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NOTES AND QUERIES.

TWO WITCH STORIES. — Of the stories given below, the first seems evidently of old English origin. The second may be of negro derivation; both agree in the feature that in each case the witch is unknown to the husband.

1. *The Brothers who married Witches* — Once there was a man who kept a store, and his wife was a witch, but he did n't know it. They kept having things stolen from the store, and could n't find out who took them. It was really the clerk that stole them, and the storekeeper's wife always helped him to get away, for after he'd stolen anything she'd say, "Over the woods and over the water, follow me." And then he'd fly off with her to some safe place, where he could hide the things, and then fly back to the edge of the town, and from there he'd walk to the store, so he could n't never be caught. At last the storekeeper watched one night, and caught the clerk stealing, and they was going to hang him for it. But when he was on the gallows, the witch came along and said, "Off the gallows, and over the water, follow me." And so he got off clear.

The storekeeper had a brother that had a wife that was a witch, too. This brother was a miller, and he had a heap of trouble about getting any one to tend the mill nights, because the men he'd get would either get scared away, or else if they stayed they surely got killed. Anyhow, the miller got one man that said he was n't afraid to stay and watch, if they'd give him a sword and a butcher-knife. So they gave them to him, and he lighted a row of lights, and took his sword and his knife and laid down to watch. Pretty soon in came a lot of black cats, — miaou, miaou, — and one of them began to go around and spat out the lights with her paw. The man, he got up and cut at her with the sword, and cut off her paw, and then they all ran out and left him. He found a hand lying there and picked it up, and it had a gold ring on it, like one the miller's wife wore. In the morning the miller's wife was sick, and they sent the man that watched for the doctor. When the doctor came, he found her in bed in a great deal of misery, and he asked her to let him feel her pulse. She put out her left hand to him, and kept her right hand all the time under the bed-clothes. The doctor, he asked her to put out her right hand, and when he got hold of it he found it was cut off. And that week she died.

2. *The Snake-Wife*. — Once there was a man that had a snake for a wife. But he did n't know she was a snake, till one day one of his friends said to him: "Do you know you got a snake for a wife? She don't look like a snake, — looks like a woman; but she *is* a snake, and I'll tell ye how I know. When she bakes bread she allers bakes two batches, some for you that's got salt in it, an' some for herself that ain't got any in. Now if ye want to ketch her, I'll tell ye how to do. You jest put a pinch of salt into the bread she makes fer herself." So he watched his chance and put in the salt, and sure 'nuff, when she ate a piece o' that bread she turned into a snake, and run up the chimney fast as she could go. And

when the other man see her do that he jest hollered, "Make a big fire, an that'll kill her sure." So they made a big fire right quick, and that killed her.

And the man's wife had been dead a long while ; he did n't know it, but she got killed being thrown from a hoss.

Told to Fanny D. Bergen by a young colored girl at Chestertown, Md.

FOLK-TALE OF THE PANSY. — That charming

"little western flower

Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,"

called by maidens "love-in-idleness," but also known as "heart's-ease" and "Johnny-jump-up" (the *Viola tricolor* of botanists), has given rise to many pleasing folk-tales. One used in Germany to illustrate an episode of family life has found its way across the Atlantic, and has been told me in the following manner: My friend first pointed out that the perfect flower consists principally of three parti-colored brilliant petals and two plainer ones, together with a small central pistil partly concealed by the showy corolla, and that beneath the five colored petals there are four green sepals. The family episode herein symbolized concerns a man with his two daughters, his second wife and her two daughters, and deals with the selfishness of the stepmother. Holding the pansy so that the three handsome gold and purple petals are below the two plain ones, the story-teller proceeds thus:—

Once upon a time there lived in the Thuringian forest a family consisting of a man (show the pistil), his two daughters (show the two plain petals), his wife and her two daughters (show the three gaudy petals). The father of the family was of a retiring disposition (show that the pistil is quite hidden by the corolla), while the ladies of the household were more showy and conspicuous; the stepmother, being proud and selfish, arrayed herself and her own daughters in gorgeous gold and purple gowns (show the three brilliant petals), while she gave her step-children cheaper and simpler garments (show the two plainer petals). And besides this, the lady was so unkind as to secure for herself and her own children a stool apiece for each to sit on (here remove each of the parti-colored petals, and point out that each rests upon a green sepal beneath), whereas her two step-children had but a single stool between them (show that the two plain petals rest upon one green sepal). Remove the corolla and proceed: Having taken away the ladies who overshadowed the head of the family, the latter (the pistil) becomes visible, with his little round head and bright red necktie, and there he sits in silent retirement with his feet in a tub of hot water.

H. Carrington Bolton.

ROPES OF SAND; ASSES; AND THE DANAIDES. — The occurrence of a single incident in ancient Egyptian custom, on Greek and Roman monuments, in an Arabian story, and in English folk-lore provokes suspicion that some one idea worth finding out may lie behind the scattered facts. Such an