

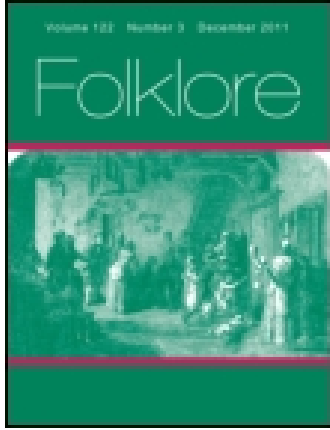
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E. Sidney Hartland

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OBITUARY.

PAUL SÉBILLOT.

In the death, on the 23rd April last, of M. Paul Sébillot, the founder, and for many years the secretary of the *Société des Traditions Populaires*, and editor of the *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, our French colleagues and the scientific world have suffered a severe, if not irreparable, loss. He was born at Matignon, Côtes du Nord, in 1843, of an old *bourgeoise* family. His father and forefathers for several generations had been medical practitioners. Dinan and Rennes were the scenes of his early education; and he was destined for the practice of the law. But his tastes were artistic rather than juridical, and it was on this side of his nature that he was first attracted to the study of folklore. To an intensely patriotic Breton like himself his native scenes and the stories, songs and sayings current among the people, were his inspiration, though he probably owed not a little also to those distinguished Bretons who, more than half a century ago, had begun to study the literature of Brittany and other Celtic countries, and whose studies led naturally on to that of popular traditions everywhere and in all forms. Of that band of pioneers I think only the venerable M. Henri Gaidoz still survives.

M. Sébillot is probably most widely known by his collections of Breton folktales obtained at first-hand from the peasantry of Upper (*i.e.* French-speaking) Brittany. But unsurpassed in charm as these tales are, they are by no means his only, perhaps not his most important, contributions to traditional science. He was an unwearied and methodical worker. Indeed,

none but such a student could have accomplished his voluminous labours, which have laid his fellow-students under a debt they can never adequately repay to his memory. His longest work, that remarkable digest, *Le Folklore de France*, in four volumes, is indispensable to every one who desires information on its subject. Scarcely less important (though occupying a smaller space) are two later books—*Le Paganisme Contemporain chez les Peuples Celto-Latins*, and *Le Folk-lore, Littérature orale et Ethnographie traditionnelle*. In these three books he gathered up the scientific results of his life's labours.

M. Sébillot also published two volumes of verse inspired by his native Brittany: *La Bretagne enchantée* and *La Mer fleurie*. He had a reputation as a painter, which his devotion to folklore alone prevented him from developing; and specimens of his art are preserved and prized in the public galleries of Brittany. He was vice-president and president of the Société d'Anthropologie, taking for many years an important part in its affairs. His gaiety of disposition made him widely loved, and adds poignancy to the regrets of his relatives and of his friends, whether in France or elsewhere. He was married to a sister of M. Yves Guiot, the French publicist, well known and widely honoured in this country as well as in his native land. His son, Paul Yves Sébillot, inherits his artistic, literary and traditional tastes, and has already made his mark in at least one delightful volume.

M. Sébillot's health had been failing for some time, but his intellectual activity and interests were unimpaired; nor was his end expected so soon by those who were about him. He died, we are told, before his hour, broken by the effect of the moral energy that strains everyone of us in these days when our hopes of a free and peaceful Europe have been so rudely threatened. His labours, however, were accomplished—labours such as few men have the capacity and the opportunity to perform. His memory will be held in reverence by his English as by his French colleagues, and wherever the study of tradition penetrates in the years to come.

E. SIDNEY HARTLAND.