

Tales of Fairies

By Ty Hulse



THE FAIRIES

William Allingham (Edited)

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-huning
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!
Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow ide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.
High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and grey
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkil he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.
Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-huning
For fear of little men;

Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!



The Treasure Stone of the Fairies

Welsh Fairy Tale

Long ago, when London was still a village, there was a boy named Gruffyd, who tended sheep on the hill sides. His father was a hard working farmer, who every year tried to coax oats, barley, leeks and cabbage to grow out of the stony ground. In summer, he worked hard, from the first croak of the raven to the last hoot of the owl, to provide food for his wife and baby daughter. In time several little sisters came to keep the boy company.

Mother Gruffyd was always so neat, with her black and white striped apron, her high peaked hat, with its scalloped lace and quilled fastening around her chin, her little short shawl, with its pointed, long tips, tied in a bow, and her bright red plaid petticoat folded back from her frock. Her snowy-white, rolling collar and neck cloth knotted at the top, and fringed at the ends, added fine touches to her picturesque costume. In fact, young Gruffyd was proud of his mother and he loved her dearly. He thought no woman could be quite as sweet as she was.

Once, at the end of the day, on coming back home, from the hills, the boy met some lovely children. They were dressed in very fine clothes, and had elegant manners. They came up, smiled, and invited him to play with them. He joined in their sports, and was too much interested to take note of time. He kept on playing with them until it was pitch dark.

Among other games, which he enjoyed, had been that of "The King in his counting house, counting out his money," and "The Queen in her kitchen, eating bread and honey," and "The Girl hanging out the clothes," and "The Saucy Blackbird that snipped off her nose." In playing these, the children had aprons full of what seemed to be real coins, the size of crowns, or five-shilling pieces, each worth a dollar. These had "head and tail," beside letters on them and the boy supposed they were real.



But when he showed these to his mother, she saw at once from their lightness, and because they were so easily bent, that they were only paper, and not silver. She asked her boy where he had got them. He told her what a nice time he had enjoyed. Then she knew that these, his playmates, were fairy children. Fearing that some evil might come of this, she charged him, her only son, never to go out again alone, on the mountain. She mistrusted that no good would come of making such strange children his companions.

But the lad was so fond of play, that one day, tired of seeing nothing but byre and garden, while his sisters liked to play girls' games more than those which boys cared most for, and the hills seeming to beckon him to come to them, he disobeyed, and slipped out and off to the mountains. He was soon missed and search was made for him.

Yet nobody had seen or heard of him. Though inquiries were made on every road, in every village, and at all the fairs and markets in the neighborhood, two whole years passed by, without a trace of the boy.

But early one morning of the twenty-fifth month, before breakfast, his mother, on opening the door, found him sitting on the steps, with a bundle under his arm, but dressed in the same clothes, and not looking a day older or in any way different, from the very hour he disappeared.

"Why my dear boy, where have you been, all these months, which have now run into the third year--so long a time that they have seemed to me like ages?"

"Why, mother dear, how strange you talk. I left here yesterday, to go out and to play with the children, on the hills, and we have had a lovely time. See what pretty clothes they have given me for a present." Then he opened his bundle.

But when she tore open the package, the mother was all the more sure that she was right, and that her fears had been justified. In it she found only a dress of white paper. Examining it carefully, she could see neither seam nor stitches. She threw it in the fire, and again warned her son against fairy children.

But pretty soon, after a great calamity had come upon them, both father and mother changed their minds about fairies.

They had put all their savings into the venture of a ship, which had for a long time made trading



voyages from Cardiff. Every year, it came back bringing great profit to the owners and shareholders. In this way, daddy was able to eke out his income, and keep himself, his wife and daughters comfortably clothed, while all the time the table was well supplied with good food. Nor did they ever turn from their door anyone who asked for bread and cheese.

But in the same month of the boy's return, bad news came that the good ship had gone down in a storm. All on board had perished, and the cargo was totally lost, in the deep sea, far from land. In fact, no word except that of dire disaster had come to hand.

Now it was a tradition, as old as the days of King Arthur, that on a certain hill a great boulder could be seen, which was quite different from any other kind of rock to be found within miles. It was partly imbedded in the earth, and beneath it, lay a great, yes, an untold treasure. The grass grew luxuriantly around this stone, and the sheep loved to rest at noon in its shadow. Many men had tried to lift, or pry it up, but in vain. The tradition, unaltered and unbroken for centuries, was to the effect, that none but a very good man could ever budge this stone. Any and all unworthy men might dig, or pull, or pry, until doomsday, but in vain. Till the right one came, the treasure was as safe as if in heaven.

But the boy's father and mother were now very poor and his sisters now grown up wanted pretty clothes so badly, that the lad hoped that he or his father might be the deserving one. He would help him to win the treasure for he felt sure that his parent would share his gains with all his friends.

Though his neighbors were not told of the generous intentions credited to the boy's father, by his loving son, they all came with horses, ropes, crowbars, and tackle, to help in the enterprise. Yet after many a long days' toil, between the sun's rising and setting, their end was failure. Every day, when darkness came on, the stone lay there still, as hard and fast as ever. So they gave up the task.

On the final night, the lad saw that father and mother, who were great lovers, were holding each other's hands, while their tears flowed together, and they were praying for patience. Seeing this, before he fell asleep, the boy resolved that on the morrow, he would go up to the mountains, and talk to his fairy friends about the matter.

So early in the morning, he hurried to the hill tops, and going into one of the caves, met the fairies and told them his troubles. Then he asked them to give him again some of their money.



"Not this time, but something better. Under the great rock there are treasures waiting for you."

"Oh, don't send me there! For all the men and horses of our parish, after working a week, have been unable to budge the stone."

"We know that," answered the principal fairy, "but do you yourself try to move it. Then you will see what is certain to happen."

Going home, to tell what he had heard, his parents had a hearty laugh at the idea of a boy succeeding where men, with the united strength of many horses and oxen, had failed.

Yet, after brooding awhile, they were so dejected, that anything seemed reasonable. So they said, "Go ahead and try it."

Returning to the mountain, the fairies, in a band, went with him to the great rock.

One touch of his hand, and the mighty boulder trembled, like an aspen leaf in the breeze.

A shove, and the rock rolled down from the hill and crashed in the valley below.

There, underneath, were little heaps of gold and silver, which the boy carried home to his parents, who became the richest people in the country round about.



KING REINHOLD

German Fairy Tale

In deep green valley there once was a forester's cottage, a lonely and deserted-looking dwelling in the middle of the forest. Where they dwelt an old forester, his wife and a little boy named Hugo. Hugo had few story-books; but he did not need them; for he lived in the forest, and the forest tells its own tales to the children who live there. The birds would chatter to him, and tell him their family histories; the silent, sweet-eyed deer came to the forestry to be fed in the cold winter, and so he learnt to know their ways. The little flowers would whisper tales of the strange sights they had seen in the forest, when they had by chance forgotten to close their petals for the night.

Hugo had seen much for a five year's old boy; but he longed to see more. He had heard stories of wood-goblins, of fairies and nixies, and of the busy dwarfs who live underground. He thirsted for adventure.

One day one of Hugo's friends, a little girl, strayed by herself in the woods of the Küppel, and though her parents and Hugo's father, indeed all the villagers had sought for her, no trace could they find, save strips of her little blue pinafore, and a hair ribbon on the brambles in a remote spot near an old quarry.

Some people spoke of gipsies, some of deep holes or pools in the woods; others did not say much, but they thought of the wood-spirits and fairies and shook their heads.

It happened that, about a fortnight after these events, Hugo's father went out for a night's hunting. His mother had been busy all the afternoon; the weather was hot and sultry. At last drowsiness overcame her and she fell asleep with her head on the kitchen table. Now she was certainly not given to falling asleep in the afternoon, she was generally much too busy for that; so I really think she must have been bewitched. For the fairies sometimes put sleeping draughts into people's coffee. Now was Hugo's opportunity. He hastily took up the brown rye-bread and sausage that stood ready for his supper, packed it into a beautiful green case, snatched up his toy gun in case of accidents, and set out with a brave heart to look for little Elsa.

I must tell you that he had dreamt of her repeatedly since her disappearance. She seemed to look at



him with her wistful blue eyes, and to implore his help. A rhyme rang constantly in his head that seemed to have reference to her; but he could not quite make out what it meant:

"King Reinhold found a little maid
Alone within the forest glade;
She wept and cried in sore distress,
All torn and tattered was her dress;
He set her on a golden throne,
He gave her playthings for her own.
But still she wept the livelong day,
She would not laugh, and would not play.
'This is most tiresome to behold;
What shall I do?' said King Reinhold."

The little maid was probably Elsa; but where was she? Who was King Reinhold? How could Hugo deliver her? He could not answer these questions. "I must trust to luck, and hope that the fairies will help me. Heigho for adventures!"

It was the twilight hour; the sky was of a delicate grey-green tint, the birds called to their roving mates to come home to bed, a few faint stars appeared in the sky; mystery hung in the air.

On Hugo went — following a circle of green and gold that was marked on the trees and seemed to show him the way. He sang and shouted merrily to keep up his spirits; it was supper-time, and the night air had made him hungry; so he unpacked his bread and sausage and made a good meal. The moon had risen, and threw a glimmer of light through the trees; the lingering shades of twilight vanished. On one side of the little path was the dark fir-wood, impenetrable in its gloom, on the other, beeches and oaks. Little harebells, and pink centaury bordered the pathway. There was a lovely woody smell in the late summer night, a smell of damp earth, and fungi and flowers, or rather a combined perfume still more subtle and indescribable.

Suddenly a muffled sound broke the silence: knock, knock, knock, like the blow of hammers when the workmen are busy at some distance. Hugo's brave little heart began to beat; for he knew that the noise must be made by the Kobolds at work on their anvils deep underground.

Then he was aware of footsteps behind him: tramp, tramp, tramp. Was it his father come to fetch him home? He rather hoped that it might be so; but when he plucked up courage to turn round, there was no one there! An owl screeched; a bush rustled near him; he turned round sharply, and there he saw a little old man with a huge key in his hand sitting on a felled tree-trunk. His bright blue eyes gleamed strangely in the moonshine, and his shaggy grey hair stood up on either side of



his red-peaked cap. He wore a jacket of green, lined with scarlet, and had on heavy wooden shoes such as the peasants wear in some parts of Germany. He plucked a dandelion clock that grew by the way and held it up to the moon.

"One, two, three," up to nine the little man counted.

"Nine o'clock! Come along hurry up," said he, and he took Hugo by the hand.

Instantly the child was able to see many things in the forest which he had not observed before; strange fairy forms came floating by and gazed at him with sad, sweet eyes; then a stream of laughing elves passed him in wild frolic. Yes, once he thought that through the trees he saw the gigantic form of the Old King himself, throned on his mountain.

Down, down a narrow bypath they clambered, over stones and through brambles, and interlaced branches. Then they crossed a trout stream silver clear in the moonlight. The trout were asleep; but when the dwarf leant over the little stone bridge and whispered a few words — flash and they were off, far far down the stream; they hid under the rushes and tree-roots by the banks and quaked for fear. They dreaded the dwarfs and with reason.

"Boiled trout with a fine butter sauce, that is my favourite dish," said the little man to Hugo and smacked his lips greedily.

They walked along the beautifully overshadowed pathway by the trout stream, watching the moonlight on the rippling water, till they left the brook behind, and came to a green meadow in the centre of which stood a venerable oak-tree, which still bore green leaves though its trunk was completely hollow.

The tree was lit from within by a brilliant glow of rosy light. The dwarf approached on tiptoe, taking off his clumsy shoes, and beckoning to Hugo to follow him quietly. They peeped through the holes in the trunk of the tree, and O what a sight they saw!

Twenty or more of the tiniest children, scarcely bigger than my finger, sat or danced or rolled on the green mossy carpet of the tree-room. These were the fairy babies, and this was the fairies' nursery. Each little girl had a dolly made of the loveliest flowers, and a cradle of green oak leaves, sewed together by grass blades.

The tiny Fee babies lay on their backs and kicked and crowed for joy, and the biggest of all the fairies present gave them their bottles, filled with moonshine and honey-dew on which the babies thrive. The boy elves made the most noise; they had captured a field mouse, a huge creature it seemed in comparison with them, and they were all trying to ride on its back at once.

Hugo was so delighted with the lovely sight that he could not resist calling out "Oh!" in tones of ecstasy. In an instant, puff! the light went out; a cold fog arose; Hugo saw his dwarf companion change into a big black bear terrible to behold. Just as our hero thought he was going to be eaten up, the Kobold resumed his natural form.



"Be silent if you would be wise," he said, and that was all.

They followed the little pathway further through the meadow and into the woods again, until they came suddenly on a great pile of rocks, picturesquely heaped up amongst the trees, such as are so common in the Taunus Mountains. The dwarf went up to the rock, key in hand, and searched about until he had found a secret door. Then he fitted the key into the lock and turned it, then tugged and tugged to open the door. Suddenly it swung open, creaking noisily, and the dwarf lay on his back. Up he got grumbling and scolding. "They ought to have oiled the hinges, the lazy louts," he said. As the door opened, Hugo saw a long corridor before him, lit by stars of light, and countless mirrors reflected the stars in every direction. The effect was rather too dazzling after the dark night, and Hugo's eyes blinked. Down, down, down, the corridor gradually descended and seemed never-ending. "However shall I get out again?" thought Hugo anxiously. He did not know you see that there are many ways out of magic land.

At last they came to another door, made of crystal glass, and entered a large hall with a sparkling roof of rock crystal. In the centre was a fountain, a more wonderful creation fairyland does not contain. Hugo held his breath for fear of saying "Oh!" again. Strange gnomes and fairies seemed to be alive in it, and the element it contained, was not water, but fire. The most marvellous display of fireworks that you have ever seen, would be nothing in comparison.

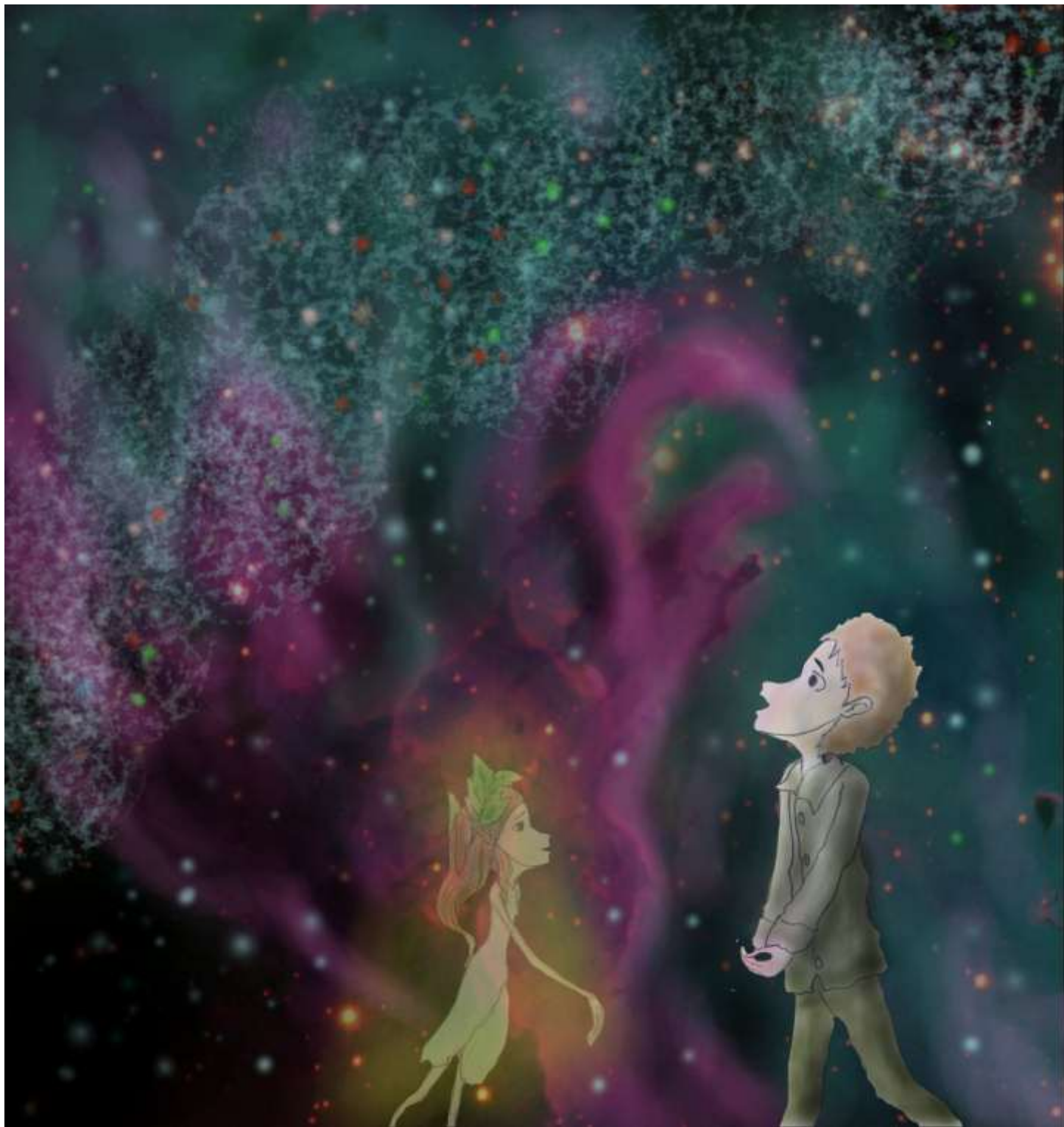
Sometimes it illustrated well-known fairy tales: Snowdrop in her glass coffin, Cinderella trying on the shoe and so on. Hugo could have watched it for ages, and left it reluctantly, looking back all the time. Then they passed through an arched doorway, and a new scene met their view.

Multitudes of little dwarf men dressed in Court attire stood round the room. Facing them, on a throne of gold, with a tiny crown of gold starred with bright-eyed diamonds on her head sat a real little human girl, with a shabby old dolly in her arms. She was a very pretty little girl, grandly dressed in a frock of blue silk embroidered with white daisies, little blue socks and shoes with diamond buckles. But her face was sad and pale, and her eyes red from crying, and her fair hair hung in tangled locks over her shoulders. She held her dolly clasped tight in her arms and repeated over and over again: "I want my mamma, I want to go home to my mamma."

As the dwarf, followed by Hugo, entered the room the dwarfs or Kobolds, as they are also called, bowed down with their heads to the ground, and sang in a gruff chorus:

"Hail, thrice hail, to King Reinhold,
We his subjects true and bold
Bow in homage to our king,
Each his cap on high must fling!"

With that each Kobold threw his peaked cap up to the roof and caught it again on his head, or his foot, or on his nose as the case might be. Then they all shouted "Hurrah!" and it was as if a mighty



flock of ravens were to croak all together. The little girl put her hands up to her ears, and was about to cry again when she saw Hugo. Then she jumped up eagerly with a cry of joy and sprang down the golden steps.

"O you dear, good Hugo," she said, "have you come to fetch me home? I knew you would come," she continued, "for I have dreamt of you so often."

Hugo looked into the sweet little face before him and, in spite of her fine clothes and diamond crown, he recognised little Elsa, his lost playmate. He remembered his dreams, and all seemed to grow clear. He felt himself very big and strong and important all at once. Putting his arms protectingly round the little girl, he said facing the whole assembly: "I have come to take this little girl, Miss Elsa, home to her mamma."

King Reinhold (for it was the king of the dwarfs himself who had accompanied Hugo) took up a heavy crown that lay on a cushion beside him, put it on, and then took it off again, grumbling that it was too heavy and did not fit him properly.

Then he cleared his throat and addressed his courtiers in these words: "Hum! Hum! Hum! My esteemed subjects! I found this little girl some weeks ago in the woods, within the magic circle of my domain. She was crying bitterly, and seemed very frightened. I comforted her as best I could. I gave her strings of pretty beads and a tiny fan of blue jay's feathers, but now that there is someone here **who can take her home it's time for her to return.**"

And so the fairy king ordered that a carriage be made ready and in another moment Hugo and Elsa found themselves standing in the forest in the moonlight. A carriage stood ready for them drawn by six stags. King Reinhold had dispensed with the ceremony of leave-taking; he hated fusses, and wanted to smoke his pipe in peace.

Hugo recognised the stags; he had fed them in the winter from the windows of the forestry; they knew him too, and nodded their gentle heads.

O what a ride that was home through the warm September night! They saw neither spirit nor goblin; no fairy marvel was revealed to them; only the strong, sweet scent of the firs, the dark, weird shape of the trees, and the stars that shone through the branches!

They held one another tight by the hand, and leaned back on the soft cushions; they said nothing, they felt as if they were in a dream.

Presently they heard the noise of a little brook that was hidden in the dark trees, and shortly afterwards they turned a corner and saw the little village of Elhalten before them, peaceful and still in the early morning light.

Elsa recognised her home after all, and called to the stags to stop. Then she kissed Hugo and laid her little cheek against his and said: "Good-bye, darling," and then she slipped into her house, and it all seemed quite natural. You may imagine how delighted Elsa's mother was to have her baby girl in



her arms again. There was such a kissing and hugging as never was before!

Meanwhile Hugo drove up the steep side of the Küppel in the rosy light of the early morning; luckily he met no one on that lonely way. Once he thought he saw a white form standing at the end of the path, like a tall woman who waved her arms and beckoned. But when he looked more closely, it was but the growing light of day through the trees, and not Mother Holle, or the Wood-woman, as he had imagined. The stags galloped along swiftly in spite of the rough road, and soon stopped before the door of the forestry. There everyone seemed still asleep; not a sound was to be heard. Hugo stroked the gentle heads of the stags and bade them good-bye, and they vanished suddenly in the thicket of the Küppel.

With the first rays of the sun Hugo's mother awoke, and was most astonished to find that she had slept all night in the kitchen.

"What has become of Hugo?" she thought suddenly, and felt anxious. She went quickly upstairs to the bedroom, but there lay Hugo snugly curled up in bed with rosy cheeks and tumbled curls, his nose buried deeply in his pillow.

As she came in, he roused himself and said: "Mother, I have been to fetch little Elsa. She is home again" — then he turned round and fell fast asleep.

The next day the news reached them that little Elsa had really been found.

"Why, how curious, my boy dreamt it last night," said Mrs Forester.

"She was left at her parents' house at about four in the morning, so I heard," said her husband, who had just come home.

Elsa's parents always believed that she had been stolen by the gipsies; it was strange that they should have sent her back so soon, without asking for a reward. Moreover the child was richly dressed; that was also a queer thing; her clothes were the wonder and admiration of the whole village. A blue silk frock, and shoes with shining buckles; never had such a finely dressed child been seen in Elhalten before.

The simple folk never dreamt that the buckles were real diamonds and worth a large sum of money. When Hugo and Elsa met again on the following Sunday, you may be sure that they had much to talk about, at least when they were left alone undisturbed by grown-ups!

Although the fairy gifts were invisible to all save the children themselves, it seems that they had an influence on them as they grew older.

Elsa became a sweet, loving little person, the sunshine of her home — so she was called — and very, very seldom did anyone see her crying.

Hugo was a quiet, shy boy; but he seemed to observe everything and people said of him: "Hugo has his eyes open; he will make his mark in the world some day." So the children grew up happy and good, and what can you want to know more about them than that?



Lucky Lanto

Welsh Fairy Tale

There once was a man who used to keep his fire of coal balls burning all night long, out of pure kindness of heart, in case the Tylwyth Teg should be cold. That they came into his kitchen every night he was well aware; he often heard them. One night when they were there as usual and he was lying wide awake and heard them say, 'I wish we had some good bread and cheese this cold night, but the poor man has only a morsel left; and though it's true that would be a good meal for us, it is but a mouthful to him, and he might starve if we took it.' At this man cried out at the top of his voice, 'Take anything I've got in my cupboard and welcome to you!' Then he turned over and went to sleep. The next morning, when he descended into the kitchen, he looked in his cupboard, to see if by good luck there might be a bit of crust there. He had no sooner opened the cupboard door than he cried out, 'O'r anwyll! what's this?' for there stood the finest cheese he had ever seen in his life, with two loaves of bread on top of it 'Lwc dda i ti!' cried the man, waving his hand toward the wood where he knew the fairies lived; 'good luck to you! May you never be hungry or penniless!' And he had not got the words out of his mouth when he saw--what do you think?--a shilling on the hob! But that was the lucky shilling. Every morning after this, when the man got up, there was the shilling on the hob. Well, after that, no man in the parish was better supplied with money than he, though he never did a stroke of work. He had enough to keep his wife in ease and comfort, too, and he got the name of Lucky Lanto.



A Fairy Song

by William Shakespeare

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire!
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green;
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours;
In those freckles live their savours;
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.



THE OLD MAN AND THE FAIRIES.

Celtic Fairy Tale

Many years ago the Welsh mountains were full of fairies. People used to go by moonlight to see them dancing, for they knew where they would dance by seeing green rings in the grass.

There was an old man living in those days who used to frequent the fairs that were held across the mountains. One day he was crossing the mountains to a fair, and when he got to a lonely valley he sat down, for he was tired, and he dropped off to sleep, and his bag fell down by his side. When he was sound asleep the fairies came and carried him off, bag and all, and took him under the earth, and when he awoke he found himself in a great palace of gold, full of fairies dancing and singing. And they took him and showed him everything, the splendid gold room and gardens, and they kept dancing round him until he fell asleep.

When he was asleep they carried him back to the same spot where they had found him, and when he awoke he thought he had been dreaming, so he looked for his bag, and got hold of it, but he could hardly lift it. When he opened it he found it was nearly filled with gold.

He managed to pick it up, and turning round, he went home.

When he got home, his wife Kaddy said: "What's to do, why haven't you been to the fair?" "I've got something here," he said, and showed his wife the gold.

"Why, where did you get that?"

But he wouldn't tell her. Since she was curious at how he'd come by such a large amount of gold, she kept worrying him all night — for he'd put the money in a box under the bed — so he told her about the fairies.

Next morning, when he awoke, he thought he'd go to the fair and buy a lot of things, and he went to the box to get some of the gold, but found it full of cockle-shells, for you should never tell if you've seen fairies.



THE ELVES AND THEIR ANTICS

Dutch Fairy Tale

The elves are the little white creatures that live between heaven and earth. They are not in the clouds, nor down in the caves and mines, like the kabouters. They are bright and fair, dwelling in the air, and in the world of light. The direct heat of the sun is usually too much for them, so they are not often seen during the day, except towards sunset. They love the silvery moonlight. There used to be many folks, who thought they had seen the beautiful creatures, full of fun and joy, dancing hand in hand, in a circle.

In these old days, long since gone by, there were more people than there are now, who were sure they had many times enjoyed the sight of the elves. These little creatures, that looked as thin as gauze, were very lively and mischievous, though they often helped honest and hard working people in their tasks, as we shall see. But first and most of all, they were fond of fun. They loved to vex cross people and to please those who were bonnie and blithe. They hated misers, but they loved the kind and generous. These little folks usually took their pleasure in the grassy meadows, among the flowers and butterflies. On bright nights they played among the moonbeams.

Then their tricks were generally in the stable, or in the field among the cows. Sometimes, in the kitchen or dairy, among the dishes or milk-pans, they made an awful mess for the maids to clean up. They tumbled over the churns, upset the milk jugs, and played hoops with the round cheeses. In a bedroom they made things look as if the pigs had run over them.

When a farmer found his horse's mane twisted into knots, or two cows with their tails tied together, he said at once, "That's the work of elves." If the mares did not feel well, or looked untidy, their owners were sure the elves had taken the animals out and had been riding them all night. If a cow was sick, or fell down on the grass, it was believed that the elves had shot an arrow into its body.



Near a certain village named Elf-berg or Elf Hill, because there were so many of the little people in that neighborhood, there was one very old elf, named Styf, which means Stiff, because though so old he stood up straight as a lance. Even more than the young elves, he was famous for his pranks. Sometimes he was nicknamed Haan-e'-kam or Rooster's Comb. He got this name, because he loved to mock the roosters, when they crowed, early in the morning. With his red cap on, he did look like a rooster. Sometimes he fooled the hens, that heard him crowing. Old Styf loved nothing better than to go to a house where was a party indoors. All the wooden shoes of the twenty or thirty people within, men and women, girls and boys, would be left outside the door. All good Dutch folks step out of their heavy timber shoes, or klomps, before they enter a house and Old Styf would come and mix these shoes all up together, and then leave them in a pile.



So when the people came out to go home, they had a terrible time in finding and sorting out their shoes. Often they scolded each other; or, some innocent boy was blamed for the mischief. Some did not find out, till the next day, that they had on one foot their own, and on another foot, their neighbor's shoe. It usually took a week to get the klomps sorted out, exchanged, and the proper feet into the right shoes. In this way, which was a special trick with him, this naughty elf, Styf, spoiled the temper of many people.

Beside the meadow elves, there were other kinds in Elfin Land; some living in the woods, some in the sand-dunes, but those called Staalkaars, or elves of the stall, were Old Styf's particular friends. These lived in stables and among the cows. The Moss Maidens, that could do anything with leaves, even turning them into money, helped Styf, for they too liked mischief. They teased men-folks, and enjoyed nothing better than mislead travelers on lonely country roads.

Styf's especially famous trick was played on misers. It was this. When he heard of any old fellow,



who wanted to save the cost of candles, he would get a kabouter to lead him off in the swamps, where the sooty elves come out, on dark nights, to dance. Hoping to catch these lights and use them for candles, the mean fellow would find himself in a swamp, full of water and chilled to the marrow. Then the kabouters would laugh loudly.

Old Styf had the most fun with another stingy fellow, who always scolded children when he found them spending a penny. If he saw a girl buying flowers, or a boy giving a copper coin for a waffle, he talked roughly to them for wasting money. Meeting this miser one day, as he was walking along the brick road, leading from the village, Styf offered to pay the old man a thousand guilders, in exchange for four striped tulips, that grew in his garden. The miser, thinking it real silver, eagerly took the money and put it away in his iron strong box. The next night, when he went, as he did three times a week, to count, and feel, and rub, and gloat, over his cash, there was nothing but leaves in a round form. These, at his touch, crumbled to pieces. The Moss Maidens laughed uproariously, when the mean old fellow was mad about it.

Fairies did good things as well; they sewed shoes for poor cobblers, when they were sick, and made clothes for children, when the mother was tired. When they were around, the butter came quick in the churn. And they invented linen cloth for humans to use.

Very quickly did the Dutch folks, men and women, hear and make use of the elves' invention. Their linen closets now looked like piles of snow. All over the Low Countries, women made caps, in new fashions, of lace or plain linen, with horns and wings, flaps and crimps, with quilling and with whirligigs. Soon, in every town, one could read the sign "Hier mangled men" (Here we do ironing).

In time, kings, queens and nobles made huge ruffs, often so big that their necks were invisible, and their heads nearly lost from sight, in rings of quilled linen, or of lace, that stuck out a foot or so. Worldly people dyed their starch yellow; zealous folk made it blue; but moderate people kept it snowy white.

Starch added money and riches to the nation. Kings' treasuries became fat with money gained by taxes laid on ruffs, and on the cargoes of starch, which was now imported by the shipload, or made on the spot, in many countries. So, out of the ancient grain came a new spirit that worked for sweetness and beauty, cleanliness, and health. From a useful substance, as old as Egypt, was born a fine art, that added to the sum of the world's wealth and pleasure.



The Mountain Sprite

by Thomas Moore

In yonder valley there dwelt, alone,
Ayouth, whose moments had calmly flown,
'Till spells came o'er him, and, day and night,
He was haunted and watch'd by a Mountain
Sprite.

As once, by moonlight, he wander'd o'er
The Golden sands of that island shore;
A foot-print sparkled before his sight-
'Twas the fairy foot of the Mountain Sprit!
Beside a fountain, one summer day,
As bending over the stream he lay,
There peeped down o'er him two eyes of
light ,
And he saw in that mirror the Mountain Sprite.

He turn'd, but, lo! like a startled bird,
That sprite fled!- and the youth but heard
Sweet music, such as marks the flight
of some bird of song, from the Mountain
Sprite.

One night, still haunted by that bright look,
The boy, bewildered, his pincil took;
And guided only by memory's light,
Drew the once-seen from of the Mountain
Sprite.

"Oh, thou, who lovest, the shadow," cried
A voice, low whispering by his side,
"Now turn and see"- Here the youth's delight
Seal'd the rosy lips of the Mountain Sprite.

"Of all the sprites of land and sea,"
Then rapt he murmur'd, "there's non like thee;
And oft, o oft, may thy foot thus light
In this lonely bower, sweet Mountain Sprite



Butterfly fairy

Flutter, flutter, in the sun;
Who can be this pretty one?

Up above the world so high
On a golden Butterfly!

Who can stand so sure, yet airy,
But the Butterfly's own Fairy?

Tiniest in Fairyland;
Favourite of the Elfin band.

She can guide the restless thing;
She can calm its eager wing.

Now it comes and now it goes;
Now it lights upon a rose.

Happy all the shining day;
After dark it flits away.

