

FOLK TALES OF BREFFNY

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Folk tales of Breffny by B. Hunt

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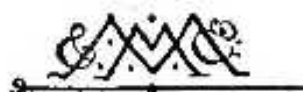
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B. HUNT

**FOLK TALES
OF BREFFNY**

Arthur J. Kinsella

FOLK TALES OF BREFFNY



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BY
B. HUNT

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INTRODUCTION

MANY of the stories in this volume were told by an old man who said he had more and better learning nor the scholars. "The like of them," he declared, "do be filled with conceit out of books, and the most of it only nonsense; 'tis myself has the real old knowledge was handed down from the ancient times." The spread of education and cheap literature robbed him of audience: the boys read of adventure by land and sea, the girls interested themselves in the fate of heroes with marble-white complexion and coal-black moustache. But it happened that the old man took a contract to break stones for lime, and a child with an insatiable desire for information came to watch him at work. "I promise you will walk the world, like a Queen of

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FOLK TALES OF BREFFNY

ancient days, renowned for learning and wit," he assured her, delighted to find a listener at last. The child was only seven years old, and could not remember all she heard, so most of his lore died with him.

"The King's Daughter of France," "The Dark Oath," and "Nallagh's Child" were told by other friends.

The Folk Tale is essentially dramatic and loses much when it is written down; moreover it is often put into a form unsuited to the spirit of naïve philosophy from whence it springs. The peasant of ancient race is more akin to the aristocratic type than the bourgeois can ever be—and the story told from generation to generation bears greater resemblance to the work of a poet than to that of the popular novelist, who is the bourgeois of literature. Superstition in a race is merely the proof of imagination, the people lacking fairy lore must also lack intelligence and wit.

B. HUNT.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE KING'S DAUGHTER OF FRANCE	1
II. THE COW OF A WIDOW OF BREFFNY	13
III. KATE ELLEN'S WAKE	21
IV. THE DARK OATH	29
V. FAIRY GOLD	37
VI. M'CARTHY OF CONNACHI	45
VII. NALLAGH'S CHILD	65
VIII. THE ENCHANTED HARE	73
IX. THE BRIDGE OF THE KIST	81
X. THE CHILD AND THE FIDDLE	89
XI. THE CUTTING OF THE TREE	97
XII. THE LITTLE SETTLEMENT	105
XIII. THE TILLAGE IN THE FORT	115
XIV. THE NEW DECK OF CARDS	121