

The Woman Pursued by Two Dogs

By A. Le Braz

This happened when the linen from Lower Brittany was considered superior to any from elsewhere. There was not at that time, either at Penvénan or in the neighbourhood, any woman who spun such fine linen as Fant-Ar-Merrer, from Crec-h'-Avel. Every Wednesday, she went to Treguier to sell what she had spun.

One Tuesday evening she said to herself, "I must start early to-morrow morning." And she went to bed with this resolution. In the middle of the night she awoke, and was surprised to find that it was almost light. She got up in haste, dressed, threw her packet over her shoulders, and set out on her way.

Having reached the rise in the road which leads to La Croix de Brabant (where roads meet), she came upon a young man. They exchanged a "Good morning," and walked on together as far as the Cross. Then the young man touched Fant-Ar-Merrer on the arm and said, "Let us stop here." And he pushed her to the roadside near the hedge, and placed himself before her as if to protect her.

Hardly had they thus ranged themselves, when Fant heard fearful sounds advancing towards them. Never had she heard such a tumult. There might have been a hundred heavy carts going at a gallop, so great was the noise.

And it came nearer and nearer!

Fant trembled all over. Nevertheless, she was desirous of knowing what it could be.

A woman ran breathlessly along the road. She went so quickly that the streamers of her cap might be heard flapping as if they had been the wings of a bird. Her bare feet hardly touched the ground, yet they left drops of blood behind. Her unbound hair hung down behind her. She tossed her arms in wild despair, and moaned piteously. It was such a cry of anguish that Fant-Ar-Merrer felt cold to her finger tips. The woman was pursued by two dogs who seemed to be striving, each to get hold of her.

One of these dogs was white, the other was black.

It was they who were making all the disturbance.

At each leap they took the earth seemed to echo.

The woman was making for the Cross.

Fant-Ar-Merrer saw her dart towards the steps of the Calvary. At that very moment the black dog had succeeded in seizing her by the edge of her skirt. But she, springing forward, caught hold of the stem of the Cross and clung to it with all her strength.

The black dog instantly disappeared, barking hideously.

The white dog remained near the poor woman, and began to lick her wounds.

Then the young man said to Fant-Ar-Merrer, "You can now go on your way. It is but just midnight. Never again risk seeing what you have seen to-night, for I cannot be always at hand to protect you. At certain hours it is not well to be on the roads. When you get to Kervénon, enter the house. You will find a man about to die. Spend the night in saying the prayers for the dying by his bedside, and do not leave that house till daybreak. As for me, I am your good angel."

(Related by Marie Louise Belier, Port-Blanc.)