889G Man Swallowed by Fish. (90, TG&MC)  
 1889P Horse Repaired. (10)



		Tale Number
1890	<u>The Lucky Shot.</u>	(19)
1890A	<u>Shot Splits Tree Limb.</u>	43
1893A*	<u>Two Hares Run into Each Other and are Caught.</u>	7
1895	<u>A Man Wading in Water Catches Many Fish in his Boots.</u>	43
1900	<u>How the Man Came out of the Tree Stump (Marsh).</u>	91
1910	<u>The Bear (Wolf) Harnessed.</u>	(89)
1920B*	<u>Big Strawberries.</u>	(98)
1920C*	<u>Speed in Skills.</u>	1
1930	<u>Schlaraffenland.</u>	(12, 49, 85.)
1935	<u>Topsy-Turvy Land.</u>	(50, 85.)
1960	<u>The Great Animal or Great Object.</u>	TG&MC
1960B	<u>The Great Fish.</u>	25
1960Z	<u>Other Stories of Great Objects and the Like.</u>	86
1961	<u>The Big Wedding.</u>	(97)

## MOTIFS

## A. MYTHOLOGICAL MOTIFS

A2400-2499 Causes of Animal Characteristics:  
appearances and habits.

A2434.2.3. Why there are no snakes in Ireland. (PJ26)

A2800-2899 Miscellaneous Explanations.

A2834. Origin of fish drug. (103)

## B. ANIMALS

B0-99 Mythical Animals.

B11 Dragon. PJ19

		Tale Number
B11.2.3.1.	Seven-headed dragon.	PJ49
B13	Unicorn.	PJ21
B15.1.2.8.2.	Nine-headed serpent.	PJ45
B15.3.	Animal unusual as to its horns.	PJ4
B15.3.1.	Many-horned animal.	PJ2
B15.3.4.	Animal usually harmless has horns.	PJ5
B21	Centaur; man-horse.	PJ18
B31.1.	Roc.	(PJ47)
B32	Phoenix.	PJ24
B32.1.	Phoenix renews youth.	PJ25
B32.1.1.	Phoenix renews youth when 1,000 years old.	(PJ25)
B33	Man-eating birds.	PJ8
B39	Other mythical birds.	PJ41
B42	Griffin. Half lion, half eagle.	PJ6
B91.2.	Plumed serpent.	PJ46
B99.2.	Mythical worm.	PJ37

#### B100-199 Magic Animals.

B122.2.	Birds as reporters of sights and sounds.	Conv.
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#### B200-299 Animals with Human Traits.

B211.3.	Speaking bird.	Conv.
B291.1.0.1.	Bird as letter carrier.	92

#### B400-499 Kinds of Helpful Animals.

B450	Helpful birds.	92
B451.1.	Helpful lark.	(92)

## Tale Number

## B700-799 Fanciful Traits of Animals.

B731.0.1.	Animals of strange and varied coloring.	PJ3
B731.2.	Green horse.	PJ48

## B800-899 Miscellaneous Animal Motifs.

B874	Giant fish.	(82)
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## D..MAGIC

## D0-699 Transformation.

## D400-499 Other Forms of Transformation.

D451.8.	Transformation of leaf to another object.	49
D452.1.4.	Transformation: stone into jewel.	(PJ35)
D452.3.	Transformation: sand to another object.	PJ35
D475.4.2.	Transformation: lice into gems.	(12)
D475.4.4.	Transformation: peas into pearls.	(12)

## D800-1699 Magic Objects.

## D800-899 Ownership of Magic Objects.

D810	Magic object as gift.	92
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## D900-1299 Kinds of Magic Objects.

D915.4.	Intermittent river.	PJ33
D915.4.1.	Sabbatical river. Dry on Sabbath.	PJ32
D978	Magic herb.	PJ28
D1032	Magic meat.	PJ42
D1183	Magic scissors.	(73)

## Tale Number

## D1300-1599 Function of Magic Objects.

D1338	Fountain of youth.	PJ29
D1347.5.	Magic fish (eaten) causes fecundity.	PJ42
D1361.17.	Magic ring renders invisible.	92
D1429	Magic object draws person (thing) to it.	48

## D1600-1699 Characteristics of Magic Objects.

D1652.1.	Inexhaustible food.	PJ59
D1652.5.	Inexhaustible vessel.	PJ59

## E. THE DEAD

## EO-199 Resuscitation.

E80	Water of life.	PJ44
E90	Tree of life.	PJ43

## F. MARVELS

## FO-199 Otherworld Journeys.

F111.0.2.	Swineherd finds terrestrial paradise while looking for lost sow.	33
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## F200-699 Marvellous Creatures.

## F200-399 Fairies and Elves.

F261	Fairies dance.	93
F331.1.	Mortal wins fairies' gratitude by joining in their dance.	93
F340	Gifts from fairies.	93

## Tale Number

## F500-599 Remarkable Persons.

F511.3.	Person with horns.	PJ9
F511.0.9.	Person with animal's head.	PJ38
F512.1.1.	Person with one eye in center of forehead.	PJ10
F512.4.	Person with eyes in back of head.	PJ11
F517.1.4.	Person with claws on the feet.	PJ14
F517.1.6.	Person with horse's hoofs.	PJ13
F531.	Giant.	PJ23
F531.3.4.	Giant eats a prodigious amount.	(16)
F535	Pygmy. Remarkably small man.	PJ17
F544.2.	Remarkable tongue.	(12)
F544.3.2.	Teeth of angered saint give off sparks.	(55)
F545.1.1.1.	Green beards.	12
F555	Remarkable hair.	12
F555.5.	Multicolored hair.	(12)
F563	Women warriors or hunters.	PJ15

## F600-699 Persons with Extraordinary Powers.

F600	Person with extraordinary powers.	(107)
F632	Mighty eater.	16, (58)
F633	Mighty drinker.	(58)
F634.1.	Catching fish in beards.	(17)
F639.2.	Mighty diver can stay extraordinary time under-water.	PJ39
F647	Marvellous sensitiveness.	(107)
F660.1.	Brothers acquire extraordinary skill. Return home and are tested.	1
F663.1.	Skillful smith shoes running horse.	1
F665.1.	Skillful barber shaves running hare.	1
F667.1.	Skillful fencer keeps sword dry in rain. Swings it so fast.	1

		Tale Number
F667.2.	Man able to strike every arrow with his sword and reduce it to splinters.	11
F675	Ingenious carpenter.	(2)
F681	Marvellous runner.	(68)
F700-899 Extraordinary Places and Things.		
F708	Countries with one conspicuous lack.	PJ47
F711	Extraordinary sea.	PJ30
F711.2.	Sea of unusual substance.	PJ34
F713.2.	Bottomless lakes (pools, etc.)	(66)
F715	Extraordinary river.	PJ27, PJ31.
F715.1.	Extraordinary source of river.	PJ16
F715.3.	Rivers with marvellous underground connections.	(66)
F718	Extraordinary well.	8
F721	Subterranean world.	8
F753	Mountain of fire.	PJ36
F771.1.5.	Palace of jewels.	PJ50, PJ57.
F771.1.6.	Crystal castle.	PJ56
F771.1.6.1.	Castle with glass wall.	(PJ56)
F771.3.5.	Underground house.	PJ40
F774	Extraordinary pillars.	(PJ58)
F781	Extraordinary rooms.	PJ53
F782	Extraordinary doors and windows.	PJ51
F784	Extraordinary table.	PJ52
F787	Extraordinary bed.	PJ54
F789	Extraordinary buildings and furnishings-- miscellaneous.	PJ55
F828	Extraordinary crown.	PJ1

## Tale Number

## F900-1099 Extraordinary Occurrences.

F910	Extraordinary swallowing.	(TG&MC)
F911.4.	Great fish.	(TG&MC)
F913	Victim rescued from swallower's body.	47
F940	Extraordinary underground/underwater disappearance.	21, 66.
F962	Extraordinary precipitation.	32
F962.5.	Extraordinary hailstones.	20
F968	Extraordinary thunder and lightening.	(100)
F980	Extraordinary occurrences concerning animals.	13

## G. OGRES

## G10-399 Kinds of Ogres.

## G10-99 Cannibals and Cannibalism.

G11.18	Cannibal tribe.	PJ12
G13	Spiritual exaltation from eating human flesh.	(PJ12)
G93	Cannibal breaks wind as means of attack.	(6)

## G200-299 Witches.

G272.2.	Magic herb protects from witch.	(PJ28)
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## H. TESTS

## H1250-1399 Nature of Quests.

H1381.3.1.2.1.	Quest for unknown woman whose picture has aroused man's love.	92
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## J. THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

## J1750-1849 Absurd Misunderstanding.

		Tale Number
J1770	Objects with mistaken identity.	30
J1772	One object thought to be another.	30

J2050-2199 Absurd Short-sightedness.

J2071	The foolish wishes.	93
J2133	Numskull falls.	104

K. DECEPTIONS

K0-99 Contests won by Deception.

K92.2.	Game won with loaded dice.	22
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K700-799 Capture by Deception.

K771	Unicorn tricked into running horn into tree.	PJ22
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K1200-1299 Deception into a Humiliating Position.

K1271	Amorous intrigue exposed.	57
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N. CHANCE AND FATE

N400-699 Lucky Accidents.

N527	Treasure (money) carried by bird to nest.	96
N534	Treasure discovered by accident.	96

N600-699 Other Lucky Accidents.

N620	Accidental success in hunting or fishing.	(43)
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## Tale Number

Q. REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS  
 Q400-599 Kinds of Punishment.

Q411.0.2. Husband kills wife and paramour. 57

R. CAPTIVES AND FUGITIVES  
 R0-99 Captivity.

R41.2. Captivity in tower. 92

T. SEX  
 T0-99 Love.

T11.2. Love through sight of picture. 92

X. HUMOR

X900-1899 Humor of Lies and Exaggerations.

X910-1099 The Remarkable Man (Woman) and his Possessions  
 and Occupations.

X930	Physical powers and habits of remarkable person.	6, 44.
X931	Lie: remarkable eater.	16, 58.
X932	Lie: remarkable drinker.	58
X934	Lie: remarkable spitter.	15
X934(ee)	Tobacco juice puts out fire.	(15)
X935	Remarkable blower.	(44)
X939	Other motifs pertaining to extraordinary senses or bodily powers.	(44), 107.
X940	Lie: person of remarkable strength.	60, (73).
X943	Lie: remarkable thrower.	60
X943(e)	Accurate throwing.	60
X961	Lie: extraordinary bodily skills.	46

		Tale Number
X962*	Lie: remarkable runner.	(46), 68.
X980	Lie: occupational or professional skill.	(11), 73, 87.
X981*	Lie: skillful marksman.	61
X981*(d)	Unusual occurrences in shooting.	4
X981*(da)	Brothers shoot at each other's gun muzzles; the bullets meet and fall flattened to ground.	4, (61).
X981*(db)	Brothers shoot at each other's gun muzzles; gun of one misfires; bullet from other gun enters and plugs barrel of his gun.	(61)
X994	Lie: remarkable carpenter.	(2)
X1004.1.	Lie: man rides unusual riding animal.	89
X1010	Lie: remarkable mental skills.	107
X1031.1.1.	Lie: the great kettle.	(86)
X1031.3.	Lie: remarkable cooking in the big kitchen.	86
X1031.3(d)	Pea or bean soup made in lake (usually after load of peas falls through ice of lake).	(86)
X1070	Extraordinary man's family.	97

X1110-1199 The Great Hunter and the Great Fisherman.

X1110	The wonderful hunt.	19
X1112	Hunter catches fish in boots while wading.	43
X1114.1.	Two hares run into each other and are caught.	7
X1122.2.	Lie: person shoots many animals with one shot.	71
X1124	Lie: the hunter catches or kills game by ingenious or unorthodox method.	36, 40, 88, 101.
X1124.1(a)	Shooting off the leader's tail.	52
X1124.2.	Hunter turns animal inside out.	31
X1124.3.1.	Gunshot splits limb and catches feet of birds.	43
X1130	Lie: unusual experiences of hunter.	74, 88, 105.
X1130.2.	Fruit tree grows from head of deer shot with pit or pits of fruit by hunter who has no regular bullets.	(82)

		Tale Number
X1133.1.	Lie: man uses remarkable means of getting out of tree stump.	(105)
X1133.4.	Man escapes from bees' nest on bear's tail.	(91)
X1150.1.	Lie: the great catch of fish.	103
X1156	Lie: other unusual methods of catching fish.	65, 81, 103.

X1200-1399 Tall Tales about Animals.

X1200	Lie: remarkable animals.	67
X1201	The great animal.	47, 80.
X1202	Lie: animals inherit acquired characteristics or conditions.	41
X1203	Lie: animal's food affects him in unusual way.	62
X1210	Lies about mammals.	53, 78.
X1215	Lies about dogs.	13, 42, 45.
X1215.8.	Lie: intelligent dog.	69, 76, 77, 101.
X1215.8(a)	Intelligent hunting dog.	77
X1215.8(ai)	Dog fishes.	77
X1215.9.	Lie: obedient or dutiful dog.	83
X1215.13*(c)	Female fox chases female rabbit. During the chase, the fox gives birth to four young, and the rabbit gives birth to four young. The chase continues with five foxes chasing five rabbits.	14
X1216.1.	The wolf harnessed.	89
X1218*	Lies about foxes.	59
X1227	Lies about rats.	54, 95.
X1227(a)	Big rat.	72
X1231*	Lies about rabbits.	(67)
X1232*	Lies about monkeys.	12
X1233	Lies about hogs.	49
X1233.1.2.	The great wild boar: tusks go through tree, come out other side.	64

		Tale Number
X1234*	Lies about deer.	26
X1237	Lies about oxen. The great ox.	27
X1237.2.3*	Size of blue ox.	27
X1237.2.3*(f)	Distance between horns of blue ox.	27
X1241	Lies about horses.	65
X1241.1(e)	Man skins horse by mistake, thinking it dead. Horse revives; man puts skin of other animal back on horse by mistake.	(63)
X1241.2.2.	Trained horse as harvester and hunter. He rolls on the fields. Oats in his flanks; club in his tail kills birds.	(77)
X1244	Lies about goats.	20
X1250	Lies about birds.	51, 59, 70, 110.
X1256.1.	Lie: doves tear up wolf.	(85)
X1258.1.	Lie: man carried through air by geese.	(34, 36).
X1261	Remarkable ducks.	37
X1267	Lies about hawks.	51
X1273*	Lies about owls.	96
X1280	Lies about insects.	47
X1285	Lies about fleas.	109
X1285(ab)	Large fleas jump over gum-trees.	(109)
X1286.1.4. & <u>passim</u> :	(Men clinch mosquitoes' bills).	(64)
X1300	Lies about fish.	75
X1301	Lie: the great fish.	12, 82.
X1301.4*	Other remarkable dimensions of the great fish.	90, (TG&MC).
X1301.5*(a)	Man ties big fish to tree, eats from it for six weeks.	(TG&MC)
X1301.5*(g)	Cured flesh of great fish feeds whole village for several years.	(25)

## Tale Number

## X1400-1499 Tall Tales about Plants, Fruits, Vegetables and Trees.

X1400	Plants, fruits and trees.	76
X1401.1(d)	Animal finds shelter in great vegetable.	98
X1402	Lie: the fast growing plant.	35
X1402.3.1*	Lie: speed of growth of cornstalk.	35
X1410(d)	Large strawberries.	98
X1471	Lies about large trees.	62

## X1500-1599 Tall Tales about Geography and Topography.

X1505	Topsy-Turvy Land.	50
X1540	Lies about water features.	66
X1545	Remarkable underground channels.	66
X1545.1(a)	Cow falls into pool; two days later she is seen swimming in to shore from out in ocean.	(66)
X1546	Remarkable pond.	66

## X1600-1699 Tall Tales about Weather and Climate.

X1600	Lies about weather and climate.	(100)
X1605	Lie: mixed weather. It is summer in one spot and winter in another nearby.	33, 79.
X1611	Lies about the wind.	3
X1611.1.	Remarkably strong wind.	79
X1611.1.5*	Remarkable wind blows objects and living things about.	3
X1611.1.5.1*	Remarkable wind affects man.	79
X1611.1.8*	Wind blows objects.	106
X1611.1.8*(a)	Wind blows houses	(106)
X1611.1.13.5*	Rapidly blowing sand or dust.	79
X1617*	Remarkable lightning.	100

		Tale Number
X1620	Lies about cold weather.	9, 49.
X1622*	Effects of cold weather.	102
X1622.1*	Cold weather affects man.	9
X1622.2*	Cold weather affects animals.	28
X1622.3.3.1*(b)	Part of water in pot on stove boils; the part next to the door is frozen over.	(24)
X1622.3.3.2*	Man makes use of icicles.	18
X1622.3.3.2*(a)	Man trapped in burning hotel pours pitcherful of water out the window, slides to safety on the icicle which forms.	(18)
X1623	Lies about freezing.	102
X1652*(a)	Large hailstones. Hailstone bounces off silo, kills calf.	(20)
X1654	Lies about rain.	32
X1654.4*(a)	Rain is so thick that fishermen cannot tell where lake ends and rain begins. Fish swim in air, birds fly under water of the lake.	(32)
X1663	Lies about healthy atmosphere.	49
X1663.3*(c)	Man who lives in healthy climate has to go elsewhere because he wants to die.	49

X1700-1799 Lying Tales based on Absurd Logic or Lack of Logic.

X1720	Absurd disregard of anatomy.	45
X1722*(b)	Skater falls through ice hole, strikes head against sharp ice; head scoots along ice, meets body at another air hole. That night the man sneezes; his head flies behind the backlog in the fireplace.	(94)
X1722.1*	Man has head cut off in encounter with enemy; he taunts enemy for missing him. The enemy tells how he will realise his condition when he tries to turn his head around.	(94)

		Tale Number
X1723	Lies about swallowing.	39, 47, 90, (TG&MC).
X1723.1.	Swallowed person is discovered in animal's stomach still alive.	47
X1723.1.2.	Man is swallowed by fish (or other animal).	47
X1726	Man cuts off own head.	(23)
X1727	Absurd stories about beards.	17
X1731	Lies about falling.	29
X1740	Absurd disregard of natural laws.	13
X1741	Lies about gravitation.	28
X1741.3(b)	Petrified bird transfixed with arrow hangs in mid-air; the law of gravity is petrified.	(28)
X1741.9*	Lie: anvil swims river.	12, 102.
X1767.1*	Absurd disregard for nature of snores.	(99)
X1796	Lies concerning speed.	(68)

X1800-1899 Miscellaneous Lies and Exaggerations.

X1800	Miscellaneous exaggerations.	5
X1810	Tall tales about miscellaneous objects.	75, 84, 108.
X1864	Lie: warrior whose horse is cut in two continues to ride on half horse.	10

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