

THE BIRTH OF DERBY

LA SALLE

We owe the green plain where Derby stands to the Lombard population. Having entered the Aosta Valley under the leadership of a valiant warrior, they were stationed at the Cluse of Arvier and every day a squad, led by the chief's son, left camp to explore the surroundings.

One day the young man pushed on towards the great waterfall now called Lenteney, that stood close to a vast lake. He placed a foot wrongly, slipped into the water, and his heavy armour dragged him to the bottom, with no comrades able to intervene to help him.

When the Lombard leader received the announcement, as a strong warrior he did not weep; still, he wanted to have his son's body back at all costs. He therefore ordered his men to cut the rock of the mountain, so the waters of the lake would drain away through the gap opened in the stone (which has since been called Pierre Taillée), leaving the wretched body uncovered.

Having recovered the corpse and given him an honoured burial, the Lombard King left the valley.

Years went by. Where the breeze once rippled the waves of the lake, patches of grass and bushes sprang up; one day some farmers thought of building their houses on the green prairie: they were the first in the village of Derby.

Taken from: T. GATTO CHANU, *Fiabe e leggende della Valle d'Aosta*, Rome, Newton & Compton Editions, 2004