

THE ANATOMY OF PUCK

*An Examination
of Fairy Beliefs
among Shakespeare's
Contemporaries and
Successors*

by

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Author's Note

The cryptic letters which appear before the fairy stories in Appendix II, and among the footnotes, relate to two books. The first is *The Types of the Folk-Tale*, by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson. Professor Aarne's method of classification, although not in all ways satisfactory, is widely accepted; but it is necessarily limited, and there are many types of story which it does not include. The letters 'Mt' followed by figures relate to this book. Professor Stith Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk Literature* is a more inclusive work, and I have employed it to supplement the other. The word 'Motif' prefaces the numbers which apply to this book. Naturally neither classification covers all known stories.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>page</i>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
AUTHOR'S NOTE	vii
I. THE AIR THEY BREATHED	1
II. OPINIONS ON FAIRIES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY	8
III. OPINIONS ON FAIRIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	25
IV. SHAKESPEARE'S FAIRIES	44
V. THE FASHION FOR THE MINIATURE	56
VI. HOBGOBLINS AND DEVILS	71
VII. THE COUNTRY FAIRIES IN MASQUES, PLAYS AND POETRY	82
VIII. THE FAIRIES AND THE PRACTITIONERS OF MAGIC	99
IX. FAIRIES AND GHOSTS	117
X. MERMAIDS AND MONSTERS	146
XI. SPIRITUAL CREATURES	163
<i>Appendix</i>	
I. SOME OF THE PERSONAE OF FAIRYLAND	184
II. FAIRY-TALES CITED IN THE COURSE OF THE BOOK	197
III. SOME OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF FAIRIES	236
IV. SOME SPELLS AND CHARMS AND THE LETTER OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL MAGICIAN	248
A LIST OF BOOKS AND AUTHORITIES CITED OR QUOTED	262
INDEX	277

List of Illustrations

	<i>page</i>
The Supernatural World in the Seventeenth Century	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From <i>Pandaemonium or the Devil's Cloyster</i> by R. Bövet (1684)	
The Ptolemaic Conception of the Universe	1
The Fairy Ring	16
From <i>Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus</i> by Olaus Magnus (Antwerp 1558)	
A Fairy Hill	17
From <i>Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus</i> by Olaus Magnus (Antwerp 1558)	
Goblins in the Mines	112
From <i>Golden Remains of the Ever-memorable Mr. John Hales</i> (1653)	
The Phairie or Lamia	113
From <i>The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes</i> by R. Topsell (1607)	
A Demon Ghost	128
Title page to <i>Bateman's Tragedy</i> (c. 1640)	
A Ghost in its Winding Sheet	129
From <i>The Rest-less Ghost or Wonderful News from Northamptonshire and Southwark</i> (1676)	
Merman and Mermaid	160
From <i>The Works of Ambrose Parey</i> translated by T. Johnson (1634)	
Sea Monsters	161
From <i>Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus</i> by Olaus Magnus (Rome 1555)	
The Falling Angels still in Angelic Form	176
From <i>The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels</i> by T. Heywood (1636)	
The Degenerated Satan	177
From <i>The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels</i> by T. Heywood (1636)	



The Ptolemaic Conception of the Universe

From *Le Compost et Kalendrier des Vergiers*, by Guy Marchant (Paris 1500)

One

THE AIR THEY BREATHED

THE first half of the seventeenth century is of special interest to us in these days because it is at once so like to our time and so different from it. In few periods except our own have fundamental beliefs changed so rapidly. The more obvious external changes belonged to the sixteenth century; it was then that the Commonwealth of Europe was broken and religious dissension brought a new bitterness into warfare, that nationality and sovereignty assumed another aspect, and that the navigators discovered a new continent. But there was a moral and intellectual time-lag; and, just as in many twentieth-century sceptics the ethical standards of Christianity have survived like cut flowers, unrooted but in water, so in most places, and more particularly in England, the fundamental assumptions of medieval times remained unquestioned until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Then everything went into the melting-pot.

In a century when everything was being reconsidered, when the foundations of old beliefs were shaking and a new science was being hammered out, it was natural that fundamental assumptions should come up into consciousness and should be questioned. It is this questioning of fundamentals which gives so poignant an interest to seventeenth-century literature. It was a period, like our own, at once sceptical and credulous. Fascinated though it might be by the new science, the age yet held with a drowning man's grip to the assumptions which it felt to be slipping away from it. It was characteristic of this period that the

Puritans carried through one of the most sweeping revolutions in the history of Europe by talking passionately of 'the good old cause'. This combination of a radical change of outlook with an affection for deep-rooted traditions makes one feel at times that one hears the voice of the modern man, describing and pronouncing upon beliefs and customs which we can now never know at first hand.

We feel this note of modernity everywhere in the seventeenth century. In the drama we come every now and then upon a turn of phrase and thought that might be our own. It seems no accident that in this period the modern pattern of costume—coat waistcoat and breeches—first appears, and that, different though the meals were, they began to be spaced as ours are into breakfast, luncheon and dinner. Tobacco, potatoes, coffee and tea, the normal background of our food habits, first came into common use at this time. Four-wheeled traffic only waited for better roads to gain its modern ascendancy. People sought eagerly after new inventions, though they might be no more than mechanical statues and water clocks. Everywhere there was an eager breath of curiosity. Most important of all, this was the time when the medieval universality finally disappeared, and when the study of individual characters became of absorbing interest. Never till then had so many different fundamental assumptions jostled each other as in the seventeenth century. The Parliamentary Army would have served a philosopher as a zoo of beliefs. Quirks, oddities, humours were almost called into existence by the delight which hailed them. Plays like Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman* seem to us now schoolboyish in their labouring of individual oddities, till we realize that they are indeed schoolboy efforts; it is almost the first time that that type of social satire had been attempted.

Yet the modernity of this scrutiny, this eager curiosity about every object presented to Man, and about Man himself, must not blind us to the very unmodern atmosphere in which the investigations were carried out. They breathed another air from us then, and our absent-minded assumptions are very different from theirs. We inherit the nineteenth century's doctrine of progress; and, however much events may have disillusioned us about it, most people instinctively feel that if the present things are bad those in the past must have been worse, and those

in the remote past worse still. That mythical character, the cave man, is a case in point. Where nothing can be known it is an equal possibility that the most primitive men were gentle, berry-picking creatures, monotheistic in religion and ignorant of war; but this supposition will not stick in a modern man's head. The doctrine of automatic progress makes him certain that primitive man was a savage and nasty creature, morally worse than most animals though intellectually their superior. We have our credulities no less than our ancestors; most of us believe in authority as blindly as the people of any age, but it is the authority of the scientists, and the newer continually supersedes the older. The majority of us use modern inventions as a caterpillar uses a highroad—for convenience—and know nearly as little as the caterpillar of their intellectual foundation. The enormous growth of knowledge has necessarily resulted in specialization, so that not even a scientist attempts to know more than one or two branches of science. We are delivered into the hands of the specialists, and in spite of popular outlines, which often claim a larger field for science than the responsible scientist would do, it is very difficult for the average man to form a comprehensive picture of the Universe. The pronouncements upon ethics and upon aesthetic values are particularly wavering and unrooted. There are signs that we are on our way to co-ordination and coherence, but at present the whole picture is confused and blurred.

It is obvious how different the whole ground of argument would be if everyone presupposed a theocentric universe, and Man was felt to be fallen from a primitive state of virtue, knowledge and strength. Then the authority of the past would have a sanctity which we could hardly conceive, and a quotation would be an argument. All past knowledge would be felt to be more or less the result of inspiration. To take a small example, the name of a thing would be more than a convenient label, it would have a divine, hidden connection with the thing itself. We touch here on a deep-rooted folk belief upon which all magic incantation was founded, but also on the reason why a pun had then more serious intellectual significance than it has today.

The science of the early sixteenth century was founded on this theocentric conception. Only in the darkest times did men believe in a flat world, but the conception which had been in-

herited by the educated Jacobean, and therefore came naturally to him, was that of the Ptolemaic universe, a series of concentric globes, nine spheres, with the Primum Mobile without, then the fixed stars, the seven planets and the moon, with the Earth as its small and rotten core, which hung in chaos, suspended by a golden chain from the throne of God. In the sublunary regions Satan and his rebel angels were confined, but each sphere above that was governed by one order of angels, and as the crystalline orb revolved the music of the spheres rang out. Even a poet so careful of truth as Milton could not help using the Ptolemaic conception, though he introduced a passage on the new Copernican theory into the body of the poem.

According to this conception the whole universe was interlocked and interacting, the aspect of the stars influenced man and vegetation alike, and visible judgements could be descried everywhere by the discerning eye. Not only was the universe interacting but it was arranged in a strict hierarchy. Each order of being had a primate, Man among earthly creatures, the lion among beasts, the eagle among birds, and worked down in a strict order to the lowest. By the middle of the sixteenth century this carefully built structure was beginning to crack, by the seventeenth it was crumbling; but at the back of men's minds this was still the instinctive assumption; and unless we understand something of it we shall often be puzzled at the point at which argument stops in the seventeenth-century controversies and quotation begins.

Fundamental beliefs often betray themselves more by superstitions than by creeds. The superstitions of our day are for the most part wandering and unconnected atoms, like the dust from an exploded star. They are the result of our uncertainties and bewilderments, not of our certainties. The superstitions and false beliefs of the renaissance period came from a double source. Some were lingering growths of pagan times which had tangled themselves into Christian beliefs like bishop's-weed in a clump of lupins, so that one could hardly be uprooted without the other; and these were largely the beliefs of the country people. The educated man had his special superstitions and fallacies as well; these were firmly rooted in the belief in authority, and the neat, rational, graduated universe. The natural assumption of the thinking man in the sixteenth century was that upon

the foundation of theology human reason could build up a picture of what the universe must be, without too much searching into individual facts to confirm it. Already in the sixteenth century a new knowledge of facts was pressing upon this neat, rational conception of the universe, and in the seventeenth almost every surface belief was questioned, and some of these probings went very deep. But still a solid core remained. People described as atheists in the early seventeenth century would hardly be called agnostics today. There were of course a few natural materialists, as there are at all times; but they were materialistic against a background of faith. In the wild places in the North of England, and in other outlying parts of the kingdom there were many who were virtually pagans; and there were a few—probably a very few—full and complete Satanists among the witches and devotees of magic. Most witches, however, practised their magical rites as many Irish peasants do today, side by side with their Christian observances, attempting no rational reconciliation between the two; for it is possible for most people to keep two quite irreconcilable beliefs alive at the same time. But the blank incredulity and materialism of the present day was foreign to the temper of the times.

It is as difficult to generalize about the beliefs of that time as about our own, for there was a wide difference between the fully conscious intellectual life of the travelled and educated man, whose latinity made the whole of Western culture available to him, and the dim, unconnected notions of the wild peasant of the Yorkshire or Devon moors, who had never moved more than a few miles from his own home; but the gulf between the cultured and uncultured was hardly wider than it is in our day, except that now the proportion of educated to uneducated people may be greater. The Industrial Revolution had not yet created Disraeli's Two Nations. All Englishmen were to some extent countrymen, well rooted in traditional things. From the middle of the sixteenth century until the outbreak of the Civil War literacy grew, and the gulf between class and class became narrower. In many country schools it was possible to get a good, though limited, education, and the general study of the Bible was an education in itself. The common soldiers of the Civil War, and even some working women, such as Bunyan's sister, wrote astonishingly good and graphic letters. Among the poor

as well as the rich intellectual ferment was stirring. We may picture our England in those days so like and so unlike to what it is today. It was a time of eager intellectual curiosity and of alert senses. People listened better than they do today, and looked better. They were far more callous to some things and more sensitive to others. There were many superstitions, and yet people lived closer to realities than we do. Death and pain were not hidden as they are now, and most people were religious.

The literary treatment of fairy beliefs at that time is of both intellectual and social interest. The fairies came in for discussion with everything else, and the shift of opinion about them is a subtle thermometer of the temper of the times. Socially the new treatment of the fairies is a small symptom of the growing influence of the yeoman class in literature. Various things contributed to make the late Elizabethan times our great period of fairy literature, but the rise of the yeoman writer was perhaps chief among them. The fays of medieval literature had been the full-sized fairies, many of them enchantresses rather than fairies, though there was an occasional trace of the nature spirit about them. Small fairies were known to tradition in the Middle Ages, for Giraldus Cambrensis, Ralph of Coggeshall and Gervase of Tilbury give us accounts of them; but fairy-lore was near to heresy, and it was unwise to exhibit too much knowledge of the fairies. When the fear of heresy lifted and the fairies became less formidable they became available for ornament and delight. Spenser used the fays of romance for his allegory, but they had already become a little bookish and faded. There was, however, an almost untouched piece of poetic machinery in the country fairies of England. The yeomen writers knew them well from their mothers and grandmothers, and their new readers knew them, and loved them because they were familiar. Well mixed with fairy-lore drawn from literature, they appealed to the Court as well as to the Country, and the fairy vogue was made. It rested upon a kind of pleasurable half-belief. The fairy poetry of Shakespeare, Drayton and Herrick was obviously meant to be taken lightly, but there was more reality behind it than there would be about such poetry written in the present day. The poets may not themselves have believed in fairies, but they knew that thousands of their fellow-countrymen

believed in them. What were these fairies, and what was believed about them? It is difficult at any time to find what is really believed about spirit lore superstitions—we can sometimes hardly be sure of our own beliefs about them—but the discussions and questionings of that time tell us a good deal. The law courts proved an acid test for some beliefs, and the controversialists and antiquarians provided a good deal of evidence of others. It seems worth while at least to examine the soil from which some of the choicest flowers of our poetry have sprung.

Two

OPINIONS ON FAIRIES IN THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY

THE world of fairy- and folk-lore which was familiar to our childhood was different both in content and focus from that of the Jacobean. True, the folklorists, who had arisen during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had elevated the study of fairy-tales into a science; but the general knowledge had declined as much as the scholarly knowledge had progressed. So, though the scholars were well able to distinguish a brownie from a boggart, we find a completely different note struck in the ordinary literary allusions at the beginning of our century from that struck at the beginning of the seventeenth; nothing like these passages could be written in the Jacobean period:

King Merriwig of Euralia sat at breakfast on his castle walls. He lifted the gold cover from the gold dish in front of him, selected a trout, and conveyed it to his gold plate. He was a man of simple tastes, but when you have an aunt with a newly acquired gift of turning everything she touches into gold you must let her practise sometimes. In another age it might have been fretwork.¹

The poor Queen gave a start and a scream, and the king, brave as he was, turned pale, for Malevola was a terrible fairy, and the dress she wore was not at all the kind of thing for a christening. It was made of spiders' webs matted together, dark and dank with the damp of the tomb, and the dust of dungeons. Her wings were the wings of a great bat, spiders and newts crawled round her neck; a

¹ A. A. Milne, *Once on a Time* (London, n.d.), p. 15.

serpent crawled about her waist, and little snakes twisted and writhed in her lank, black hair.¹

'Any soup, my dear?' shouted the King through a speaking trumpet; when suddenly the air was filled with a sound like the rustling of birds. Flitter, flitter, flutter went the noise; and when the Queen looked up, lo and behold; on every seat was a lovely fairy dressed in green, each with a *most interesting looking parcel* in her hand.²

Each of these stories has a humorous turn, they are not intended to be taken seriously; but it is interesting to notice that the kind of original they presuppose is the court fairy-story of Perrault. The fairies at the christening,³ who appear again and again in modern fairy stories, do not occur at all in any of the surviving English folk-tales. They were not of course invented by Perrault, but have a long ancestry, from the Fates at the cradle of Meleager, from the Norns who visited Ogier the Dane, even from Odin and Thor, who came once to a child's birth, one benevolent and the other malicious, like the fairies after them.⁴ But though these visitors might take part in a heathen name-giving it is rather a question what right they had at a christening.

An early example, even then somewhat sophisticated, is to be found in the works of the thirteenth-century trouvère, Adam de la Halle. In *Le Jeu Adam, ou de la Feuillie* we have a visit of three fairies, Morgue, Arsile and Maglore, which might be the model for all subsequent fairies' visits, except that it was to no christening that they came, but to a summer bower prepared for them. Maglore is discontented because no place has been laid for her.⁵ The romance of *Huon of Bordeaux* has also a story of the fairies' gifts and a discontented fairy; though they came to Oberon's birth, not to his christening.

It is noticeable that even Andrew Lang, an eminent mythologist, gives his fairies wings. It is uncertain when they first acquired them, perhaps about the time when angels became pre-

¹ E. Nesbit, *Nine Unlikely Tales for Children* (London, 1910), p. 133.

² Andrew Lang, *Prince Prigio*, in *My Own Fairy Book* (Bristol, n.d.), p. 8. *The Gold of Farnlee* in the same volume deals with our native fairies in a very different way.

³ Motif (F.311.1).

⁴ Motif (F.361.1.1).

⁵ *Le Jeu Adam, ou de la Feuillie. Œuvres Complètes du Trouvère Adam de la Halle* (Paris, 1872).

dominantly feminine, and were popularly supposed to be departed spirits rather than beings of another order. "Miss Barbary, sir," said Mrs. Rachel, "who is now among the Seraphim,"—"I hope so, I'm sure," said Mr Kenge politely.¹ Or if this is a little ambiguous a more indisputable and later example may be found in an American children's book: 'but angels are not the same as seraphims. Seraphims are brighter white and have bigger wings, and I think are longer dead than angels, which are just freshly dead.'²

In the seventeenth century even the lighter and more sophisticated treatment of the fairies had a different emphasis:

If ye will with *Mab* find grace,
Set each Platter in his place:
Rake the Fier up, and get
Water in, ere Sun be set.
Wash your Pailles, and cense your Dairies;
Sluts are loathsome to the Fairies:
Sweep your house; who doth not so,
Mab will pinch her by the toe.³

Or:

At morning and at evening both
You merry were and glad,
So little care of sleepe and sloth
These prettie ladies had;
When Tom came home from labour,
Or Ciss to milking rose,
Then merrily merrily went their tabor,
And nimble went their toes.⁴

Or:

These make our Girles their sluttary rue,
By pinching them both blacke and blew,
And put a penny in their shue,
The house for cleanly sweeping:
And in their courses make that Round,
In Meadowes, and in Marshes found,

¹ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (London, 1853).

² K. D. Wiggin, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (London, 1911).

³ Robert Herrick, *Poems* (Oxford, 1915), p. 201.

⁴ Richard Corbet, *Poems*, 4th edition (1807), p. 214. *Farewell Rewards and Fairies. To be sung to the tune of God a mercy Will.*

Of them so call'd the *Fayrie* ground,
Of which they have the keeping.¹

These things are as lightly intended as the others, yet they come nearer to reality, and a long step nearer to peasant life than our modern convention. Something more like them is to be found among the late nineteenth-century Irish writers; who are indeed upon the same pleasant ground between belief and disbelief as our Jacobeans. Allingham is perhaps as near the seventeenth century in spirit as we shall get for a while:

The rogue was mine, beyond a doubt.
I stared at him; he stared at me:
'Servant, sir.' 'Humph' said he,
And pulled a snuff-box out.
He took a long pinch, seemed better pleased
The queer little Lepracaun;
Offer'd the box with a whimsical grace,—
Pouf! he flung the dust in my face,
And, while I sneezed,
Was gone!²

Indeed the same thing happened to our folk-lore as to our music; we were suddenly deluged from foreign sources, which enriched our soil, but hid our landmarks. The Italian opera and the German musicians killed the tradition of Purcell and Byrd, as Perrault and Grimm and Hans Andersen buried our native fairy-tales. Twenty people know *Cinderella* and *Rumpelstilzkin* and *Bluebeard* for one that knows *Tattercoats* and *Tom Tit Tot* and *Mr. Fox*.³ In music, song has ceased to be a native habit to us; the caller no longer amuses himself by picking out an air as he waits for his host, and strangers at an inn do not join in part-songs now. In the same way our country habits have changed into urban ones; and the fairies, who descended perhaps from gods older than those the Druids worshipped, who were so long lamented as lost and so slow to go, have gone, now and for ever. They may not have cared for church bells, but they liked factory horns and street lights even less; so that now the most curious of studies is that of our own native tales.

¹ Michael Drayton, *Nimphidia. The Works of Michael Drayton* (Oxford, 1932), Vol. III, p. 127.

² Allingham, 'The Lepracaun', *Rhymes for Young Folk* (London, n.d.), p. 48.

³ See Appendix II, Nos. 9, 5, 10.

And yet perhaps they have not quite gone, but still dance before us, diminishing but never departing. For even now scattered tales come in from Ireland and the Highlands, from Yorkshire and Somerset and Shropshire. And even among the learned there are a few like Aubrey, who still collect and more than half believe.

When the Jacobean writer drew upon his native traditions for fairy ornament he had, so far as one is able to judge, four main types of fairies to choose from, and two standpoints from which he might regard them, as benevolent or as evil. The types of fairies existing in oral tradition at that time must be, to a certain extent, a matter of speculation, for the study of folk-lore was in its infancy in the seventeenth century; but we have some sources of knowledge which, when combined, enable us to make a fairly reliable estimate of the main body of the oral tradition. The first and fullest source is the body of Irish and Welsh tales of fairies, written down at differing dates from the beginning of the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, but remarkably homogeneous in subject-matter and style. These give us a full account of the heroic fairies of Celtic legend, their way of living, their appearance, characters and habits. Much slighter are the mentions in the medieval chronicles and romances. We have further the contemporary notices of fairies by those who, like Aubrey and Kirk, were interested in folk-lore, or by those who mentioned them incidentally in the course of talk about more serious things, like Reginald Scot and the other writers on witchcraft, or those less literary and more practical mentions of fairies that occur in the witch trials. These last are a valuable if painful testimony, because, however fantastic they may seem, they bear witness to a real belief and cannot be dismissed as poetic embroidery. Nor can the traditional ballads be disregarded as a source of information, for owing to their easily memorized form they carry us back to very early traditions; but they must also be viewed with a certain suspicion, because this form readily gathers later accretions which are sometimes difficult to detect. The last source, and one of the most valuable, is the comparison of the later accounts and stories of our native fairies, orally collected by the folklorists, with the corresponding material in other countries. Without the comparison it might be urged—and indeed it has been urged

by such authoritative writers as Dr. Margaret Murray¹ and Mr. White Latham²—that the small size and the more amiable characteristics of the later English fairies are a result of Shakespeare's invention, adopted immediately by other writers, and so endeared to English imagination as to pass readily into folk-lore. It is difficult to limit the rate and scope of oral diffusion in favourable circumstances, but it is almost as difficult to believe that the tiny fairies whom the Hampshire farmer³ saw robbing his barn or those of whom Keightley tells, who pock-marked the old woman's cake with their heels,⁴ are the descendants of literary fairies. It would be arguable, however, if it were not for Gervase of Tilbury's Portunes, for the tiny fairies recorded by Grimm, the Danish troll, 'no larger than an ant',⁵ and the Scandinavian light elves, who had the same smallness and harmless nature as Shakespeare's fairies, and like them lived among flowers.

From these sources we can collect the classes and characteristics which would have been available to the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets, and examine which they have chosen to use and which leave unnoticed.

The first class is that of the Trooping Fairies, who vary from the heroic fairies of Celtic and Romance tradition down to the small creatures who stole the Hampshire farmer's corn.⁶ Different as these are in many ways, they vary by such insensible gradations that it is hardly possible to divide them into two types. The heroic fairies are of human or more than human height. They are the aristocrats among fairy people, and pass their time in aristocratic pursuits, hunting, hawking, riding in procession on white horses hung with silver bells, and feasting in their palaces, which are either beneath the hollow hills⁷ or under or across water.⁸ It is a generally accepted belief that the Irish fairies are dethroned gods, euhemerized into an extinct

¹ In *The God of the Witches* (London, 1933), pp. 42–47, and other writings.

² In *The Elizabethan Fairies* (Columbia University Press, London, 1931).

³ See Appendix II, No. 24.

⁴ Keightley, *Fairy Mythology* (London, 1900), p. 305. See Appendix II, No. 36.

⁵ See Appendices I and II for these small fairies.

⁶ Appendix II, No. 24.

⁷ Motif (F.211).

⁸ Motif (F.212). Stories about these earlier Celtic Fairies are contained in *The Mabinogion*, *The Voyages of Bran*, *Mongan's Frenzy*, and such collections as James Stephens's *Irish Fairy Tales* and Rolleston's *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race*.

race and supernaturalized again into fairies;¹ and it is quite possible that the others of that type are the same, though Lewis Spence² in his *British Fairy Origins* points out their close connection with the dead. They are masters of glamour and shape-shifting; they are amorous, open-handed, reward kindness and are resentful of injuries. Time spent with them passes at a different rate than when spent with mortals;³ seven days in fairyland is generally equivalent to seven years of mortal time, but occasionally it is the other way round. As a rule, though not invariably, they are dangerous to human beings, their food is taboo and people who fall into their power are carried away and often crumble into dust on their long-delayed return. There is sometimes a hint that the fairy beauty is a delusion, like that of the Elf Queen in the 'Ballad of True Thomas', who turned gaunt and haggard when he kissed her.⁴

The ordinary fairy people of Britain dwindle down from these heroic fairies; some are life-sized, some on the small side of people, some are the size of a three-years' child, like Oberon in *Huon of Bordeaux*, some, like the *Wee, Wee, Man* of the ballad,⁵ are three spans in height, some, like the Muryans of Cornwall and the smallest of the Danish trolls,⁶ are the size of ants, and these seem to be particularly flower fairies; but their general characteristics remain much the same as those of the heroic fairies. They still ride, though sometimes their horses are dark grey, stunted and shaggy.⁷ They dance, and love music and musicians. They seem to be more domestic, more of agricultural spirits, than the Celtic fairies. They are greatly concerned with order and cleanliness, and can bring success or failure to the farms they visit. They give presents, which must not be revealed. Like the other fairies they are masters of

¹ Interesting evidence bearing on this point is given by Evan Wentz in *Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (Oxford, 1911).

² Lewis Spence, *British Fairy Origins* (London, 1946).

³ Motif (F.377).

⁴ Motif (F.304.2). *Thomas of Ersseldoune and True Thomas*. Child's *English and Scottish Ballads* (New York, 1957, 5 vols.), Vol. I, pp. 317-29.

⁵ Ibid., *The Wee, Wee Man*, Vol. I, pp. 329-34.

⁶ From the Danish Ballad of *Eline of Villenskov*. Quoted by Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, p. 95.

Det da meldte den mindste Troll, (Out then spake the tinyest Troll.)

Han var ikke storre end en myre. (No bigger than an emmet was he.)

⁷ See Appendix III. Hugh Miller's account of the passing of the fairies.

glamour; sometimes the gold they give turns to withered leaves; sometimes worthless-looking rubbish turns, if kept, into gold or precious stones. Their most mischievous activity is the stealing of babies and nursing mothers, who, unless they are protected at the dangerous time of child-birth, are liable to be carried off and replaced by a changeling, an elf or a transformed stock.¹ Their size seems naturally small, but they are capable of assuming any shape or size they please,² or of going invisible, though a magic ointment, or even a four-leaved clover, will penetrate this disguise.³ They can transport themselves through the air, and levitate others.⁴ Sometimes they ride grass-stalks, sometimes a magic wand is enough; often they ride in a whirl of dust. They vary in power and malice. Some, like Skillywidden,⁵ Coleman Gray⁶ and the borrowing fairies of Worcestershire,⁷ are as powerless as Tom Thumb; some are benevolent and virtuous like Elidor's fairies; some have a longing for the privileges of Christianity, like the Scottish fairy in the story of the Bible-reader;⁸ some are blood-suckers, tempters and kidnappers.

The second type of fairy existing in Britain is the hobgoblin and Robin Goodfellow in all his forms, identified by the Jacobean, and also by some later writers, with the classical 'lares'. These hobgoblins are rough, hairy spirits, which do domestic chores, work about farms, guard treasure, keep an eye on the servants, and generally act as guardian spirits of the home. Useful as they are, they are easily offended and often mischievous. They are not exclusively domestic, but are often associated with streams, pools and rocks,⁹ like that other tutelary spirit, the banshee. On the whole they were regarded as honest and friendly spirits, though the weight of church authority was against them, as against the other fairies. Some of them were thought to be ghosts, others devils, and the words hobgoblin, bug or boggart gradually assumed a more dangerous sound.

The third type is of mermaids, water spirits and nature fairies, a small class in Britain, since the Trooping Fairies had

¹ See Appendix II, Nos. 15 and 20.

² See Appendix I. The Hedley Kow, the Picktree Brag, etc.

³ See Appendix II, No. 13.

⁴ See Appendix II, No. 33.

⁵ See Appendix II, No. 37.

⁶ See Appendix II, No. 38.

⁷ See Appendix II, No. 30.

⁸ See Appendix II, No. 41.

⁹ See Appendix II, No. 23.

assimilated many of them. The mermaids remain the most distinct of these. As a rule they are dangerous people, though the Highland roane¹ are an exception, and the little mermaid rescued by the old fisherman of Cury,² as well as the mermaid in the Scottish story who took such a benevolent interest in the diet and health of maidens.³ The river spirits were occasionally friendly, like Sabrina, but generally evil, like Jenny Greenteeth and Peg Powler.

The fourth group, which is closely allied with the nature spirits, is of giants, monsters and hags—Gogmagog, the kelpie and the blue hag⁴ of winter. They might hardly be thought of as fairies if the Brash,⁴ the Brag⁴ and the Grant⁴ did not link them with the hobgoblins. These are the main types of the British fairies, and their traits would fill a book; but only a few of them were fully used by the Jacobean writers. The change of temper from the medieval times is shown by the traits they chose to write about, and their treatment of the folk-lore material at their disposal.

Of the four types of fairies the medieval romancers used chiefly the first, and the most heroic of these. They made free use of enchantments, enchantresses and beings between the mortal and the supernatural—Morgan la Fée, Nimue and those enchanted ladies and unexplained damsels who make so convenient a machinery for exalting or unmasking knights errant. Legends of the Land of the Ever Young and the Island of Hy Brasil hang round medieval literature like things seen with the tail of one's eye in a dream, waiting to be confronted with a full glance. The Arthurian Romances mingle Celtic legend with the classical stories of incubi, succubi and dusii transmitted by the Church. In the *Romance of Merlin*⁵ the enchanter is the child of an incubus, and only half human, and Morgan and Nimue tremble between humanity and fairyhood in something the same way. They are all of the heroic cast of fairies, like the ladies of the Daoine o' Sidhe who loved the Fianna Finn. The Green Knight who challenged Gawayne is of the same essence as Manannon who carried off Etain. In *Huon of Bordeaux* we have for the first time in the Romances a small fairy king, Oberon, the size of a three-

¹ See Appendix I.

² See Appendix II, No. 35A.

³ See Appendix I.

⁴ See Appendix II, No. 35.

⁵ See Appendix I.



The Fairy Ring

From *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, by Olaus Magnus (Antwerp 1558)



A Fairy Hill

From *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, by Olaus Magnus (Antwerp 1558)

OPINIONS ON FAIRIES IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY

years' child. The size is elaborately explained, but since Oberon is the French version of Alberich, the German elf king, there is no doubt that this is a sophistication of a folk tradition only partly familiar to the romancer;¹ the romances and histories are full of such euhemerizations. Not till Chaucer do we come upon a treatment at all like the Elizabethan;² and he wrote much as Corbet was to do later.

Perhaps this avoidance of the folk fairies, and the eagerness with which the fairy ladies of romance claim to be Christians was caused by that fear which was apparent in Joan of Arc's trial. It is possible that a stronger cult of fairy worship survived into the Middle Ages than we realize. Dr. Murray makes out a good case for it, and something of the kind is said to have survived in Italy as late as the last century. If so, the poets would feel that the less said about the fairies the safer, on all counts. The Church would disapprove of anyone who showed too intimate an acquaintance with the fairies, and they themselves did not like to be talked about. In Elizabethan times and much later it was considered unwise among the country people to speak of them by name:

Gin ye ca' me imp or elf,
I rede ye look weel to yourself;
Gin ye ca' me fairy,
I'll work ye muckle tarrie;
Gin gude neibour ye ca' me,
Then gude neibour I will be;
But gin ye ca' me seelie wicht,
I'll be your freend baith day and nicht.³

'These *Siths* or Fairies,' says Kirk, 'they call *Sleagh Maith*, or the Good People, it would seem, to prevent the Dint of their

¹ *The Boke of Duke Huon of Bordeaux done into English by Sir John Bouchier, Lord Berners* (Early English Text Society, London, 1883-7), Vol. 1, p. 73. An interesting point in the treatment of Oberon in this book is that, though the good hermit supposes him to be a fiendish creature whom it is dangerous to answer, he proves, when his advances are returned, to be friendly and virtuous. This seems to suggest that the conflict between the views of the church and the folk beliefs was waged among the literate as well as the illiterate.

² Chaucer, *The Tale of the Wyf of Bath*. *Complete Works* (Oxford University Press), p. 576.

³ Robert Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1890), p. 324.

ill Attempts (for the Irish use to bless all they fear Harme of).¹

Too much, however, must not be made of this avoidance; for Giraldus Cambrensis, Walter Mapes, Gervase of Tilbury and Ralph of Coggeshall, all speak of the fairies quite freely. Giraldus Cambrensis gives them a high character:

These men were of the smallest stature, but very well proportioned in their make; they were all of a fair complexion, with luxuriant hair falling over their shoulders like that of women. They had horses and greyhounds adapted to their size. They neither ate flesh nor fish, but lived on a milk diet, made up into messes with saffron. They never took an oath, for they detested nothing so much as lies. As often as they returned from our upper hemisphere, they reprobated our ambition, infidelities and inconstancies; they had no form of public worship, being strict lovers and reverers, as it seemed, of truth.²

We shall not find so full an account again until the sixteenth century, when the power of the Church had been lifted from men's minds, and they were no longer in fear of being proved heretics. Then, when the fairy beliefs were investigated, they proved no longer so formidable as they had been, and fairy-lore could be used for delight and ornament. The fays of romance were a little outworn, though still picturesque; but there were racier, homelier and more friendly fairies to hand, hardly less decorative and more amusing. This shift of focus was helped by the rise of a new class of readers. Before the Renaissance only the learned or the noble could read; with the invention of printing and the diffusion of books the number of readers increased every year, and with them the subjects of literature became more diverse. The poor began to read, and the earliest popular journalism sprang up to supply them with reading matter. Broadside ballads were the most convenient way of catering for the semi-literate. The stories and songs that they already knew would be at first most popular with them, as a child just learning to read likes best to read the books that have already been read to it. The ballad-mongers were the descendants of the minstrels, singing, like Autolycus, the ballads they had to sell. Even when novelty was demanded it would be a novelty on the old lines. So folk-

¹ R. Kirk, *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (Stirling, 1933), p. 67.

² Giraldus Cambrensis, *Itinerary through Wales* (London, 1863), p. 390.

lore began to seep upwards into literature. As they became more educated the new class of readers produced the new class of writers, and the stories they knew from their grandmothers were mixed with the literary folk-lore they had drawn from their reading, and became fashionable with the more sophisticated classes. The sinister side of the fairies' character was not forgotten—the witch scare sometimes presented them in dangerous company. Poltergeist hauntings, which had often been ascribed to boggarts and follets, were increasingly ascribed to witchcraft, and the fairies fell into ill odour with the witch-hunters. But the general belief in fairies declined, though that in witchcraft increased, and the poets and dramatists found them too pretty a machinery to be neglected. The pleasing and poetic traits of the little flower-loving fairies had long existed in solution, as it were, in the alembic of fairy-lore; the Elizabethan poets merely precipitated it. The fifth chapter will be given to the use which the Jacobean poets made of this element in folk-lore; in this and the following chapter I have only to examine the recordings of those forerunners of our folklorists whose interest in everything to do with Man and Nature led them to investigate and write down the current fairy beliefs; and also those incidental mentions of fairies in books and pamphlets on witchcraft and kindred subjects with which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature is strewn.

Even before Elizabethan times we have mentions of fairies among the writers on witchcraft. The witches were apt to claim acquaintance with the fairies, perhaps partly, as Sir Walter Scott suggests,¹ because they imagined that such a traffic would be more leniently treated than a pact with the devil himself, but probably also because there was a real mingling of the two beliefs. These mentions are incidental and generally to be found in the trials; but Reginald Scot considered the connection clear enough to make him give his fairies explicit treatment in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*:

In deede your grandams maides were woont to set a boll of milke before him and his cousine Robin good-fellow, for grinding of malt

¹ Sir Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (London, 1884), pp. 120–1. King James has a suggestion of the same opinion in his *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1597), p. 75: 'And to the Witches, to be a collour of safetie for them, that ignorant Magistrates may not punish them for it.'

or mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight: and you haue also heard that he would chafe exceedingly, if the maid or good-wife of the house, having compassion of his nakednes, laid anie clothes for him, beesides his messe of white bread and milke, which was his standing fee. For in that case he saith; What haue we here? Hemton, hamten, here will I neuer more tread nor stampen.¹

Here we have the household tasks of the brownie, the food left out for him and the unexplained way of laying him. He is coupled, however, with the incubus, who is more like the Nightmare, the Irish Ganconer or some form of the Water-horse.² Later, Scot gives a long list of the frightening spirits, often quoted, but hardly to be omitted:

But in our childhood our mothers maids have so terrified us with an ouglie divell having hornes on his head, fier in his mouth, and a taile in his breach, eies like a bason, fanges like a dog, claws like a beare, a skin like a Niger, and a voice roring like a lion, whereby we start and are afraid when we heare one crie Bough: and they have so fraied us with bull beggers, spirits, witches, urchens, elves, hags, fairies, satyrs, pans, faunes, sylens, kit with the canstickie, tritons, centaures, dwarfes, giants, imps, calcars, conjurers, nymphes, changlings, *Incubus*, Robin good-fellowe, the spoorne, the mare, the man in the oke, the hell waine, the fierdrake, the puckle, Tom thombe, hob goblin, Tom tumbler, boneles, and such other bugs, that we are afraid of our owne shadowes.³

Keightley⁴ thinks this list rather a display of erudition than of folk knowledge, for it seems hardly likely that Scot's mother's maids would be familiar with satyrs, pans, fauns, tritons, centaurs or nymphs; but our native folk-lore, even that of the last two centuries, can supply an equivalent to most of these creatures. The shaggy lobs might pass for satyrs, the Brown Man of the Muirs for Pan, the mermen and merrows for tritons, Nuckelavee, a man to the waist and a horse below, for a centaur, and the innumerable white ladies and female fairies for nymphs.⁵ Many of these are certainly collected from remote parts of Britain, but the stories about them may very well have been

¹ Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584), Book IV, cap. x, p. 85.

² See Appendix I.

³ Scot, op. cit., Book VIII, cap. xv, pp. 152, 153.

⁴ Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (London, 1900), note, p. 290.

⁵ See Appendix I for particulars of these creatures.

more widely diffused at the time when Scot was writing, for only fragments of our folk beliefs are left. Scot himself mentions several fairies not known to folk tradition, which were probably authentic. We can guess pretty well what forms the Man in the Oak, the Spoorne, Tom Tumbler and Boneless took, but the particular names have not survived in common use. We still have the rhyme, 'Fairy folks are in old oaks', and Tom Tumbler may very well have been another name for a poltergeist. A calcar seems to be no more than a conjurer. The rest of the list contains many interesting varieties of folk creatures, Hags, giants and dwarfs are in the Scandinavian tradition of mythology—that is hags regarded as witch-like but non-human beings and giants as a race separate from men, like the giants of Jötunheim, and those which Corineus found in Cornwall. Dwarfs, again in their non-human form, are in the Scandinavian and Teutonic tradition, though they inhabit the mines of Cornwall as well as of Germany. *Elves*, the Saxon name for fairies, gradually came, in the south at least, to be used for small fairies of the same type as the Scandinavian Light Elves; often for fairy boys. 'To make my small elves coats' was soon to become a typical use of the word. The word *fairy*, derived originally through *fay* from *Fata*, had been used for the female fairies descended from the Fates and Norns, but had lately been extended to cover the whole kingdom of the elf people. *Urchins* were the small mischievous fairies, and the word *still* applies to small boys, and hedgehogs. *Puckle*, a small Puck, comes from the same root which gave us Pixy, Phooka, Tom Poker, Boggles, Bugs and Boggarts. *Mare* comes from *Mara*, a demon who was supposed to be responsible for bad dreams, and whose name still survives in *Mare's nest* and *Nightmare*. The Scandinavian Alp and the German Mahrte and Drach are of the same nature, and the incubus is the classical form, famous for its connection with the witches. A fiery exhalation was called a *firedrake*, but was originally supposed to be a dragon. The Hell-wain is interesting because it is a mention of a picturesque belief that the contemporary poets did not use. Hecla's Hell-wain, the waggon in which the souls of the dead were carried, was long talked of in Wales and the West, and turned later into the ghostly coach with the headless coachman which travels so many of the wilder roads of England.

Scot echoes Chaucer and anticipates Corbet in speaking of the fairy belief as dead:

For I should no more prevaile herein, than if a hundred yeares since I should have intreated your predecessors to beleeeve that Robin goodfellowe, that great and ancient bulbegger, had beene but a cousening merchant, and no divell indeed. . . . But Robin goodfellowe ceaseth now to be much feared, and poperie is sufficiently discovered.¹

This was not yet entirely true. The fairy belief had still some generations to linger on; and indeed towards the end of the seventeenth century it seems to have grown stronger in some learned quarters. In Scot's own time the fairies were still a part of the popular belief in the country, and even among the burghesses of the country towns. We have evidence of this in a small book by R. Willis, a Gloucester man, born in the year of Shakespeare's birth, and belonging to the same class. He was a scholar of the Crypt school in Gloucester, was of Puritan sympathies and was secretary in turn to Lord Brooke, the Earl of Middlesex, and Lord Coventry. In his old age he wrote a small devotional book, *Mount Tabor, or Private Exercises of a Penitent Sinner*, which, short though it is, is full of pleasant reminiscences. Among them he records an experience which has rarely been told in the first person:

When we come to years, we are commonly told of what befel us in our infancie, if the same were more than ordinary. Such an accident (by relation of others,) befell me within a few daies after my birth, whilst my mother lay in of me being her second child, when I was taken from her side, and by my suddain and fierce crying recovered again, being found sticking between the beds-head and the wall; and if I had not cryed in that manner as I did, our gossips had a conceit that I had been quite carried away by the Fairies they know not whither, and some elfe or changeling (as they call it) laid in my room.²

These, it would seem, were likely to be Protestant rather than Catholic gossips, in spite of the theory suggested by Scot. It is remarkable that each generation in turn accounts for the decline of the fairies by the victory of the current form of belief, and

¹ Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. 'To the Reader'. B ij.

² R. Willis, *Mount Tabor or Private Exercises of a Penitent Sinner* (London, 1639), pp. 92-93.

attaches them to that which has been overcome. Perhaps in Druid times the old people attributed the decline in fairy practices to the increasing number of Druid circles in the land, and to the hallowing of the oaks.

Scot's contemporary, Thomas Nashe, mentions the fairies in so much the same terms that the passage seems rather an imitation than a corroboration.

The Robbin-good-fellowes, Elfes, Fairies, Hobgoblins of our latter age, which idolatrous former daies and the fantastical world of Greece ycleaped *Fawnes*, *Satyres*, *Dryades*, & *Hamadryades*, did most of their merry pranks in the Night. Then ground they malt, and had hempen shirts for their labours, daunst in rounds in greene meadowes, pincht maids in their sleep that swept not their houses cleane, and led poore Trauellers out of their way notoriously.¹

With the instinct of a journalist, Nashe has here hit on the very things which caught the Elizabethan fancy, the pinching, the dances on the green, the night labours and the misleading of travellers. He has, however, nothing to add to our knowledge except a remark on the small size of spirits, which makes them even smaller than Drayton's fairies:

The *Druides* that dwelt in the Ile of *Man*, which are famous for great coniurers, are reported to have been lousie with familiars. Had they but put their finger and their thumbe into their neck, they could have pluckt out a whole nest of them.²

He further suggests playfully that mustard contains a devil, a passage which may have caught Shakespeare's quick eye when he was naming Mustardseed.

The *Daemonologie* of King James the First, published as an answer to Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, touches on the fairy people as they were known in Scotland.

That fourth kinde of spirites, which by the Gentiles was called *Diana*, and her wandring court and amongst us was called the Phairie (as I tould you) or our good neighboures, was one of the sortes of illusiones that was rifest in the time of *Papistrie*: for although it was holden odious to Prophesie by the devill, yet whome these kinde of Spirites carryed awaie, and informed, they were thought to be sonsiest and of best life. To speake of the many vaine

¹ Nashe, *Terrors of the Night* (1594), ed. R. B. McKerrow (Oxford, 1958), Vol. I, p. 347.

² *Ibid.*, p. 349.

trattles founded upon that illusion: How there was a King and Queene of *Phairie*, of such a jolly court & train as they had, how they had a teynd, & dutie, as it were, of all goods: how they naturallie rode and went, eate and drank, and did all other actiones like naturall men and women: I thinke it liker Virgils *Campi Elysii*, nor anie thing that ought to be beleaved by Christians.¹

This is the true fairy atmosphere of the Scottish *Ballads*, and is like a prose version of the description given by Alexander Montgomery of the Fairy Rade:

In the hinder end of harvest, on a hallow even,
Quhen our good neighbour doth ryd, if I reid rycht,
Sum buked on a buinvand, and some one a bene,
Ay trottand in trowpes from the twylychte;
Some saidland a sho aipe all graithid into greine,
Some hobland one ane hempstalk, hovand to the heicht.
The King of pharie, and his Court, with the elph queine,
With mony elrich Incubus was rydand that nycht.²

King James also mentions the Brownie, as a devil who haunted the house, doing no evil, 'but doing as it were necessarie turnes up and down the house: and this spirit they called *Brownie* in our language, who appeared like a rough-man: yea, some were so blinded, as to beleve that their house was all the sonsier, as they called it, that such spirities resorted there.'³

In these passages we notice the tithe that was considered due to the fairies, the fairy rade, so common in Scottish stories, and that Diana was said to be their queen. Shakespeare followed the same tradition in making Titania Queen of the Fairies instead of Queen Mab. The Brownie is here, as Lob is elsewhere, regarded as of full mortal size; although sometimes in later folk-lore smaller creatures perform the Brownie tasks, like the Pixy mentioned by Mrs. Bray.⁴ Grimm's story of *The Shoemaker and the Elves* is another example of Brownie tasks performed by small fairies. Beatrix Potter found a similar story current in Gloucester, and transformed its anonymous actors into mice.⁵

¹ King James I, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1597), pp. 73-74.

² Alexander Montgomery, *Poems* (Scottish Text Society, Supplementary Volume, Edinburgh, 1910), p. 151, ll. 274-81.

³ King James I, *Daemonologie*, ed. cit., p. 65.

⁴ Appendix II, No. 27.

⁵ Margaret Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter* (London, 1946), p. 63.

Three

OPINIONS ON FAIRIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

LEAVING the Elizabethans, we arrive at a time when psychic phenomena began to excite much speculation. Among the unlearned the witch scare roused a greedy appetite for news of the supernatural, and among the learned the ever-sharpening keenness of scientific curiosity left nothing uninvestigated. That some of the learned as well as the unlearned were apt to be credulous of marvels is all the better for our purpose.

Little is to be gleaned of fairy-lore from Sir Thomas Browne. His *Vulgar Errors* are as a rule the errors of the learned. He has something to say of witchcraft, of superstitions and of folk natural history, but very little about fairies or hogoblins.

Burton yields a richer harvest; though most of his folk-lore is rather derivative than direct. In the *Digression of the nature of Spirits*, however, among much that derives from literature, is an occasional note on the native fairies:

Some put our Fairies into this ranke, which have been in former times adored with much superstition, with sweeping their houses, and setting of a paille of cleane water, good victuals, and the like, and then they should not be pinched, but finde money in their shooes, and be fortunate in their enterprizes.¹

And a little later:

A bigger kinde there is of them, called with us *Hobgoblins*, and

¹ Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London, 1638), pp. 47-48.

Robin Goodfellowes, that would in those superstitious times, grinde corne for a messe of milke, cut wood, or doe any manner of drudgery work.

bigger, that is, than the two-foot goblins of Paracelsus. Burton's Goodfellow is again of full size, like King James' Brownie. He also mentions the fairies' love of dancing and the rings they make. Later in the book he refers in passing to another well-known fairy trait, 'As he (they say) that is led round about an heath with a Puck in the night.'

That brief recrudescence of fairy beliefs among the learned which is a strange feature of the end of the seventeenth century is well shown by a comparison between the first edition of Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* and the third edition of 1665. There are considerable additions to the text, as the title page shows,¹ and whoever the author was he wrote in a very different style from the sceptical and hard-headed Reginald Scot. He inserted nine chapters at the beginning of the fifteenth book, and added a second part to the *Discourse upon Devils and Spirits*. This has some very pretty fairy passages.

And more particularly the *Faeries*—do principally inhabit the Mountains, and Caverns of the Earth, whose nature is to make strange Apparitions on the Earth in Meddows, or on Mountains being like Men and Women, Souldiers, Kings, and Ladyes Children, and Horse-men cloathed in green, to which purpose they do in the night steal hempen stalks from the fields where they grow, to Convert them into Horses as the Story goes. . . . Such jocund and facetious Spirits are sayd to sport themselves in the night by tumbling and fooling with Servants and Shepherds in Country houses, pinching them black and blew, and leaving Bread, Butter and Cheese sometimes with them, which if they refuse to eat, some mischief shall undoubtedly befall them by means of these Faeries. And many such have been taken away by the sayd Spirits, for a fortnight, or month together, being carried with them in Chariots through the Air, over Hills, and Dales, Rocks and Precipices, till at last they have been found lying in some Meddow or Mountain

¹ *The Discovery of Witchcraft: Proving That the Compacts and Contracts of Witches with Devils and all Infernal Spirits or Familiars, are but Erroneous Novelties and Imaginary Conceptions. Whereunto is added an excellent Discourse of the Nature and Substance of Devils and Spirits, in two Books: The First by the Aforesaid Author: The Second now added to this Third Edition as Succedaneous to the former, and conducing to completing of the Whole Work. With Nine Chapters at the beginning of the Fifteenth Book of the Discovery* (London, 1665).

bereaved of their sences, and commonly of one of their Members to boot.¹

Here we have some mention of both the heroic and the peasant fairies, the rides of the kings, ladies and warriors mentioned, the glamour by which hemp stalks are transformed into horses, the green clothing, which makes green still an unchancey colour to wear in Scotland, and the playful spirits who haunt the farm houses at night, leaving presents for the tidy servants and punishing the slatterns. Instead of the taboo on their food we have something of the danger of refusing fairy gifts, of which there is a later parallel in a story of Keightley's.² Nothing is said of the theft of children, though we have some mention of the fairy habit of capturing humans. All this is genuine folklore. The new school was inventing nothing, but it was treating traditional material with greater deference. This may have been partly due to the growth of antiquarianism which often accompanies a period of rapid change, but it was also the result of the broad scientific curiosity of the time, which had not yet cut the channels it was to follow in the eighteenth century. All was grist that came to the scientific mill, and many members of the Royal Society were students of magic. It is as if Prospero hastily memorized his book before he drowned it.

The most scientific and methodical account of the fairies of our period was written at the close of the century; but the beliefs it records were no mushrooms, and had been firmly held long before the time of the Jacobean. It is Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies*. Robert Kirk, a Presbyterian minister at Aberfoyle, was free from the puritan bigotry which confounded the fairies with the witches; he treated the fairies as a natural phenomenon, and examined and recorded their habits with a calm curiosity and an admirable freedom from sensationalism. His researches were evidently notorious among the country people, and considered uncanny; for on his death he was supposed to have been carried into a fairy hill, and to have appeared to one of his kinsmen, asking to be rescued in the conventional manner with cold iron.³ The legend is still current

¹ *Discourse on Devils and Spirits*, appended to the 1665 edition of Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Book II, cap. iv, p. 51.

² Appendix II, No. 22.

³ Sir Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (London, 1884), p. 138.

in Aberfoyle that the minister's wife, if she has a child at the Manse, can even yet rescue Kirk from the fairies by sticking a dirk into his seat at the child's christening. The fairy beliefs that he records are those of the border between the Highlands and Lowlands, unaffected by the literary fashions of the south and in some ways alien even to their folk traditions. Many of the beliefs are, however, the same as those recorded in the south, though second sight plays a larger part in them than in the southern traditions.

Kirk's account is no mere rambling set of reminiscences and wonder stories: he attempts to understand the true nature of the fairy people, and to put them in their true place in the Universe.

These Siths or Fairies . . . are said to be of a midle Nature betwixt Man and Angel, as were Daemons thought to be of old; of intelligent studious Spirits and light changable Bodies (lyke those called Astral), somewhat of the Nature of a condensed Cloud, and best seen in Twilight. Thes Bodies be so plyable thorough the Subtilty of the Spirits that agitate them, that they can make them appear or disappear att Pleasure. Some have Bodies or Vehicles so spungious, thin and desecat, that they are fed by only sucking into some fine spirituous Liquors that peirce lyke pure Air and Oyl: others feid more gross on the Foyson or substance of Corns and Liquors, or Corne it selfe that grows on the Surface of the Earth, which these Fairies steall away, partly invisible, partly preying on the Grain, as do Crowes and Mice; wherefore in this same Age, they are some times heard to bake Bread, strike Hammers, and do such lyke Services within the little Hillocks they most haunt: some whereof of old, before the Gospell dispelled Paganism, and in some barbarous Places as yet, enter Houses after all are at rest, and set the Kitchens in order, cleansing all the vessels. Such Drags¹ goe under the name of Brownies.²

Kirk further describes the bodies of the fairies as being made of congealed air, as Prospero says of Ariel, 'thou, which are but air'. Clermont d'Amboise in Chapman's *Revenge of Bussy d'Amboise* accounts for ghosts in the same way. Kirk several times reverts to the food of the fairies, following that tradition which recurs in the story of *The Tacksman's Ox*,³ in which the

¹ Drudges. In *Wright's Dialect Dictionary* a drag is defined as a toil.

² R. Kirk, *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies* (Stirling, 1933), p. 67.

³ Appendix II, No. 19.

fairies feed on the foyson of grain or of elf-shot cattle, not altering the appearance of their food, but taking the substance out of it. He says too that when we have plenty they have scarcity, which presumably means the same thing. They are seen, he says, by second-sighted men to eat at funerals and banquets, and the danger of sharing food with them is felt to be so great that some Highlanders refrain from food at these feasts. A man with a voracious appetite and unnourished by his food is believed to have an invisible joint-eater devouring what he seems to eat. This is a variation of the common folk belief that such people have accidentally swallowed a lizard or voracious monster.¹ In their subterranean dwellings they eat little, Kirk says, but they are fastidious over that little:

There Food being exactly clean, and served up by Pleasant Children lyke enchanted Puppets. What Food they extract from us is conveyed to their Homes by secret Paths, as sune skilfull Women do the Pith and Milk from their Neighbours Cows into their own Chiese-hold thorow a Hairtedder, at a great Distance, by Airt Magic, or by drawing a spickot fastened to a Post, which will bring milk as farr of as a Bull will be heard to roar. The Chiese made of the remaineing Milk of a Cow thus strain'd will swim in Water like a Cork.²

Kirk's authority for the habits of the fairies is the testimony of the second-sighted men common in the Highlands at that time; and a large part of the treatise is devoted to an account of second sight, and the manner of acquiring it. The seers, or second-sighted men, often see the fairies travelling the roads, particularly at quarter days, for they constantly change their habitations, flying with their luggage a little above the earth. The Highlanders are therefore commonly diligent about attending church on quarter days, and reluctant to travel then, for fear of unchancy encounters. The fairy dwellings are either in the hollow hills, or, if aboveground, invisible to most eyes.

Kirk thus describes them:

Their Houses are called large and fair, and (unless att some odd occasions) unperceavable by vulgar eyes, like Rachland, and other enchanted Islands, having fir Lights, continual Lamps, and Fires, often seen without Fuel to sustain them.³

¹ In Sussex known as a *nanny-wiper*. Mrs. Latham, *West Sussex Superstitions*, in *Folk-Lore Record*, Vol. I (1878), pp. 48-49.

² R. Kirk, *Secret Commonwealth*, ed. cit., p. 71.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

Of the subterranean dwellings he says:

There be many Places called Fairie-hills, which the Mountain People think impious and dangerous to peel or discover, by taking Earth or Wood from them; superstitiously believing the Souls of their Predicessors to dwell there.¹

Kirk considers these the most common habitation of the fairies, whom he often calls *the subterraneans*. He believes that the double, or co-walker, who, according to Highland superstition, accompanies every man through his life, is a fairy, who returns to his subterranean home on the death of his counterpart. This would seem to point to a belief that a man's double is his soul, and that fairyland is the home of the dead.

There are several references to the stealing of women as foster nurses to the fairy children, and of the changeling, 'a lingering and voracious image', left in their place. At the same time he mentions the fairy ointment and the blinding of the seeing eye which is also common in the folk stories of the West of England. The most particular instance he gives of this is the story of a woman in a neighbouring county who returned to her husband after a two-years absence.

The first whereof shall be of the Woman taken out of her Child-bed, and having a lingring image of her substituted Bodie in her Roome, which Resemblance decay'd, dy'd and was bur'd. But the Person stollen returning to her Husband after two Years Space, he being convinced by many undeniable Tokens that she was his former Wyfe, admitted her Home, and had diverse Children by her. Among other Reports she gave her Husband, this was one: That she perceived litle what they did in the spacious House she lodg'd in, untill she anointed one of her Eyes with a certain Uction that was by her; which they perceaving to have acquainted her with their Actions, they fain'd her blind of that Eye with a Puff of their Breath.²

He touches further on the injuries caused by elf-shots, or flint arrow-heads,³ the fairies' fear of cold iron,⁴ the protective power of bread, the idea that fairies can only be seen between

¹ Ibid., p. 79.

² Ibid., p. 86. Motif (F.322, F.235.4.1, F.361.3).

³ These were used by the witches. See Isobel Gowdie's confession for the making and use of the elf arrows. R. Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials* (Edinburgh, 1833), Vol. III, Part II, p. 607.

⁴ Motif (F.384.3).

one twinkling of the eye and another, their invulnerability, so that their bodies close unhurt after blows, their fear of the name of Christ, and the ease with which they can be conjured up by the seer, though they go more readily on a hurtful errand than a helpful one. The seer 'is not terrified with their Sight when he calls them, but seeing them in a surprize (as often he does) frights him extreamly. And glaid would he be to be quite of such, for the hideous Spectacles seen among them; as the torturing of some Wight, earnest ghostly stairing Looks, Skirmishes, and the like.'¹

He refers to poltergeist activities, with the suggested explanation that they are owing to unquiet ghosts, probably troubled by hidden treasure.² With a little arrangement the book would indeed make a small encyclopedia of fairy-lore. He even describes the fairy literature—'pleasant, toyish Books'. 'Other books they have,' he adds, 'of involved abstruse Sens, much like the Rosurcian Style. They having nothing of the Bible, save collected Parcells for Charms and counter Charms.'³

In another passage, rich in fairy social history, he says:

Their Apparell and Speech is like that of the people and Countrey under which they live; so they are seen to wear Plaids and variegated Garments in the Highlands of Scotland, and Suanochs therefore in Ireland.⁴ They speak but litle, and that by way of whistling, clear not rough. . . . Ther Women are said to Spine very fine, to Dy, to Tossue and Embroyder; but whither it is as manuall Operation of substantiall refined Stuffs, with apt and solid Instruments, or only curious Cob-webs, impalpable Rainbows, and a fantastic Imitation of more terrestriall Mortals . . . I leave to conjecture as I found it.

There Men travell much abroad, either presaging or aping the dismall and tragicall Actions of some amongst us; and have also many disastorous Doings of their own, as Convocations, Fighting, Gashes, Wounds, and Burialls, both in the Earth and Air. They live much longer than wee; yet die at last, or (at) least vanish from that State. . . . They are said to have aristocraticall Rulers and Laws, but no discernible Religion, Love, or Devotion towards God. . . . They do not all the Harme which appearingly they have Power to do; nor are they perceaved to be in great Pain, save that they are

¹ R. Kirk, *Secret Commonwealth*, ed. cit., p. 74.

² Motif (F.473).

³ R. Kirk, op. cit., p. 75.

⁴ Motif (F.420.1.6.1) variant.

usewally silent and sullen. . . . They are not subject to sore Sicknesses, but dwindle and decay at a certain Period, all about ane Age. Some say their continual Sadness is because of their pendulous State, as uncertain what at the last Revolution will become of them, when they are lock't up into ane unchangeable Condition; and if they have any frolic Fitts of Mirth, 'tis as the constrained grinning of a Mort-head, or rather as acted on a Stage, and moved by another, then cordially coming of themselves.¹

Many passages, like that already quoted about the Fairy Hills, suggest a close connection between the fairies and the dead. One of the most striking is the explanation of the fairies given by some of the seers, that they are departed spirits clothed in bodies made of their almsgiving and good deeds while they were alive.² The only suggestion that the fairies are of less than mortal size is in the description of an initiation into second sight, in which the pupil sees 'a Multitude of Wights, like furious, hardie Men, flocking to him hastily from all Quarters, as thick as Atoms in the Air'.³

On the whole the fairy picture is gloomier in the Highlands than in the south. We have many familiar features, the changelings, the fairy ointment, the aristocratic state, the fairy hills, the theft of corn, the power of invisibility, the dislike of being watched, the brownie labours, the boggarts; but we have little of the fairy mirth, the dancing or the gifts to favourites. There is indeed one incident of women directed in a dream to find treasure in a fairy hill, but nothing of the homely silver sixpence as a reward for cleanliness. The Highland fairies are fiercer, more independent, more dangerous than the Southerners, but even here Prospero could have found his fairy familiar, though it would have needed all his power to coerce it to serve good ends. It is no surprise to find that the Scottish fairies held intercourse with the witches.

At the same time as Kirk was questioning his seers, and wandering round fairy hills, the ancestors of the Folk-lore Society and Psychical Research Society were jotting down what they could find out or remember of fairy beliefs and inexplicable events. The three who dealt chiefly with the fairies were Aubrey, Glanvil and Bovet. A little later John Beaumont in his *Treatise*

¹ R. Kirk, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.

² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

on *Spirits* added a personal reminiscence to his recapitulation of earlier writers.

Of these writers John Aubrey, the antiquarian, was the most catholic in his tastes. No branch of popular tradition came amiss to him. He had a zest and an absence of scepticism which would incline one to place him earlier than his time; and indeed he drew freely on the memory of his boyhood and of England before the Civil War. We owe to him some of the best fairy incidents; the knowledge that the cry of *Horse and Hattock* is the master word for fairy levitation,¹ a reference to Meg Moulach,² who is one of the few female brownies, a borrowing story of Frensham,³ of which Campbell's *The Kettle and the Woman of Peace*⁴ is a parallel, and a curiously convincing description of the misadventure of his school master who strayed inadvisedly into a fairy ring.

In the year 1633-4, soone after I had entered into my grammar at the Latin Schoole at Yatton Keynel, (near Chippenham, Wilts), our curate Mr. Hart, was annoy'd one night by these elves or fayries. Comming over the downes, it being neere darke, and approaching one of the faierie dances, as the common people call them in these parts, viz. the greene circles made by those sprites on the grasse, he all at once sawe an innumerable quantitie of pigmies or very small people, dancing rounde and rounde, and singing, and making all maner of small odd noyses. He, being very greatly amaz'd, and yet not being able, as he sayes, to run away from them, being, as he supposes, kept there in a kind of enchantment, they no sooner perceave him but they surround him on all sides, and what betwixt feare and amazement, he fell down scarcely knowing what he did; and thereupon these little creatures pinch'd him all over, and made a sorte of quick humming noyse all the time; but at length they left him, and when the sun rose, he found himself exactly in the midst of one of these faierie dances. This relation I had from him mysele, a few days after he was so tormented; but when I and my bedfellow Stump wente soon afterwards, at night time to the dances on the downes, we saw none of the elves or

¹ John Aubrey, *Miscellanies upon Various Subjects* (London, 1890), p. 149.

² *Ibid.*, p. 192.

³ John Aubrey, *The Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* (London, 1718-19), Vol. III, p. 366.

⁴ Campbell, *Popular Tales of the Western Highlands* (London, 1890), Vol. II, p. 52. See Appendix II, No. 31.

fairies. But indeede it is saide they seldom appeare to any persons who go to seeke for them.¹

'All maner of small, odd noises' is irresistible, and the whole account has a sober, matter-of-fact air that would almost carry conviction, if we did not remember Gulliver. In Wiltshire as in the Highlands twilight seems the best time to see the fairies. The notable features of this account are the small size of the fairies, the dancing in a ring, the pinching, the humming and indistinct sounds they made. If Mr. Hart amused his pupils by an invention he kept it well within the bounds of folk tradition.

Some scattered notes on fairies are to be found on page 257 of *Hypomnemata Antiquaria A*.² They are described as from old Ambrose Browne, 1645, and Aubrey apparently found Browne's handwriting illegible, as he has left spaces and rows of dots instead of some of the words.

People were wont to please the Fairies, that they might do them no shrewd turnes, by sweeping cleane the hearth, & setting a dish of fayre . . . halfe & add . . . bread whereon was set a . . . messe of milke sopt with white bread. And on the morrow they should finde a groate of which the . . . if they did speak of it they should never . . . they would . . . churnes . . . etc.

That the fairies could steale away children and put others in their place verily beleaved of old women & some yet living.

The melancholy persons led away with the Fairies, as was a hinde goeing upon Hack-pin with corne led a dance to the Village

¹ Quoted as from Aubrey's MS. Wiltshire Collections by Halliwell-Phillipps, in *Illustrations of the Fairy Mythology of A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London, 1845), pp. 235-6.

All other quotations of this passage appear to go back to this one, which is not to be found in Aubrey's surviving MSS. It is possible it was in Volume B of the *Hypomnemata Antiquaria* whose loss was discovered by J. E. Jackson. It had been borrowed by William Aubrey in 1703, and presumably not returned. It was mentioned by Wharton as being in the library at Alderton in 1783. This library was sold in 1815, and the MS. subsequently traced to Thorpe, the bookseller; but there all trace of it was lost. It is perhaps more likely that the quotation is part of the missing Chapter 32 of the Wiltshire Natural History. In the list of contents in Aubrey's writing Chapter 32, on the supernatural, occurs in both copies. The Royal Society has kindly allowed me to examine their copy, neatly written in Aubrey's hand and numbered consecutively, but his list of contents does not correspond with the chapters to be found in the book. It is possible however that Chapter 32 was lodged with other notes in the Ashmolean Museum seen there by Halliwell-Phillipps, and lost when the MSS. were transferred to the Bodleian Library. There is no doubt from its style and contents that the passage is by Aubrey.

² Bod. MS. Aubrey 3.

& so was a shepherd of Winterbourne Bassett, but never any afterwards enjoy themselves. The shepherd said that (the Ground opened) he was brought into strange places underground that used muscical Instruments, viz. violles and lutes (such as were then played on).

Hackpen is one of the hills in Wiltshire. Fragmentary though this is, it contains a good deal of common fairy belief in a small compass. The preparation of the house for the fairies, the silver groat, the secrecy enjoined, the fairy changelings, the opening hillside, the music, and the melancholy of people who have been with the fairies, are all part of fairy tradition in this country.

Glanvil in his *Sadducismus Triumphatus* tells us nothing explicitly about the fairies. He is the forerunner of the Psychical Research Society rather than of the folklorists, and the psychic researchers seem generally to have ignored the fairies. The second part of the book is devoted to stories of supernatural happenings. One or two of the phenomena, however, ascribed by Glanvil either to witchcraft or to haunting are so closely allied to the folk fairy story that they deserve to be noticed here. One of the best-known is the story of the *Demon Drummer of Tedworth*, a well-authenticated example of what later researchers called poltergeist manifestations, but what our ancestors more briefly and pleasantly called a boggart. Glanvil himself put it down to the witchcraft of a wandering musician, whose drum Mr. Mompesson had confiscated. The story has all the usual poltergeist features, the two little girls, who were at once the channel and the chief victims of the power, whatever it was, the knocking, the rattling, the heaving of bed-clothes, the small, quick animal, the stone-throwing; the usual combination of unexplained activities that goes far to account for the belief in both fairies and witchcraft.¹

In the second part of the book several similar incidents are related; and one among them is so like an ordinary fairy story as to be only distinguished from one by its explanation.² A manservant in Ireland was sent out to buy a pack of cards. He came in an open place upon a company of people sitting at a well-appointed table, who invited him to join them. One of their

¹ Joseph Glanvil, *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (London, 1681), (Part II), pp. 89-118.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 245-9.

company, however, whispered to him, warning him to comply with them in nothing.¹ Accordingly he refused; the table vanished, and they began to dance. He again refused an invitation to join them, and they stopped dancing and fell to work. When he had refused to join them in this also they vanished, and he returned to his master's house, where he fainted. At night he was visited by his friend among the company, who told him that he would be carried off next day if he ventured out of doors. He carefully kept to the house all day, but in the evening he put one foot outside the door. A rope was immediately flung round him, and he was dragged away, followed by most of the household, who were however unable to catch him, and he would certainly have disappeared if a horseman who met the party had not, with much presence of mind, caught one end of the rope, and so rescued him.² After this strange incident Lord Orrery, hearing the story, asked to have the man sent to his house; and here his friend again warned him that he would be carried off. The spirit was well informed, for the next day, in spite of Mr. Greatorex, the Irish stroker, and two bishops, the unfortunate man was levitated, and floated about for some time, while the company ran underneath to catch him when he fell. This was the climax of the affair, however. That night the spirit appeared to him again, introduced itself as an acquaintance who had been dead for seven years, and told him that the danger which had threatened him was now at an end. It also offered him medicine for two different kinds of fits to which he was subject—a significant circumstance not mentioned before—and, when he had refused them, prescribed the juice of plantain root, and soon after left him. There is a very similar Scottish story, in which the company is described as the fairies, and the human visitor is warned in the same way by a former acquaintance who had been supposed to be dead for some years. In a Scandinavian version the company is a congregation of the dead. The fairy whom Bessie Dunlop had as a familiar was the spirit of a man who had been killed at the Battle of Pinkie.³

Bovet gives us more information about the fairies than Glanvil. *Pandaemonium, or The Devil's Cloyster* was, like the

¹ Motif (C.211.1).

² Motif (D.2121.5).

³ Davenport Adams, *Witch, Warlock and Magician* (London, 1889), p. 304. See Appendix III.

others, not published until after the end of our period; but Bovet expressly says that some of his information dates from fifty years back, which would put it well before the Civil War. The title-page of the book is a vigorous summary of the supernatural world as Bovet saw it. In the background is an enchanted castle with a dragon surmounting it, and a stag's-horned porter at the gate. In the sky a witch with a hazel wand in her hand is flying on a dragon's back. In the middle distance there is a fairy ring, and near it a witch's cottage. In the foreground are two magic circles; in one a friar is conjuring up a number of rather bewildered imps, and in the other a witch has called up what she imagines to be the spirit of a dead woman, beneath whose sweeping shroud a cloven hoof peers discreetly out. For the moment we are concerned only with the fairy ring.

Like Aubrey, Bovet drew some of his material from Scotland, where superstition has had a stronger hold than in England. The contribution which Scotland makes to his fairy-lore is the account, given by Captain George Burton, of the Fairy Boy of Leith, a young boy of prematurely acute intelligence, particularly in mathematical questions, who claimed to be a drummer to the fairies, and who always absented himself on certain nights, whatever efforts were made to detain him:

He seemed to make a motion like drumming upon the Table with his Fingers, upon which I ask'd him, whether he could beat a drum? To which he replied, yes Sir, as well as any man in *Scotland*; for every *Thursday* Night I beat all points to a sort of people that use to meet under yonder Hill¹ (pointing to the great Hill between *Edenborough* and *Leith*) how Boy quoth I, What company have you there? There are Sir, (said he) a great company both of men and women, and they are entertained with many sorts of Musick besides my drum; they have besides plenty of variety of Meats and Wine, and many times we are carried into *France*, or *Holland* in a night, and return again; and whilst we are there we enjoy all the pleasures the Country doth afford: I demanded of him, how he got under that Hill? To which he replied, that there were a great pair of gates that opened to them, though they were invisible to others, and that within there were brave large rooms as well accomodated as most in *Scotland*.²

¹ Motif (F.211).

² Bovet, *Pandaemonium, or The Devil's Cloyster* (London, 1684), p. 173.

Here we have the usual fairy characteristics, the love of music and dancing, the use of human as well as fairy musicians, the meeting under the hill, and a habit which occurs in stories in England, Scotland and Ireland, of transporting themselves overseas, probably in this case as in the stories, to carouse on foreign wine in a royal cellar.

The most delightful tradition collected by Bovet is from the south. It was not used by the Jacobean poets, though it was current in their time, but perhaps not in Warwickshire. One feels that it can hardly have been known to Shakespeare and neglected by him, for there is something in it which catches the imagination. It is the story of the fairy market, visible only from a distance, but tangible close at hand.

The place near which they most ordinarily shewed themselves, was on the side of a Hill, named *Black-down*, between the Parishes of *Pittminster*, and *Chestonford*, not many miles from *Tanton*: Those that had occasion to Travel that way, have frequently seen them there, appearing like Men and Women of a stature, generally, near the smaller size of Men; their habits used to be of red, blew or green, according to the old way of Country Garb, with high crown'd hats. One time about 50 years since, a person (living at *Comb St. Nicholas*, a Parish lying on one side of that hill, near *Chard*) was riding towards his home that way; and saw just before him, on the side of the hill a great company of People, that seemed to him like Country Folks, Assembled, as at a Fair; there was all sorts of Commodities to his appearance, as at our ordinary Fairs. . . . At length it came into his mind what he had heard concerning the Fairies on the side of that hill: and it being near the Road he was to take, he resolved to ride in amongst them, and see what they were; accordingly he put on his Horse that way; and though he saw them perfectly all along as he came, yet when he was upon the place where all this had appeared to him, he could discern nothing at all, only seemed to be crouded, and thrust, as when one passes through a throng of people: all the rest became invisible to him, until he came at a little distance, and then it appeared to him again as at first. He found himself in pain, and so hasted home; where being arrived, a *Lameness* seized him all on one side, which continued on him as long as he lived, which was many years.¹

This account agrees with Kirk's in giving the fairies the costume of the country in which they live and the habit of

¹ *Pandaemonium, or The Devil's Cloyster*, pp. 208-9.

mimicking human occupations. It gives them the common fairy trait of disliking human curiosity, and the power to punish it with lameness; also the power of invisibility. Red and green are common fairy colours, almost universal, but blue is unusual.

The oral tradition has survived for three hundred years, and tales of the fairy market are still told near Blackdown.¹

The evidence provided in the witch trials is scanty but suggestive. Everywhere there are accounts of the witches' familiars, but the connection between the witches and fairies seems to have been closer in Scotland than in England. It is to Isobel Gowdie that we are indebted for a description of life in the fairy hills; but in the North of England there was also a connection between fairies and witches, and the magicians claimed to raise fairies. There are so many evidences of their connections that it deserves a chapter to itself.

Before leaving the documentation of the fairy-lore there is one more source of information, half-way between raw material and literature, which should be examined—the traditional ballads and the printed broadsides. The traditional fairy ballads are much rarer in Britain than in the Scandinavian countries. The chief of them are *True Thomas*, *Tamlane*, *The Wee, Wee Man*, *Clerk Colvil*, *Burd Isabel*, *Willie's Lady* and *King Orfeo*.² The first is the most detailed, with its tripartite division of the supernatural world into heaven, hell and fairyland, its teind paid to hell, its deadly fruit, and the rivers of blood flowing through the springs of fairyland³—a picture throughout of beauty and danger. *Tamlane* is hardly less important. The fairies in it are also dangerous, and more cruel than *True Thomas's* Queen. It is the same fairyland, but we learn more of the external customs, the fairy rade, the shape-shifting, the curative power of human food and clothing. The *Wee, Wee Man* is a grotesquerie of the small but powerful fairies. In *Clerk Colvil* the fause mermaid is the evil and tempting spirit which glints dangerously behind the folk-lore of all nations, the succubus, the Lamia, the Ellerwoman, the Glai stig⁴ and the

¹ See Appendix II, No. 42.

² F. J. Child, *English and Scottish Ballads* (New York, 1957), Vol. I. *King Orfeo* is to be found in Halliwell-Phillipps' *Illustrations of Fairy Mythology*, p. 36.

³ Motif (A.671.2.2), variant.

⁴ See Appendix I.

Yara.¹ *Burd Isobel* and the *Witch Mother* are two ballads which introduce the Billy Blind, a wise and friendly domestic spirit of the Robin Goodfellow type. The romance ballad of *King Orfeo*, a folk version of a classical story, shows how near fairyland was in some beliefs to the Land of the Dead. The ymp tree in it, the magic apple tree grown from a cutting, connects significantly with the Isle of Avalon and the apple tree under which Lancelot was sleeping when the four queens carried him away. Beyond these we have very little, except a few Shetland ballads about silkies, which are more Scandinavian than English.

Besides the traditional ballad we have the broadsides and chapbooks, popular as our daily press is popular—that is anonymous, called into being by the folk consciousness, but not traditionally transmitted, nor moulded by the additions and forgetfulness of many minds. The one of these which will occur to everyone is *Robin Goodfellow, his Mad Prankes and Merry Jestes*. There are two pamphlets much alike in matter, a prose one interspersed with songs, and a rather later version of the same in doggerel. The prose version is preferable, and is full of information on what the country public expected of fairies.² Professor Nutt considers the story the last broken-down remnant of the story of *Manannon the Son of Lir*,³ Like Manannon and Merlin Robin Goodfellow is the son of a mortal woman and a supernatural being. His father—Oberon in Robin's case—confers on him the power of shape-shifting, and finally admits him into the supernatural fellowship. For the rest *Robin Goodfellow* illustrates most of the fairy traits. He has an impish love of mischief, the fairy amorousness, and the fairy sense of justice, displayed with characteristic freakishness. He takes the form of a Will o' the Wisp, and plays all the bogy beast tricks, particularly the favourite one of turning into a horse. The fairies whom he joins have the usual fairy habits, reward cleanliness, pinch sluts, cause dreams; there is even the ghostly Church Grim among them:

My nightly businesse I have told,
To play these trickes I use of old;

¹ Andrew Lang, *Brown Fairy Book* (London, 1904), p. 88.

² *Robin Goodfellow: his Mad Prankes and Merry Jestes* (London, 1628). Reprinted in Halliwell-Phillipps' *Illustrations*, ed. cit., p. 120.

³ Alfred Nutt, *Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare* (London, 1900), p. 32.

When candles burne both blue and dim,
Old folkes will say, Here's fairy Grim.

On the whole these fairies are on the side of virtue; they take on them the ancient fairy supervision of the farm, particularly Fairy Patch, whose business it is to see that the beasts are fed, and to punish the neglect of them.

But to the good I ne'ere was foe:
The bad I hate and will doe ever,
Till they from ill themselves doe sever.
To helpe the good Ile run and goe,
The bad no good from me shall know.

Very superior to this pamphlet is the black-letter broadside of *The Pranks of Puck*,¹ beginning, 'From Oberon in Fairyland', which has been deservedly included in many anthologies. The burden of the song is Robin's traditional laugh of 'ho! ho! ho!', possibly borrowed from the *Vice* of the Miracle Play, and in the course of the short poem most of the fairy activities are mentioned. Here, although the Fairy King is given power over ghosts and witches, the fairies are not identified with them:

There's not a hag
Nor ghost shall wag,
Nor cry, ware Goblin! where I go;
But Robin I
His feats will spy,
And send him home, with ho, ho, ho!

The next verses are given to Will o' the Wisp and bogy beast pranks, and the next recalls the story of the brownie and the maids with the stolen junket.² Then there are the usual brownie labours, the fairy pinching, the fairy loans, the punishment of tale-bearing and another bogy beast prank, a pleasing verse on the fairy dances and child theft, and a farewell, which, like the opening verse, reads very much as if the poem were part of a masque. It is certainly the work of a poet, and its early attribution to Ben Jonson is understandable.

¹ Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Pranks of Puck*, op. cit., p. 165.

² See Appendix II, No. 39.

Something akin to this subject is the rhyming chapbook of *Tom Thumb the Little*, the first part printed in 1630. This is founded on a folk tradition, for there are parallel stories in Germany and Denmark, but it is difficult to say how much the pamphlet owes to the literary fairies of the Pigwiggen type. The description of his costume seems to be suggested by the attiring of King Oberon, but it is possible that the debt is the other way round. Tom Thumb, though not a fairy, was a god-child of the fairies, and their attendance at his christening anticipates a later and more sophisticated treatment of folklore.

Setting aside these popular plays upon fancy, we may say that upon the whole the treatment of fairies in the non-fictional literature of our period dwells on their darker characteristics. We have, indeed, frequent references to the brownie labours, but these are often attributed to devils, and the idea of danger behind the fairies constantly recurs. Every now and then we catch a glimpse of the beautiful and harmless country of Elidor's fairies and the Light Elves; but the picture left with us is Kirk's wandering, restless people, with their antic fits of simulated mirth, and their ghastly, staring, earnest looks, or of the coarse and country fairy. There is besides a continual intermingling of ghost and fairy beliefs. Kirk's fairies, as we have seen, are sometimes supposed to be the spirits of the dead, Aubrey's Hairy Meg was the spirit of an ancestor, Glanvil's ghosts engaged in fairy sports, the fairy Elaby Gathen, to be raised by Ashmole's conjuration, was adjured as a Christian soul.¹ A further element which often recurs is that inherited from the early days of the Church, when the fairies and heathen gods were thought to be devils. The prevalence of the witch scare seems to have deepened this belief, which towards the end of the medieval times had perhaps tended to make the devil less formidable rather than the fairies more fearful, as such legends as Friar Rush seems to show.² On the other hand there are plenty of traces of the fairies as agricultural deities. Their care for cleanliness and order, their power over the crops, the tithes they exacted, their nightly dances as well as the brownie labours

¹ See Appendix IV for this spell.

² Friar Rush is a legend of Danish origin. The sixteenth-century English version is reprinted by Thoms in *Early English Prose Romances*.

show the part they once held in peasant economy. In fact the fairies, as they appear in the didactic writings of the Jacobeans, show that rich ambiguity, that conflict of beliefs and practices which is characteristic of all well-rooted folk-lore, and which keeps our folklorists guessing to this day.

SHAKESPEARE'S FAIRIES

BEFORE the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign Shakespeare, following a hint from Lyly, had gathered the things that most pleased him out of the wealth of fairy material to his hand, and had combined and transmuted them into our greatest fairy poem. The more one ponders over *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the more remarkable it appears. All sources are drawn on for the material of the play, but the result is a shining unity. Theseus and Hippolyta, half classical, half medieval, hunt through the wood; the lovers, romantic after Chaucer's tradition, but a little perhaps forgetting Chaucer's manners, quarrel in it; the Elizabethan tradesmen rehearse in it; a league away at Athens Diana's votaresses are chanting hymns to the moon; but the wood is in Warwickshire, with its brakes of sweet brier and beds of primroses and banks of wild thyme. In the same way Oberon derives through *Huon of Bordeaux* from Alberich, the German dwarf, Titania inherits the rites of Diana, by the late classical tradition of the gods descended into fairies, the Celtic Puck shares a character with the English Robin Goodfellow, and shows the traits of the Bogy Beast, the Brag and the Grant;¹ yet the fairies, like Queen Elizabeth, are 'mere English'.

The character of the fairies seems so natural a growth—as any character does in a work of genius—that it is only when we examine them that we see from how many strands they are woven. Critics are often and justly struck by their exquisite

¹ See Appendix I.

delicacy, but rarely seem to notice that this delicacy never degenerates into mere prettinesses. The fairies may be small, but they are formidable. They are elementals, they control the weather and seasons, and when they quarrel all Nature goes awry. Titania has still votaresses; she is so much a goddess as to have a cult. Oberon is the King of Shadows, some Plutonian dominion still clings to him. Their power of motion is almost unlimited; Oberon has come from India, Puck travels to England from Athens and back in a few minutes. It seems they move continually, 'following darkness like a dream'. Like the medieval fairies they have their ridings; Oberon covets the changeling as a 'knight of his train to trace the forest wild'; Titania has her court ladies and her bodyguard. Like the classic gods and the heroic fairies both Oberon and Titania are amorous of mortals.¹ They have a power over the unborn issue of human marriages, standing like the Fates at the gates of birth. Once at least there is a suggestion of the constant sadness that underlies the fairy merriment in Kirk and the ballad singers:

Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade;
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.²

Most of these traits had been used in the romances before Shakespeare's days; but he drew straight from his native folk-lore some elements that had hardly appeared in literature before his time. The innovation that strikes us most is the fairy smallness, not new to folk-lore, but nearly new in literature. The fairies are as small as Cherry of Zennor's master in his natural shape,³ though like him they can assume a mortal size. Titania's elves creep into acorn cups, find the bag of a humble bee a load, and a bat a formidable adversary. It is worth noticing that Shakespeare chose to make his fairies tiny even in a play, where they would have to be represented by children. He had plenty of child-sized fairies to choose from, but the tiny fairies must have been so native to his mind that he could hardly help imagining them so. Their smallness reminds us of the Scan-

¹ Motif (F.301).

² *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act IV, Sc. i, ll. 101-4. (*The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, Oxford, 1914.)

³ See Appendix II, No. 26.

dinavian Light Elves, and, like them, they seem to have had a special care of flowers. The scented flowers in particular are their property, the cowslips, which are so much personified as to be made into the Queen's bodyguard, the sweet-brier, wild thyme and honeysuckle. Hardly less striking than their size is the benevolence of these fairies. It is not only that they 'do not all the harm that seemingly they have power to do', but they show an active kindness. Puck, indeed, is glad to do a certain amount of mischief, but that is almost by accident, and it is from no spite to mortals, for he is equally ready to play a prank on his own Queen. Titania feels concern at the hardships which their quarrels are inflicting on the human mortals, Oberon intervenes to set the lovers' affairs to rights, they both go to bless Theseus's marriage bed. Even Titania's child-theft has an affectionate motive. No doubt she left a lingering voracious image as heir to the Indian King, but she took the child because of her love for its dead mother. This is perhaps the only changeling in any pre-Victorian literature that we see from the fairy angle. Shakespeare knew of darker fairy thefts, for he knew the story of Childe Roland, with its ogreish Elf King and its stolen bride;¹ but this sinister type of fairy is left untouched in the Dream. Except for the mention of triple Hecate's team Titania's followers are sharply dissociated from the witches. They drive away the owl, snakes, spiders, newts and bats, all creatures that are associated with witchcraft. Oberon, too, distinguishes himself from ghosts and night-wandering spirits that cannot bear the day. He prefers to leave before sunrise, but he boasts his power of out-staying the sun; cock-crow has no terrors for him. This stressing of the better and kindlier fairy nature is not a violation of folk tradition, perhaps it rather asserts it against the more formal doctrine, but it is a picking-out of one strand in a varied web. Folk-lore is full of kindly fairies, the lending fairies of *Frensham*,² the fairy boy who repaid the hospitality of the Laird of Co',³ Habitrot, the patroness of spinners,⁴ Elidor's fairies, Hob-Hole Hob,⁵ who cures whooping cough, and many others.

¹ See Appendix II, No. 4.

² John Aubrey, *The Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* (London, 1718-19), Vol. III, p. 366.

³ Appendix II, No. 21.

⁴ Appendix II, No. 6.

⁵ See Appendix I.

The mention of Hob-Hole Hob brings us to Robin Goodfellow, as native and homespun as ever a fairy was. He has all the boggart tricks, even down to the traditional ho! ho! ho! He turns himself into a Will o' the Wisp, a horse, a headless bear, a roasted crab-apple, a three-legged stool. Among his boggart practical jokes there is a mention of one brownie activity, the grinding of meal, unless, as is possible, he laboured in the quern¹ to bring the grinding to nothing. He is a valuable part of the machinery of the plot, yet his character is formed of the very stuff of tradition. The whole conception of the fairies is true of its kind. They are creatures of another order, but definite, clear-cut and natural, with none of that flimsy quality that strikes one in later fairy stories. At the same time their quarrels and intrigues belong wholly to their fairy nature; they are not human beings made small, Titania, though she is as susceptible to Oberon's spell as the mortal lovers, is every millimetre a fairy queen.

In each play in which Shakespeare mentioned the fairies he turned a slightly different light upon them. Even the Queen Mab of *Romeo and Juliet*,² though another tiny fairy, is as different as possible from Titania, a less dignified person altogether. Her name is more native than Titania's; she has the elfin quality of knotting locks and making elf stirrups in horses' manes, and she performs another of the traditional functions of the nightmare, the bringing of dreams, but she has one quality for which I have found no clear warrant in folk-lore, she uses insects as horses.³ The Welsh and Scottish fairies had miniature horses, and so had the tiny Irish fairies in the story of *Fergus MacLeda and the Wee Folk*,⁴ the small English elves swarmed over human horses or transformed grass stalks into mounts, but Shakespeare's Queen Mab drove in a hazel nut drawn by ants. Herrick and Drayton were captivated by this trait, and their fairies became miracles of littleness and often very little else. Shakespeare, however, having opened this vein, left it to be explored by others, and in his later mentions of fairies elaborated other characteristics.

¹ The quern is a primitive stone mill.

² *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act I, Sc. iv, ll. 53-95.

³ The name of *the devil's coach horse* is the only popular indication I have found of that use of insects, and that must necessarily be late.

⁴ Appendix II, No. 40.

Shakespeare's Fairies, 3 & 40
See also: T. 10

John Lyly's introduction of the fairies into his plays, written for the Children of Paul's, was very slight and incidental, probably designed to fit in dances for the smaller children, but he deserves credit for the invention of the fashion. In *Endimion*, published in 1591, the fairies have a small part to contribute to the action and a pleasing song. Corsites is endeavouring to move the spell-bound Endimion when the fairies intervene.

(The Fairies *daunce, and with a Song pinch him, and hee falleth asleepe, they kisse Endimion, and depart.*)

The Third SONG by Fairies

OMNES. Pinch him, pinch him, blacke and blue,
Sawcie mortalls must not view
What the Queene of Stars is doing,
Nor pry into our Fairy woing.

1 FAIRY. Pinch him blue.

2 FAIRY. Pinch him blacke.

3 FAIRY. Let him not lacke
Sharpe nailes to pinch him blue and red,
Till sleepe has rock'd his addle head.

4 FAIRY. For the trespasse hee hath done,
Spots ore all his flesh shall runne.
Kisse *Endimion*, kisse his eyes,
Then to our midnight heidegyes.

(*Exeunt*)¹

In *Gallathea*, published a year later, the fairies make a bare appearance.

There is one other play which uses fairies like those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and that is *The Maydes Metamorphosis*, published in the same year. This is a pleasant piece of rambling pastoral, amateurish but fresh, into which snatches of folk-songs and all kinds of incidental ornaments are introduced. Among them is a theme lifted from Shakespeare's fairies. The introduction of the pages to Penny, Cricket and Little Little Prick is too like Bottom's conversation with the elves to be accidental. It seems unlikely that the borrowing is on the other side, for the scene has no place in the plot at all. It occurs in Act II, when Mopso, Frisco and Ioculo are on the stage, and the Fairies enter, singing and dancing.

¹ *Endimion*, Act IV, Sc. iii. *The Dramatic Works of John Lyly*, ed. by F. W. Fairholt (London, 1858), Vol. I.

By the moone we sport and play,
With the night begins our day;
As we daunce, the deaw doth fall;
Trip it little urchins all,
Lightly as the little Bee,
Two by two and three by three:
And about go wee, and about go wee.

10. What Mawmets are these?

FRIS. O they be the Fayries that haunt these woods.

MOP. O we shall be pincht most cruelly.

1 FAY. Will you have any musick sir?

2 FAY. Will you have any fine musicke?

3 FAY. Most daintie musicke?

MOP. We must set a face on't now; there's no flying; no,
Sir, we are very merrie, I thanke you.

1 FAY. O but you shall, Sir.

FRIS. No, I pray you, save your labour.

2 FAY. O, Sir, it shall not cost you a penny.

10. Where be your Fiddles?

3 FAY. You shall have most daintie instruments, Sir.

MOP. I pray you, what might I call you?

1 FAY. My name is *Penny*.

MOP. I am sorry I cannot purse you.

FRIS. I pray you sir what might I call you?

2 FAY. My name is *Cricket*.

FRIS. I would I were a chimney for your sake.

10. I pray you, you prettie little fellow, whats your name?

3 FAY. My name is little, little *Pricke*.

10. Little, little Pricke? O you are a daungerous Fayrie, and fright all
little wenches in the country out of their beds. I care not whose
hand I were in, so I were out of yours.

1 FAY. I do come about the coppes
Leaping upon flowers toppes;
Then I get vpon a Flie,
Shee carries me aboue the skie,
And trip and goe.

2 FAY. When a deaw drop falleth downe
And doth light vpon my crowne,
Then I shake my head and skip
And about I trip.

- 8 FAY. When I feele a girle a sleepe
 Underneath her frock I peepe.
 There to sport, and there I play,
 Then I byte her like a flea;
 And about I skip.
10. I, I thought where I should have you.
- 1 FAY. Wilt please you daunce, sir.
10. Indeed, sir, I cannot handle my legges.
- 2 FAY. O you must needs daunce and sing,
 Which if you refuse to doe
 We will pinch you black and blew;
 And about we goe.

They all daunce in a ring and sing, as followeth.

Round about, round about, in a fine ring a,
 Thus we daunce, thus we daunce, and thus we sing a:
 Trip and go, too and fro, ouer this Greene a,
 All about, in and out, for our brave Queene a. etc.¹

Here there is a hint of the danger of complying with the fairies' requests, yet the three boys dance with the fairies without any evil consequences.

Until *The Tempest* Shakespeare shows us no other full-dress portrait of a fairy creature, but fairy references are scattered sparsely through the plays. That in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*² is the most notable, different from the others because it deals with counterfeit fairies, but full of references to what one would expect a contemporary of Shakespeare to believe about them. These fairies are child-sized with a full-grown queen, following a tradition which makes the ruler larger than the common people of fairyland. They are dressed in white or green; white silk is commonly worn by the White Ladies, particularly in Wales and on its borders.³ They carry torches, supposed to be of glow-worm's light, and rattles, presumably babies' rattles with bells, not the rattles used for scaring birds. The jingling of fairy bells occurs in many accounts of their rides⁴—strangely perhaps, for bells were supposed to have the power to drive

¹ *The Maydes Metamorphosis* (1600), Act II. Reprinted in *A Collection of Old Plays*, A. H. Bullen (1882), Vol. I.

² *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act. V, Sc. iv and v.

³ S. Baring Gould, *A Book of Folk Lore* (London, n.d.), pp. 80–83.

⁴ Appendix III, *The Old Woman of Nithsdale's Account of the Fairies*.

away evil spirits. They are accompanied by a Lord Chamberlain, horned like a satyr, and by a hobgoblin, both of mortal size. Falstaff himself is dressed as a wood spirit, Herne the Hunter, a wood demon later euhemerized to a ghost. Why he is so dressed is not quite clear, unless for the sake of making a joke about his horns, a joke of inexhaustible pungency to the Elizabethans. The fairies exercise their ancient functions as guardians of morality and order, and dance in a circle round Herne's oak, thus connecting him with the fairies. Falstaff, with a credulity most unlike his character in those plays where he is himself, at once believes in the fairies and believes them to be formidable, so that it is death to watch them, a belief still existing on the Welsh borders in the nineteenth century.¹ The fairy trick of pinching, not used in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is naturally used here. It is a trait which occurs in many of the Jacobean references to fairies.

Henry IV has a brief reference to fairy changelings,² but the King seems ill-acquainted with the fairy habits, for he expects them to interchange mortal children, instead of taking a mortal child and leaving an elf. In *Hamlet* we have a connection between the witches and the fairies suggested in, 'no fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm',³ and again in *Macbeth* we have—though possibly not from Shakespeare's hand:

And now about the cauldron sing,
 Like elves and fairies in a ring.⁴

The incantation, 'Black spirits and white,' which appears in full in the manuscript of Middleton's *Witch* is very possibly a quotation from a ballad on the witches of St. Osyth's from which Reginald Scot also quotes. That it is a genuine piece of folk belief is shown by a passage in the Irish part of Camden's *Britannia*, in which he quotes a spell from a book written in 1566 by J. Good, a schoolmaster in Limerick, which has apparently been lost.⁵ Shakespeare, however, refuses the suggestion

¹ Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-Lore* (London, 1883), pp. 28–29. A girl told by her father to cover her face when Wild Edric's ride appeared.

² *Henry IV, Part I*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act I, Sc. i, ll. 86–89.

³ *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act I, Sc. i, l. 162.

⁴ *Macbeth*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act IV, Sc. i, ll. 41–42.

⁵ *William Camden, Britannia*. Done into English by Philemon Holland (London, 1610). *Ireland*, pp. 146–7. See Appendix IV, for description of spell.

from Hector Boethius that the three weird sisters were fairies,¹ and makes them hags; whether they be human witches or no it is hard to decide.

We can expect no fairy references in the close-tangled net of Othello; King Lear too, although founded on Celtic legend, with a fairy-story plot, full of snatches of folk-song, references to fairy story and legend, to the Mad Tom tradition, the foul fiend Flibberty Gibbet, the walking fire, the nightmare,² has darker things to deal with than fairy-lore. There is one reference to elf-knotted locks,³ but the gentler fairies are out of place in this wild, primeval world.

In *Cymbeline*, with its pagan setting—a convenience since the word *God* had been lately struck out of the dramatist's vocabulary—we have two types of fairies, the incubus against which Imogen blesses herself in her prayer,⁴ and the gentle female fairies, the Tylwyth Teg of Wales, to whom the outlawed princes commit the keeping of Fidele's tomb.⁵ There is also Arviragus' exclamation, 'but that it eats our victuals',⁶ which shows that the princes share Kirk's opinion that the fairies feed fine by sucking into pure air and spirits, and do not expect such gross appetites as the brownies show. The situation in which the two outlawed brothers are visited by their sister reminds one of the fairy stories of the *Twelve Ravens* type.

In the *Winter's Tale* we have what is often called a fairy-tale, but with no fairy characters nor machinery of magic, beyond Apollo's oracle. The old shepherd is a believer in fairies. Like the Wests' victims, the Moores, he has been told that he shall be rich from the fairies; and his injunction of secrecy is not so much a caution against human jealousy as an observance due to the fairies; he knew it brought bad luck to speak of fairy gifts.⁷

The Tempest is the other play of Shakespeare's in which the fairies take a main part, but they have no plot to themselves. They are spirits raised by a magician and under his command, not the free fairies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ariel indeed

¹ See Appendix III for the various accounts of Macbeth's witches.

² *King Lear*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act III, Sc. iv, ll. 70–71.

³ *Ibid.*, Act II, Sc. iii, l. 9.

⁴ *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act II, Sc. ii, l. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Act IV, Sc. ii, l. 217. ⁶ *Ibid.*, Act III, Sc. vi, l. 40.

⁷ *Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act III, Sc. iii. There is a reference to this belief in Baxter's *Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (1691), p. 46.

is never expressly described as one, and if it were not for the elves and fairies whom he companions and commands he might be taken for a sylph rather than a fairy. Prospero says that he is made of air, and it is impossible to imagine him amorous of a mortal, like Oberon. The fairies were generally supposed to have bodies of a kind, though Kirk describes them as astral and made of condensed air. Devils and angels on the other hand were thought to be pure spirits, having the power of moving and informing matter, but not of combining with it. The elementals, different from both these, are made up purely of one element. Ariel seems rather an elemental than a fairy. He has very little of Puck's independent sense of mischief, but a certain ethereal benevolence, without human emotion. Speaking of Prospero's enemies he says:

That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.

Dost thou think so, spirit?

Mine would, sir, were I human.¹

It is difficult to say why the simplicity and brevity of that reply are so moving. It seems to contain in it the meaning behind all those stories of the Neck and the mermaid and the Scottish fairy who long for human souls,² a sudden sharp reminder of the humanity we lose and insult by silly grudges. The marrow of a hundred fables is in it.

As Ariel is finer than humanity, finer and more etherealized even than the ordinary fairy, so Caliban is grosser. What kind of being he is it is not easy to determine; he seems to have been the child of a human witch and a devil.³ He is scaly and web-fingered, something like a Merrow to look at, but he has no superhuman powers. He is the helpless victim of the smallest of Prospero's fairies; and beyond some straggling memories of his mother's spells and curses, not definite enough for him to be able to put them into effect, all his knowledge is that of the savage—where springs may be found, and shell-fish and earth-nuts. Though he is scaly and smells of fish the land is his element, not the sea. His monstrosity seems to be that of the Anthropo-

¹ *The Tempest*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act V, Sc. i, ll. 18–20.

² Appendix II, No. 41.

³ *The Tempest*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act I, Sc. ii, ll. 319–20.

phagi, or some such creatures of the traveller's imagination; though a gross form of humanity he is at least half human, not a hobgoblin or a devil.

Between these two are the fairies of the island, Ariel's companions. He shares with them a fairy's love of flowers. They are nature fairies, 'elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves'.¹ They seem hardly indigenous to the uninhabited island, for they love the sound of curfew, and make the sour ring where the ewe not bites. In fact they are the nature fairies of an agricultural country with villages within earshot, Warwickshire for instance. The water fairies that play on the beaches are perhaps more native to the place, but Shakespeare, here and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* makes little distinction between the spirits of land and water; and there is often little in folk-lore. Maury points out how often the fairies are connected with wells and streams,² and it is hard to say of some of our native fairies, like the Gwraig of the Three Blows,³ or even of such a prosaic fairy as the Brownie Puddlefoot,⁴ whether they are land or water spirits.

Prospero summoned his fairies, as Sycorax had done, by conjuration; and bound them to his service by some such formula as that preserved by Elias Ashmole in his *Excellent Way to Get a Fayrie*.⁵ Following the usual practice of magicians and animal-tamers of his period he was extremely rude, peremptory and unconciliatory to the spirits he raised, so as to preserve his dominion over them.⁶ By their means he had command over nature, could raise storms, bring down lightning and tear up trees. He had also power over men's senses, so that he could make them imagine themselves wrecked and hear sounds that were not; he could bemuse them and fix them to the spot. His fairies play all the fairy tricks of pinching and laying on of cramps; they mislead like walking fires, and call, invisible. They spread a fairy table and whisk it away again. Though they give no money, either real or illusory, it is possible that the clothes on Prospero's line were given a glamorous brightness. The fairy hunting of Caliban and his confederates somewhat

¹ Ibid., Act V, Sc. i, ll. 33 seq.

² Alfred Maury, *Croyances et légendes du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1896), p. 18.

³ Appendix II, No. 1.

⁴ Appendix II, No. 23.

⁵ Bodleian MS. Ashmole 1406.

⁶ See spells in Appendix IV, especially the conjuration *To a disobedient spirit*.

reminds one of the Devil's Dandy Dogs.¹ Tools though they are to Prospero's purposes the fairies still breathe the same air as blows through *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—a cool, strange sweetness. To both Ariel and Oberon human mortals, however they pity their sorrows, are creatures of another order. Though alien to humanity neither is wicked, nor fears daylight, although moonlight, twilight and early dawn are their natural hours. They haunt 'grove and green, fountain clear and spangled starlit sheen'; they rest among flowers; they can be visible or invisible at will, and, small as they are, distance is nothing to them.

Though Ariel is the only one characterized of the fairies in *The Tempest*, the others do not appear except in disguise, and the whole island tingles with them, an enchantment at once natural and remote. It is as far from the flaccid luxuriance of the enchanted islands in the late French fairy stories as Miranda is from the sophisticated propriety of their heroines.

¹ See Appendix I.

Five

THE FASHION FOR THE MINIATURE

IN the beginning of the Jacobean times a little school of friends among the poets, Drayton, Browne, Herrick and the almost unknown Simon Steward, caught by the deliciousness of Shakespeare's fairies, and coming from counties where the small fairies belonged to the folk tradition, amused themselves and each other by writing fantasies on littleness. Many of these poems existed in manuscript for some time before they were printed, so that it is uncertain who first began the pretty game. Probably they were bandied to and fro, so that the poets themselves could hardly have told whose poems came first. At all events Shakespeare was before them. Drayton's fairy poetry is perhaps the most vigorous of this. There is little of it in comparison with the bulk of his work. Though he was interested in the customs and traditions of his country, the fairy references outside *Nymphidia* and *The Wedding of a Fay* are scattered and slight. His fairies are often combined with the classical nymphs, the fauns and the satyrs. His most frequent mentions of them are as dancers:

And when the Moone doth once appeare,
Weele trace the lower grounds,
When *Fayries* in their Ringlets there
Doe daunce their nightly Rounds.¹

¹ Michael Drayton, *The Quest of Cynthia. Works* (Oxford, 1932), Vol. III, p. 153.

THE FASHION FOR THE MINIATURE

Or as playing barley-break or prisoners base:

NAILS. The Fairies are hopping,
The small Flowers cropping,
And with dew dropping,
Skip thorow the Greaves.

CLOE. At Barly-breake they play
Merrily all the day,
At night themselves they lay
Upon the soft leaves.¹

These last, curiously enough, are daytime fairies.

With his careful antiquarian tastes much of Drayton's folklore was bookish, or at the least corrected by reading; and we cannot help feeling that the original impulse of *Nymphidia* was literary. At the same time Drayton was a countryman, with direct access to country tradition and knowledge, and his native energy was great enough to carry his learning. The *Nymphidia* is a parody of the romances, which owes something to Rabelais and Cervantes; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Mercutio's Queen Mab supply it with its characters and some of its machinery; but it is a vigorous and original piece of work, full of spirit, and sprinkled with direct folk knowledge. One can hardly say that it is impregnated with it, for the machinery and plot are burlesque and sophisticated, it is the interpolations that are traditional and non-literary. The introductory verses strike the burlesque key, with their references to Chaucer's parody of the romances in *Sir Thopas*, to Rabelais and to Drayton's earlier *Dowsabel*, but the second verse suggests also the common pleasure in fairy-tales, and the traditional taste upon which the poem is founded. It is in mock epic style, but behind it are some real memories. Oberon's palace, like Aristophanes' *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, is in the air, belonging to satire rather than to folk-lore; it is neither underground nor across water, as are most of the folk fairylands, and its minute and comical materials are a turn of fancy, not the imaginative realization of a legend.² It is the same kind of fairyland as that in Evelyn de Morgan's *Toy Princess*, where the fairy shopman is paid with the footfalls of

¹ Drayton, *The Muses Elizium. Third Nymphall. Works*, Vol. III, p. 273.

² In the chapbook of *Tom Thumb the Little* (1638) Fairyland is in the air, but this may have a purely literary foundation.

cats, the screams of fish and the songs of swans,¹ that 'lubberland of dream and laughter' where so many Englishmen have wandered since Drayton's days. But when we get from fairyland to the fairies, folk-lore creeps in again, with Queen Mab in her office as nightmare, and the tiny fairies seen by maids as dancing sparks on the hearth, who pinch sluts, and make circles like that into which John Aubrey's Mr. Hart strayed so unfortunately. When the story starts the poem resumes its literary air. The plot is a reminiscence of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, twisted to waggishness. Oberon is given real cause for jealousy, and his dignity is gone. He is no longer the master of magic, but its victim, and the helpless toy of his passions. Queen Mab, though the victor in the contest, is no more dignified than Oberon. It is a court intrigue seen through a minifying glass. Though the fairies in the interpolated descriptions play some part in human affairs, all their traffic in the plot is with each other. They are so minute as to belong to the insect rather than the animal world. In Day's *Parliament of Bees*, the bees have 'Obbron' as their overlord; but he is larger than some of these fairies, or his hunting is on an heroic scale:

Field-musicke? *Obbron* must away;
For us our Gentle Fayries stay.
In the Mountaines and the rocks
Wee'l hunt the Gray and little Foxe,
Who destroy our Lambes at feed
And spoyle the Neasts where Turtles breed.²

Drayton's fairies are smaller even than the elves who crept into an acorn cup, for a cowslip bell is not the refuge of an individual fairy, but a hall to house the Queen, her maids and Pig-wiggen. Their scale is variable, however, for her maids ride a grasshopper; which would be, on that computation, considerably larger than a house, as Queen Mab's coach would be larger than her hall. The description of the Queen's coach is founded on Mercutio's; and though the details are a little different the mood is the same—pretty, fanciful and satyric. The Queen was indeed in the height of fashion to have a coach; and if she must ride in

¹ Evelyn de Morgan, *The Toy Princess*, in *The Enchanted Land* (London, 1906), p. 31.

² John Day, *The Parliament of Bees. The Works of John Day* (London, 1881), Vol. I, p. 76.

so new-fangled an invention it could hardly be made of traditional materials.

Since the Queen is without dignity, her maids could expect to fare no better. Their names are chosen as diminutives. Hop, Mop, Drop, Pip, Trip, Skip, Fib, Tib, Pinch, Pin, Tick, Quick, Jill, Jin, Tit, Nit, Wap and Win, are no generic names, nor connected with any half-forgotten god or spirit, as Titania, Mab, Puck, and Oberon are; but they are names not entirely foreign to folk tradition. Tom Tit Tot, Trwtyn-Tratyn, and such names as Hob, Cob and Lob are not unlike them. Jill, Jin, Win and Tib are all diminutives of human names, but this was a common folk tradition. Ashmole's two fairies were called in a most human way Margaret Barrance and Elaby Gathen.¹ Robin Goodfellow, Billy Blind and Coleman Gray might all be the names of human beings; and whenever the folk imagination had to find a personal name for a fairy it fell back on human diminutives or on a description of attributes or activities, like Whuppity Stoorie or Puddlefoot. Pinch and Pin are of this type. There may however be a double meaning in some of the names. They are discussed at greater length in an article on Drayton's fairies in Vol. III of the *Folk-Lore Journal*.² Here the author suggests that 'Wap' and 'Win' derive from words meaning 'quick' and 'joyous'. Dekker's *O Per Se O*, however, quotes a cant phrase which gives a different turn to the names: 'If she will not wap for a win, let her trine for a make', discreetly translated by Dekker: 'If she will not O per se O for a penny, let her hang for a halfpenny.'³ There is a hint here that the scurrility that marks some of Herrick's fairy poetry is part of a common tradition. But it is no more than a hint, and does not endanger the prettiness of Drayton's fairies.

The maids of honour in the *Nymphidia* have powers as small as their names. Our chief pleasure in them is in seeing the tiny creatures bustling about like real human beings, dropping their microscopic gloves and tearing their almost invisible ruffs, for

¹ See Appendix IV.

² Jabez Allies suggests that many of the place names in Worcestershire show that Drayton's were folk fairy names. Among others he instances Patch Hill, Grimsend, Lulsley, Tib's Hill, Pin's Hill, Dripshill. *Ignis Fatuus, or Will o' the Wisp and the Fairies* (Worcester, 1846).

³ Dekker, *O per se O*. Contained in Judges' *Elizabethan Underworld* (London, 1930), p. 367.

like Keightley's Devonshire fairies they dress in the height of fashion.¹ Their only superhuman power is that of invisibility. Nimphidia, part of the machinery of the poem, is different from others. She has a power of rapid motion which is denied to Oberon, who has to travel as best he can on insects' backs or on his own legs, and her spells are superior to those of the other fairies, so that poor hobgoblin finds his own tricks played upon him.

At hobgoblin's first entry, with his traditional 'Hoh! Hoh! Hoh!', the poem swings for a moment back towards folk-lore.²

This Puck seemes but a dreaming dolt,
Still walking like a ragged Colt,
And oft out of a Bush doth bolt,
Of purpose to deceive us.
And leading us makes us to stray,
Long Winters nights out of the way,
And when we stick in mire and clay
Hob doth with laughter leave us.³

Perhaps after his experiences with Nimphidia Puck never laughed quite as freely again. Two verses later Puck almost quotes Shakespeare:

Thorough Brake, thorough Brier,
Thorough Muck, thorough Mier,
Thorough Water, thorough Fier,
And thus goes Puck about it.⁴

It is more than possible that they are both quoting a folk fairy rhyme, as Shakespeare seems to do in, 'Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,'⁵ and Drayton in

Therewith her Vervayne and her Dill,
That hindreth Witches of their Will.⁶

The relation of Pluto and Proserpine to Drayton's fairy king

¹ See Appendix II, No. 36.

² Aubrey in his *Remaines of Gentilisme* (p. 81) has a note on this. There is also a Suffolk proverb; 'laughing like a Robin Goodfellow'.

³ Drayton, *Nimphidia. Works*, Vol. III, p. 134. ⁴ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 134.

⁵ *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act II, Sc. i, ll. 40-41. Compare with the traditional 'Gin ye ca' me fairy elf', etc.

⁶ Drayton, *Nimphidia. Works*, Vol. III, p. 137;

'Vervein and dill
Hinders witches from their will.'

Aubrey, *Miscellanies* (London, 1890), p. 139

and queen is uncertain. In *King Orfeo* Pluto was Fairy King, in Chaucer Proserpine was Fairy Queen; the first impression one gains in *Nimphidia* is that they were the god and goddess of the fairies, as Hecate was of the witches. Mab's visit to Proserpine and Proserpine's interposition between the combatants suggest, however, that Pluto was their overlord, or perhaps in something the position that the Greek gods held to the nymphs and satyrs.

Whatever Nimphidia's relationship to the infernal gods might be, she set about her charms much as a human enchantress would have done, using fernseed for invisibility, the druid's mistletoe, vervain and dill, to cross Puck's charms, and rue, nightshade and the witches' midnight dew to blight his plans, ants' galls for bitterness and moles' brains to cause blunders. She creeps under a doubly rooted brier as a wishing charm,¹ and her invocation calls on all the usual agents of witchcraft, even the moan of a lubrican, which as one form of hobgoblin, might be thought too closely related to Puck to be effective against him. In this type of magic Drayton parts company with Shakespeare, whose fairies use no black witchcraft.

In the arming of Pigwiggen and the account of the tournament Drayton returns to a parody of the romances. He even retains the oath administered in a trial by battle that the combatants had no magic devices concealed about them. Pigwiggen's squire, Tom Thumb, is the hero of the chapbook, well in place among the little fairies; but Tomalin has dwindled down from Tamlane and Thom a Lynn of the ballads, a strange declension from the wild, haunted wood and the fairy raid by the forest cross. The lightness of the end is spoiled by no catastrophe. Proserpine's cup brings forgetfulness to all the male part of the company, except poor Puck, left in his mudbath, while it allows the Queen and her maids the pleasure of reminiscence. It is to be hoped that Puck was discreet.

The Eighth Nimphall, the wedding of a nymph to a fay, displays the mingling of the classical nymphs and native fairies common in the Jacobean writings; which was not so much a confusion as an historic identification—'the fairies, ye ken', of old Mr. Gibb, quoted by Scott.² It is clear that Drayton con-

¹ This was also used as a curative charm. Mrs. Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk Lore* (Oxford, 1913), p. 241.

² Sir Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, ed. cit., p. 101.

siders the distinction one of size, for Tita is of fairy-like smallness, and therefore fit to be married to a fay. In the same way in folk-lore Tom Thumb and Thumbeline were considered suitable for fairyland because they were tiny. The poem is a lyric dialogue with no narrative, and the pleasure of writing and reading it is a pleasure in daintiness and in the fresh beauties and scents of flowers that it calls up. Tita has jewels made of dew-drops, the stamens of a rose as a crown, a dress woven of flowers, shoes of a ladybird's shell and a canopy of feathers. We know of no real wedding for which the poem was written, but any bride would be pleased with so sweet a prothalamion:

Of leaves of Roses white and red,
Shall be the Covering of her bed:
The Curtaines, Valence, Tester, all,
Shall be the flower Imperiall,
And for the Fringe, it all along
With azure Harebells shall be hung:
Of Lillies shall the Pillowes be,
With downe stuf of the Butterflee.¹

It is a dainty embroidery of a folk theme, but tells us little more of traditional fairies than does Barrie's *Little White Bird*. The folklorists would be perhaps more interested in the marriage customs described in it than in its fairy-lore.

William Browne of Tavistock belonged to the same school of thought as Drayton. They were warm friends, both companions of Ben Jonson and admirers of Spenser, in whose tradition they wrote their pastorals, and both greatly interested in the antiquities of England. Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals* is less ambitious and informative than Drayton's *Polyolbion*, but it has much in common with its spirit. It is a delightful poem, except to anyone who reads it with too earnest a concentration on the story. Something of almost everything can be found in it—political satire, local legends and references, classical allusions, Jacobean conceits, fresh clear-cut pictures of the countryside, descriptions and similes drawn from crafts and country sports; everything but straightforward narrative. The nymphs and swains are always being deserted by the poet in uncomfortable or even dangerous situations, while he pursues the fortunes of another character, or retells some story that strikes his fancy.

¹ Drayton, *The Eighth Nymphall. Works*, Vol. III, p. 312.

So the delicate and charming description of the fairy palace is interspersed with sarcastic references to Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, and told by a melancholy shepherd, whose life the sudden cessation of the poem leaves in the balance. In spite of this strange mixture the poem is unified by the sweet clarity of its music.

Browne's fairyland is more poetic than Drayton's, if less vigorous. Perhaps it is also truer to folk-lore. The fairy palace is set, not satirically in the air, but in the proper traditional fashion, under a hill:

And with that he led
(With such a pace as lovers use to tread
By sleeping parents) by the hand the swain
Unto a pretty seat, near which these twain
By a round little hole had soon descried
A trim feat room, about a fathom wide,
As much in height, and twice as much in length,
Out of the main rock cut by artful strength.
The two-leav'd door was of the mother pearl,
Hinged and nail'd with gold. Full many a girl
Of the sweet fairy ligne, wrought in the loom
That fitted those rich hangings clad the room.¹

This is not, like the Elf King's tower, raised upon pillars; but it is seen through a self-bored stone, as the lassie saw Habitrot's underground house, and like the Elf King's palace, it is jewelled. Browne's fairies spin and 'tossue' as Kirk's did. The furnishings of the banquet seem to belong more to the fairies' out-of-door feasts; the table is a mushroom, covered with a cloth made of white rose petals and set with dishes and glasses made of frozen dew. The courses of the banquet are of insects and small animals, the sort of things the Lilliputians would have had to eat if they had come to this country; a stuffed grasshopper, a roasted ant, bat's pettitoes, a chine of dormouse, and a mouse roasted whole at the end. It is all cooked and served up in the correctest manner, a Jacobean banquet in miniature. The King, dressed in flowers with squirrel-skin boots, talks in a knightly way with his companions of hawking and coursing. They are on a larger scale than Drayton's fairies, for their

¹ *Britannia's Pastorals. Poems of William Browne*, The Muses' Library (London, n.d.), Vol. II, pp. 50-51.

hawks are wagtails, and their coursers mice, squirrels, and even cats. They make Puck's boast of encircling the earth, but with them it is mere hyperbole. Their music is a mixed orchestra of insects and fairies, and the song which the fairy minstrel sings at the end of the feast is the story of Cupid and Psyche, left unfinished, as the poem is broken off, but likely from its leisurely beginning to stretch into quite a respectable evening's entertainment. There is no attempt to suggest the small size of the fairies by the shortened lines which Drayton uses in his fairy songs, Randolph in *Amyntas* and Pope in the Lilliputian verse on *The Man Mountain*. A short passage earlier in the Pastorals gives a description of fairies which follows the folk traditions more exactly, and particularly the Pixy traditions of Browne's native county:

Near to this wood there lay a pleasant mead,
Where fairies often did their measures tread,
Which in the meadow made such circle green,
As if with garlands it had crowned been,
Or like the circle where the signs we track,
And learned shepherds call't the Zodiac:
Within one of these rounds was to be seen
A hillock rise, where oft the fairy-queen
At twilight sat, and did command her elves
To pinch those maids that had not swept their shelves;
And further, if by maidens' oversight
Within doors water were not brought at night;
Of if they spread no table, set no bread,
They should have nips from toe unto the head;
And for the maid that had perform'd each thing,
She in the water-pail bade leave a ring.¹

Elsewhere in his poems Browne makes occasional references to the fairies, though the nymphs are a more usual machinery with him, as with Drayton. It is generally as dancers that they are mentioned, though once he speaks of them as the guardians of flowers:

The nimble fairies by the pale-fac'd moon
Water'd the root and kiss'd her pretty shade.²

¹ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 61.

² *The Visions. Poems of William Browne*, ed. cit., Vol. II, p. 281.

There is no mention of Robin Goodfellow; the satyrs take his place.

Although neither Drayton nor Browne would have written of fairies quite as they did if they had not been countrymen, they owed more to folk-lore in their descriptions of country sports, traditions and customs. This is even more obviously true of their younger contemporary, Robert Herrick. Herrick was by avowed preference a townsman, but his writings are full of zest for country superstitions and festivals; an anthology of poems on folk customs would draw largely on him. As he tells us in the rhymed argument to *The Hesperides*:

I sing of May-poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes,
Of Bride-grooms, Brides, and of their Bridall-cakes.

.....
I write of Groves, of Twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab and of the Fairie-King.¹

The things mentioned in the first couplet are treated with admirable accuracy and truth to folk custom, but the Court of Mab is in the main a literary quiddity. One or two short mentions—'If ye will with Mab find grace,' 'So many goblins will ye see,' 'That lucky fairies here may dance their round,' are true fairy-lore; the longer and more elaborate poems are spun out of conceits, a fairyland at once smaller and grosser than Browne's and Drayton's. An extract from *Oberon's Diet*, the first published of Herrick's fairy poems, is a fair sample:

His kitling eyes begin to runne
Quite through the table, where he spies
The hornes of paperie Butterflies,
Of which he eates, and tastes a little
Of that we call the Cuckoes spittle.
A little Fuz-ball-pudding stands
By, yet not blessed by his hands,
That was too coorse; but then forthwith
He ventures boldly on the pith
Of sugred Rush, and eates the sagge
And well bestrutted Bees sweet bagge:
Gladding his pallat with some store
Of Emits eggs; what wo'd he more?²

¹ *The Poems of Robert Herrick* (Oxford, 1915), p. 5.

² Ibid., p. 119. There is a different and rather shorter version in the Bodleian MS. Ashmole 38.

With the same minuteness he treats the *Beggar's Petition to Queen Mab* and describes Oberon's palace. A curious strain of scurrility which runs through Herrick's verse breaks out occasionally in the fairy poems. To read *To Daffodils*, *Night Piece to Julia*, and *Whenas in Silks*, is to be in a world made of dew and morning freshness; but *The Custard* and *Upon Bland* make us wonder how the same mind that thought of those could fancy these witty. The same type of wit elaborated to minuteness composes the ornament of *Oberon's Palace*.¹ A good deal of folk knowledge of a rather phallic kind has been used in it; and the effect is the more sinister for being small, so that the picture seems crowded with detail.

*The Temple*² shows in the same way a wide knowledge of superstitions and spells rather than fairy-lore. Among them, however, there are a few touches of fairy knowledge. There is a reference to Abbey Lubbers, poltergeists of the Friar Rush type. Like Corbet, Herrick makes the fairies Roman Catholics, and like Chaucer he makes them heathen. He agrees with the magicians of his time about the fairy insistence on purity; but on the whole the fairy part is literary. The saints' names are many of them borrowed from Drayton, unless indeed Drayton borrowed them from Herrick; but for the furniture of the church he drew on his knowledge of superstitions. Apple skins, salt, dry chips and old shoes are all used in divination, fasting spittle has been from time immemorial a protection against witchcraft, and pins are variously used in magic. They were often spat out by those possessed by witches, as well as used in the destruction of waxen images; a horse, too, could be prevented passing a certain spot by a magic pin stuck into the gatepost near it, and in the Irish fairy stories we have a pin of sleep. Some of the idols seem chosen only for their smallness; but the cricket was always a magic creature; in some counties it was a death portent and in some a sign of luck, and the canker worm was thought to be a fairy infliction. The whole poem is, however, against the general trend of folk tradition. Kirk and Giraldus Cambrensis alike declare that the fairies had no public worship, and the stories of the *Neck and the Priest*³ and of the *Fairy and*

¹ *The Poems of Robert Herrick*, ed. cit., pp. 165-8.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 90-93.

³ Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, Translated by J. S. Stallybrass (London, 1883), Vol. II, pp. 493-4.

the Bible Reader confirm this. There are indeed one or two stories of fairy funerals. Hunt's story of the fairies in Lelant Church¹ is late and rather decorated, though *The King of the Cats*² from quite a different part of the country bears it out. There is also a Scandinavian story of a service held by moonlight, which, though it is held by the dead rather than by fairies, is on something the same lines. These stories all have an air of conviction, however, which *The Temple* lacks.

That curious little anthology, *A Description of the King and Queene of Fayries*, published in 1635, which bears witness to the popularity of these toyish poems, includes Sir Simon Steward's *Oberon's Apparell*,³ with some of Herrick's fairy poetry and Burton's poem on melancholy. In this collection, Steward's poem is pleasantly called, 'A Description of the King of Fairies Clothes, brought to him on New Yeares Day in the morning, 1626, by his Queens chambermaids'. Like some of Herrick's poetry it thus combines fairy-lore with folk customs. The poem is on the same lines as Herrick's, and has, like his, some touches of eroticism, which it is tempting to derive from fertility rites associated with fairy worship. But the chief emphasis is on the tininess and lightness. Oberon's shirt is of gossamer, his waistcoat of trout flies' wings, his cap made of the lightness of ladies' love, his shoes of ladybirds' wings. There are a few classical touches; his breeches are made of wool from Jason's golden fleece, woven by Arachne, and his ladies-love cap, trimmed with the tears of fairy-nipped girls, has Nessus' purple hair for a plume. Indeed to the Jacobean all fable is one; they had their own version of comparative mythology. Derivative though the poem may be, it has pleasing touches of its own:

His belt was made of Mirtle leaves
Pleyted in small Curious theaves
Besett with Amber Cowslipp studdes
And fring'd a bout with daysie budds
In which his Bugle horne was hunge
Made of the Babling Echos tongue
Which sett unto his moone-burnt lippes
Hee windes, and then his fayries skipps.
Att that the lazie Duoane gan sounde
And each did trip a fayrie Rounde

¹ See Appendix II, No. 17.

² See Appendix II, No. 12.

³ Ascribed to him in Bod. MS. Ashmole 38, p. 100, from which I quote.

The 'moon-burned lip' is delightful; and in spite of the minuteness of the fancy certain flashes of scent and sight illuminate the poem.

The Sports of the Fairies, to be found in the Bodleian manuscript, Ashmole 36-37, is a work of the same kind, though its metrical style is different from any of the poems I have quoted. The fairies are again of small size:

It gamme to rayne, the kinge and Queene they runne
Under a mushroom fretted over head
With Glowwormes, Artificially doune,
Resemblinge much the canopy of a bedd
Of cloth of silver: and such glimmeringe light
It gave, as stars doe in a frosty night.¹

These fairies are more metallurgical than the others; the floor beneath their mushroom is of jet and mother-of-pearl, their table is a diamond, and their room is lit with a carbuncle. It will be remembered that in *Childe Roland* the Elf King's palace was lit by jewels. They have a vegetable, not an insect diet, honey, a grain of wheat, and juice squeezed from a grape for wine.

The Duchess of Newcastle continued on the same lines with great good will, but with even less of genuine folk tradition. She was not ignorant of the traditional activities of the fairies, but her writings give the impression that her knowledge was gained from literature. Once, certainly she describes the real, homely, household fairy, such as her nurse's tales may have made familiar to her, but by the time she wrote they were familiar to literature as well. Still, for this once she strikes the true note:

There is no *Spirit* frights me so much, as *Poets Satyrs*, and their *Faery Wits*; which are so *subtle*, *aiery* and *nimble*, as they passe through every small *Crevice*, and *Cranie* of *Errours*, and *Mistakes*, and dance upon every *Line* and round every *Fancy*; which when they find to be *dull* and *sleepy*, they pinch them *black* and *blew*, with *Robbin-hoods Jest*s. But I hope you will spare me: for the *Harth* is swept cleane, and a *Bason* of water with a *cleane Towell* set by, and the *Ashes* rak'd up; wherefore let my *Book* sleep quietly, and the *Watch-light* burning clearly, and not *blew*, and *Blinkingly*, nor the *Pots* and *Pans* be disturbed; but let it be still from your noise, that

¹ Bod. MS. Ashmole 36-37, No. 58, p. 47.

Effeminate Cat may not *Meow*, nor the *Masculine Curs* bark, nor *houle* forth Railings to disturb my *harmlesse Bookes* rest.¹

Beyond this passage the Duchess seemed chiefly impressed by the small size of the fairies. She would have agreed with the Oxford Dictionary about their diminutiveness,² although she would not have described them as supernatural, since her chief line of argument in defending her belief in fairies was that they are more natural than witches or spirits:

I wonder any should laugh, or think it ridiculous to heare of *Fairies*, and yet verily beleeeve there are spirits: which spirits can have no description, because no dimension: And of *Witches*, which are said to change themselves into severall formes, and then to returne into their first forme againe ordinarily, which is altogether against nature: yet laugh at the report of *Fairies*, as impossible; which are onely small bodies, not subject to our sense, although it be to our reason. For Nature can as well make small bodies, as great, and thin bodies as well as thicke.³

Here she leaves no characteristic for the fairies except their smallness, a quality which only belongs to a few of them. She has several fairy poems, *The Fairy Queen*; *The Pastime and Recreation of the Queene of Fairies in Fairyland, the Center of the Earth*; *The Pastime of the Queen of Fairies when she Comes upon Earth out of the Center, and her Descending*; but they are full of echoes. Hobgoblin's feats are repeated from Shakespeare, the rest are Herrick and Drayton. In the most characteristic of poems, *Of the Small Creatures, such as we Call Fairies*, in which she gives free play to her fancy, she outdoes the greatest minimizer of them all, and makes her fairies as small as microbes:

Who knowes, but in the *Braine* may dwell
Little small *Fairies*; who can tell?
And by their severall actions they may make
Those *formes* and *figures*, we for fancy take.
And when we sleep, those *Visions, dreames* we call,
By *their* industry may be raised all;

¹ Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, *Poems and Fancies* (London, 1653), p. 121.

² The definition of *The Oxford Dictionary*: 'Supernatural beings of diminutive size, in popular belief supposed to possess magical powers and to have great influence both for good and evil over the affairs of men.'

³ The Duchess of Newcastle, *Poems and Fancies*, ed. cit., Aa 2 (before p. 141).

THE FASHION FOR THE MINIATURE

And all the *objects*, which through *senses* get,
Within the *Braine* they may in order set.
And some pack up, as *Merchants* do each thing,
Which out sometimes may to the *Memory* bring.
Thus, besides our owne *imaginationes*,
Fairies in our *braine* beget *inventions*.
If so, the *eye's* the *sea* they traffick in,
And on *salt watry teares* their ship doth swim.
But if a *teare* doth breake, as it doth fall,
Or wip'd away, they may a *shipwrack* call.¹

The minimizer can go no further; the elves have lost the last of their powers.

¹ Ibid., p. 162.

Six

HOBGOBLINS AND DEVILS

OF all the types of fairy, Hobgoblin and his kind seem to have been dearest to the Jacobeans. They followed tradition more faithfully in their hobgoblin stories than they did in dealing either with the heroic or the small fairies; though here too the classical tradition crept in, with the satyrs, who were given Puck's characteristics, and the Incubus, who was often connected with Robin Goodfellow. Different though the airy Puck of *Midsummer Night's Dream* is from the wicked human or half-human Robin Goodfellow of *Wily Beguilde*, the difference truly represents varying strains of folk tradition. The hobgoblins, brownies and pucks of folk-lore were variously regarded as ghosts, simple-minded devils, kindly domestic fairies and mischievous but harmless spirits and even, occasionally, human beings who had been carried off by the fairies. It seems likely that the kindly feeling had survived from pre-Christian times, and the ghost belief may have been a survival of primitive ancestor worship, reinforced by psychic phenomena. The devil theory was that taught by the church.

The Jacobeans did not often make their hobgoblins ghosts outright; though it must be noticed that ghosts and goblins are often mentioned together, as in Herrick's *Night Piece to Julia*, or Ben Jonson's:

from a *Gypsie* in the morninge,
Or a paire of squint-eyes toninge,

from the *Goblin* and the spectre,
Or a drunckard though with nectar.¹

The connection is even clearer in Day's *Law Tricks*, where the page, visiting a tomb at midnight, conjures away spirits:

Graunt that no Hobgoblins fright me,
No hungrie devils rise up and bite me;
No Urchins, Elves or drunkards Ghoasts
Shove me against walles or postes.
O graunt I may no black thing touch,
Though many men love to meete such.²

As a rule, however, the character of the hobgoblins is that described in *Robin Goodfellow's Mad Prankes and Merry Jestes*, quoted in Chapter Three. Often there is a compromise between regarding him as a fairy and as a devil, as in Rowland's *More Knaves Yet*:

Amongst the rest, was a good fellow devill,
So called in kindness, cause he did no evill,
Knowne by the name of Robin (as we heare)
And that his eyes as bigge as sawcers were,
Who came a nights, and would make Kitchins cleane
And in the bed bepinch a lazie queane.
Was much in Milles about the grinding Meale,
(And sure I take it, taught the Miller steale,)
Amongst the creame bowles, and milke pans would be,
And with the country wenches, who but hee.
To wash their Dishes for some fresh-cheese hier:
Or set their Pots and Kettles bout the fier.³

Warner, in his *Albion's England*,⁴ goes further, for his Robin Goodfellow is a devil outright, who does no good, but gets the housewives up in their sleep to do the work for which he gets the credit.

Ho ho ho ho, needs must I laugh such fooleries to name:
And at my crummed messe of Milke each night, from Maid or Dame

¹ Ben Jonson, *The Gipsies Metamorphos'd*. Ben Jonson (Oxford, 1941), Vol. VII, p. 610, ll. 129-32.

² John Day, *Law Tricks*, Act V. *Works* (London, 1881), Vol. II, p. 70.

³ Rowland, *More Knaves Yet*. *The Knave of Spades*. Hunterian Club, No. XXII (Edinburgh, 1874), p. 40.

⁴ William Warner, *Albion's England* (1602), *A Continuance* (1606), Booke 14, Chapter 91, p. 368.

To do their chares, as they supposd, when in their deadeest sleepe
I puld them out their beds, & made themselves their houses sweepe.
How clatterd I amongst their Pots and Pans, as dreamed they?
My Hempen Hampen Sentence, when some tender foole would lay
Me shirt or slop, them greeved, for I then would go away.¹

Few of the writers were so unkind to Robin's pretensions as this; but Warner was a thorough Puritan, and he agreed with Corbet that the fairies were of the old profession. Several of the plays, however, follow the tradition of *Friar Rush*, *Tops and Bottoms*,² and such homely stories of outwitted devils, some of them no doubt descendants or relations of the Vices in the morality plays. This kind of treatment does not belong exclusively to Jacobean plays, but was as common in Elizabethan times. The date of *Grim the Collier of Croydon* is uncertain, as it was not published until 1664, but its type of rhyme suggests that it was written before the end of the sixteenth century. Its rhyme may have been intentionally archaic, however, to suggest a mummers' play. *The Merry Devill of Edmonton* is certainly Elizabethan; but the Jacobean *Wily Begulde*, a kind of rationalized fairy-tale, is in the same tradition, and so is Ben Jonson's *The Divill is an Ass*, with its wistful and bewildered little devil. Most of the writers must have been familiar with the *Legend of Friar Rush*,³ originally a Danish folk story, but well known in this country in chap-book form. In this story Satan, wishing to damn the souls of an abbey of monks, sends up a devil in human form to work among them and entice them to evil. So long as he remains in the abbey, and faithfully tempts the monks to gluttony, wantonness and quarrelling, Friar Rush maintains his diabolical character; but when he is detected and sent out into the world he becomes a hobgoblin, serving his master dutifully and at a tremendous speed, and playing tricks upon a wanton priest who is courting his mistress. He even advises one master how a devil can be cast out of his daughter—quite the wrong thing for a devil to do. In consequence of this act of kindness he is conjured by an exorciser into his proper form, and banished into an old castle. Another legend makes him a Will-o'-the Wisp. This passed into English folk-lore, and is referred to in Milton's *L'Allegro*:

¹ Ibid.

² See Appendix II, No. 11.

³ Reprinted in Thoms, *Early English Prose Romances*, p. 411

She was pincht, and pull'd she sed,
And he by Friars Lanthorn led.¹

Dekker uses the first part of this story in *If It Be not Good the Devil is in It*, but the devil remains a devil throughout.

Pug, in *The Divell is an Ass*,² is an even less effectual agent of evil, though he is incompetent rather than kindly. It is difficult not to feel a certain affection for this sad and innocent little devil, so eager to perform some prodigy of wickedness, so easily deceived by human trickery, so crestfallen and discomfited in the end. This is no fallen angel, but a boggart, dobie or bwbach, a devil of the same kind as that tricked by the Shropshire farmer in *Tops and Bottoms*, with his innocent cry of, 'When do we wiffle-waffle, mate?'³ Even Pug's name is taken from the same root that gave us Puck or Pixie. Another strain from which these comic and ineffectual devils may have derived is shown in this play by the direct introduction of the old Vice of the Moralities, whose leaping and ranting rouse Pug's simple admiration.

PUG.

O Chiefe!

You doe not know, deare Chiefe, what there is in mee.
Prove me but for a fortnight, for a weeke,
And lend mee but a Vice, to carry with mee,
To practice there, with any play-fellow,
And you will see, there will more come upon't,
Then you'll imagine, pretious Chiefe.

SATAN.

What Vice?

What kind wouldst th' have it of?

PUG.

Why, any, *Fraud*;

Or *Covetousnesse*; or Lady *Vanity*;
Or old *Iniquity*: I'll call him hither.

INIQUITY. What is he, calls upon me, and would seeme to lack a Vice?

Ere his words be halfe spoken, I am with him in a trice;
Here, there, and every where, as the Cat is with the mice:
True *vetus Iniquitas*. Lack'st thou Cards, friend, or Dice?
I will teach thee (to) cheate, Child, to cog, lye, and swagger,
And ever and anon, to be drawing forth thy dagger:
To sweare by Gogs-nowes, like a lusty *Iuventus*,
In a cloake to thy heele, and a hat like a pent-house,
Thy breeches of three fingers, and thy doublet all belly,
With a Wench that shall feede thee, with cock-stones and gelly.

¹ *The Poetical Works of John Milton* (Oxford, 1912). *L'Allegro*, ll. 163-4.

² *Ben Jonson*, ed. cit., Vol. VI.

³ Appendix II, No. 11.

PUG. Is it not excellent, Chiefe? how nimble he is!

INIQUITY. Child of Hell, this is nothing! I will fetch thee a leape

From the top of *Pauls-steeple* to the Standard in *Cheepe*:
And lead thee a daunce, through the streets without faile,
Like a needle of *Spaine*, with a thred at my tayle.
We will survey the *Suburbs*, and make forth our sallyes,
Downe *Petticoate-lane*, and up the *Smock-allies*,
To *Shoreditch*, *Whitechappell*, and so to Saint *Kathernes*,
To drinke with the *Dutch* there, and take forth their patternes:
From thence, wee will put in at *Custom-house* key there,
And see, how the Factors, and Prentizes play there,
False with their Masters; and gueld many a full packe,
To spend it in pies, at the *Dagger*, and the *Wool-sacke*.

PUG. Brave, brave *Iniquity*! will not this doe, Chiefe?¹

The devil however entirely rejects Iniquity as altogether too old-fashioned for the year sixteen hundred and sixteen. Pug has to work as best he can, alone, and Iniquity does not appear again until the last act, when he comes to carry the discomfited little devil back to Hell again, reversing, as he points out, the usual procedure in the mummers' plays.

Mount, darling of darkenesse, my shoulders are broad:
He that caries the fiend, is sure of his load.
The *Divell* was wont to carry away the evill;
But, now, the Evill out-carries the *Divell*.²

The devils in *Grim the Collier of Croydon* are innocent even in intention; their errand is one of pure justice, and they are sent on it not by Satan but by Rhadamanthus, to discover the amount of blame to be attached to a spirit who pleaded that his wife's conduct drove him to suicide. The main idea of the Belphegor plot is founded on Machiavelli's novel of Belphegor,³ but Robin Goodfellow is thoroughly English. Belphegor's wife proves, of course, too much for him. He is tricked into marrying the wrong woman, then he is horned and poisoned; but his attendant devil, Robin Goodfellow, is more fortunate. After some rough treatment at his mistress's hands he runs away; and in the wood, at Holyrood nutting time, he interests himself in the love affair

¹ *The Divell is an Asse*, Act I, Sc. i. *Ben Jonson*, Vol. VI (Oxford, 1938), pp. 165-6.

² *Ibid.*, Act V, Sc. vi, p. 262.

³ Machiavelli, *The Marriage of Belphegor. The Works of the Famous Nicholas Machiavelli* (London, 1675), p. 524. Motif (T.251.1.1).

of an honest collier. Like the true Robin Goodfellow he is on the side of justice; and he invisibly beats the friar who is trying to trick the lovers. In the end he appears to the bridal pair to share their mess of cream. The whole passage is in the real Robin Goodfellow vein:

What, is my brother Grim so good a fellow.
I love a mess of cream as well as they;
I think it were best I stepp'd in and made one.
Ho, ho, ho, my masters! No good fellowship!
Is Robin Goodfellow a bugbear grown,
(Robin falleth to eat)

That he is not worthy to be bid sit down?

GRIM. O Lord, save us! Sure, he is some country-devil;
He hath got a russet coat upon his face.

SHORTHOUSE. Now *benedicite!* who is this?
I take him for some fiend, i-wis;
O, for some holy water here
Of this same place this spirit to clear!¹

Later in the same scene Robin says:

This half year have I liv'd about this town,
Helping poor servants to despatch their work,
To brew and bake, and other husbandry.
Tut, fear not maid; if Grim be merry,
I will make up the match between ye.—

and a little later Grim says: 'Master Robert, you were ever one of the honestest merry devils that ever I saw.'

The careful description in Act IV of Robin Goodfellow's clothes: 'Enter Robin Goodfellow, in a suit of leather close to his body; his face and hands coloured russet-colour, with a flail', makes it seem probable that Robin Goodfellow had at this time some part in the mummers' play. This probability is strengthened by the mention in *Wily Beguilde* of Robin Goodfellow's calf-skin disguise:

Well, lets go drinke together;
And then Ile go put on my divelish roabes—
I meane my Christmas Calves skin sute,

¹ *Grim the Collier of Croydon*, Act V, Sc. i. Dodsley's *Old English Plays*, ed. by Carew Hazlitt (London, 1874), Vol. VIII, pp. 459–60. The speech recalls the story of the Brownies and the Junket. Appendix II, No. 39.

And then walke to the woodes,
O Ile terrifie him I warrant ye.¹

It is possible that Robin Goodfellow in a calf-skin suit may have taken the part of the man sweeping the floor with a broom, who is still one of the characters in many of the traditional mummers' plays. This would explain Puck's appearance with a broom before the fairies' epithalamion in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Bastard Falconbridge's taunt to Austria may be a reference to the calf-skin worn by a comic character among the mummers.² The whole play of *Grim the Collier* resounds with echoes of the mumming plays, particularly in such couplets as,

Miller, miller, dustipoll,
I'll clapper-claw your jobbermole.³

The type of rhyme in the sub-plot, the characters,⁴ the fighting and the situation, suggest that the Doctor and Devil in the main plot have reminded the author of a mummers' play, and that he has introduced it, almost unchanged, as a popular embroidery of his main theme.

The play of *Wily Beguilde* is particularly interesting because it is a rationalized fairy-tale. Mother Midnight, Will Cricket, Robin Goodfellow and Fortunatus are all names that should belong to fairy-tales, but in the play they are all the names of mortals. Robin Goodfellow describes himself as a promoter, and seems to be a kind of rascally attorney; but at the same time there is through the play some suggestion of the supernatural about his character. After meeting Will Cricket he says:

Mass, the fellow was afraid.
I play the Bugbeare wheresoere I come,
And make them al afraid.⁵

¹ *Wily Beguilde*, Malone Society Reprint (1912), p. 39.

² 'In the Hebrides at the Hallowe'en festival, a youth is dressed up in a cow's hide, in which he parades the village, bringing a blessing to every house where anyone inside or any animal inhales the fumes of a piece of burning hide carried by him.' Eleanor Hull, *Folk Lore of the British Islands*, p. 235.

³ *Grim the Collier of Croydon*, ed. cit., Act IV, Sc. i, p. 446.

⁴ The Miller, the Friar and the Sooty Collier are characters much used in folk-song, game and play. The collier's black face would give him, like the sweep's, a special part in the May Games.

⁵ *Wily Beguilde*, ed. cit., p. 18.

This is rather reminiscent of the lines in *The Little French Lawyer*:

THE LITTLE FRENCH LAWYER. You walk like Robin-good-fellow
all the house over,
And every man is afraid of you.¹

He disguises himself as a devil, and tries without success to frighten Fortunatus; but in spite of his failure there is some supernatural flavour in his account of his ancestry, though the author's satiric intention is evident:

By birth I am a boatewritesson of Hull,
My father got me of a refus' hagge,
Under the olde ruines of Boobie's barne,
Who as she liv'd, at lengthe she likewise died,
And for her good deedes went unto the Divell.
But, Hell not wont to harbour such a guest,
Her fellow fiends do daieily make complaint
Unto grim *Pluto* and his lovely Queene
Of her unruly misbehaviour;
Intreating that a passport might be drawne
For her to wander till the day of doome,
On earth againe to vex the mindes of men,
And swore she was the fittest fiend in Hell
To drive men to desperation.
To this intent her passport straight was drawne,
And in a whirle wind forth of Hell she came:
Ore hills she hurles, and scowres along the plaines;
The trees flew up bith rootes, the earth did quake for feare.
The houses tumble downe, she playes the Divell and all:
At length, not finding anyone so fit
To effect her divelish charge as I;
She comes to me, as to her onely childe,
And me her instrument on earth she made:
And by her meanes I learned this divellish trade.²

Later, Sophas says:

Sure hees no man, but an incarnate divel,
Whose ougry shape bewrayes his monstrous mind.³

Though Robin Goodfellow is euhemerized in this play, it

¹ John Fletcher, *The Little French Lawyer*, Act III, Sc. i. *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* (Cambridge, 1906), Vol. III, p. 421.

² *Wily Beguilde*, ed. cit., p. 60.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

yet remains the extreme example of his treatment as a devil, for he is a more disagreeable character than even the devil in many of the folk stories. The play is also an example of the common use of Robin Goodfellow as a vehicle of satire. One sees it in such works as *Tarlton's News Out of Purgatorie*,¹ and *The Cobbler of Canterburie*.² A satiric poem in one of the Ashmolean manuscripts is even nearer to *Wily Beguilde* in mood, for though Robin Goodfellow is described in it as a devil he is evidently intended to be taken as a man, and indeed the poem is probably a comic version of an actual incident. The whole poem is unsavoury enough, but there is a certain vigour about its beginning:

Listen good freinds to what I tell
of a strange thing that late befell
Robin eclyped Imp of Hell
or divell.

At Ale house he each night would keepe
when honest fo'ks were fast asleepe
and ledd a life (which makes me weepe)
uncivill.³

Another reference to actual events is enshrined in a broadside ballad, which touches on the common cozenage of the fairy queen. According to this Robin Goodfellow was once a human being like Thomas the Rhymer, and was received into the fairy company after being gulled by them. This is the nearest we come to a contemporary confirmation of Dr. Margaret Murray's thesis that the fairies were a heathen remnant in the country.

Of Robin Goodfellow also
Which was a servant long agoe,
The Queen of Fairies doth it know,
and hindered him in fashion.
She knew not what she did her selfe,
She chang'd him like a Fairie elfe,
For all his money, goods, and pelfe,
she gull'd him.⁴

The Merry Devill of Edmonton is rather a story of magic than of fairies. It is one of the examples, fairly common in Jacobean

¹ London, 1590. ² London, 1590. ³ Bod. MS. Ashmole 36-37, No. 317, p. 306.

⁴ Broadside Ballad, *A Monstrous Shape*. Printed for Thomas Lambert (London, 1640).

drama, of the sympathetic treatment of magic. The plot is the Dule upon Dun theme of Satan outwitted. Peter Fabell does not command fairies of Ariel's type, but his devils are more hobgoblins than demons. This might be a description of the boggy beast:

Ile make my spirits to dance such nightly Jigs
 Along the way twixt this and Totnam crosse,
 The Carriers Jades shall cast their heavie packs,
 And the strong hedges scarce shall keepe them in:
 The Milke-maides Cuts shall turne the wenches off,
 And lay the Dossers tumbling in the dust:
 The franke and merry London prentises,
 That come for creame and lusty country cheere,
 Shall lose their way; and, scrambling in the ditches,
 All night shall whoop and hollow, cry and call,
 Yet none to other finde the way at all.¹

They are Paracelsian imps, so often referred to by the learned writers on witchcraft.

Ile send me fellowes of a handful hie
 Into the Cloysters where the Nuns frequent,
 Shall make them skip like Does about the Dale.²

In the pretty rhyme of the exorcism the elves and fairies are included with the devils:

I cast my holy water pure
 On this wall and on this doore,
 That from evill shall defend,
 And keepe you from the ugly fiend:
 Evill spirit, by night nor day,
 Shall approach or come this way;
 Elfe nor Fary, by this grace,
 Day nor night shall haunt this place.³

Puck Hairy, the witch's familiar, in *The Sad Shepherd* is another of the diabolical hobgoblins. In spite of his name he counts himself more a devil than a Puck, for he says:

'I must goe daunce about the Forrest, now,
 And firke it like a Goblin, till I find her,'⁴

¹ *The Merry Devill of Edmonton*, ed. A. Abrams (Durham, North Carolina), Act I, Sc. i, pp. 125-6.

² *Ibid.*, Act II, Sc. ii, p. 133.

³ *Ibid.*, Act III, Sc. ii, p. 164.

⁴ Ben Jonson, *The Sad Shepherd*, ed. cit., Vol. VII. Act III, Sc. i.

and he would hardly compare himself to a goblin if he was one. This confusion continued through the century, and it was rather perhaps that the goblin became a devil than that the devil became a goblin. An example of this folk devil, complete with his cloven hoof and his whistling, indistinct speech, is found in Alexander Roberts' *Treatise upon Witchcraft*:

Yet (which is the opinion of many learned) he cannot so perfectly represent the fashion of a man's body, but that there is some sensible deformity, by which hee bewrayeth himselfe; as his feete like those of an Ox, a Horse, or some other beasts, cloven hooved, his hands crooked, armed with clawes or talants like a vulture: or some one mis-shapen part . . . And as in his body assumed, so in his speech there is defect, for it is weake, small, whispering, imperfect.¹

¹ Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (London, 1616), p. 33.

Seven

THE COUNTRY FAIRIES IN
MASQUES, PLAYS AND POETRY

IT was natural that the masque writers, in their search for themes, should turn to folk-lore. Artificial though the masque was in its full Jacobean form, a mere flower upon the revelry of the court, it yet had its roots in folk customs. Chambers finds its origins in the 'guisers' who yet remain in the Scottish Hallowe'en celebrations;¹ though dwindled down now to a few boys in 'false faces', who ring at the doors, sing what songs they know, and ask for nuts or money. The beginning of the anti-masque is suggested by such songs as the early carol *Holly shall have the Mastery*;² which makes it seem probable that the whole form of the masque arose from the dramatized contest between the forces of death and life at the mid-winter solstice. The court no less than the country was the repository of a good deal of folk custom; for the court ceremonial embalmed many usages which would otherwise have died, though the bookishness of the courtiers might re-dress them in almost unrecognizable disguises. Whenever there is an institution which passes with unbroken continuity from one generation to another, whether it is the cultivation of a farm, the conduct of a university or the ceremonial of a court, it is sure to preserve usages of which the original meaning has been almost forgotten; and these are the very stuff of folk-lore.

¹ E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), Vol. I, p. 150.

² Contained in E. K. Chambers' *Early English Lyrics*.

The masque is an extreme example of this sophistication of a folk tradition. Nothing at first sight could be more artificial, yet it supplied a real need, the formalized expression of reverential feeling. We are likely to feel the masques more artificial than they were, and the compliments in them more adulatory, because it is hard for us now to realize the deep respect in which monarchy was held in those days. The social degrees had at that time a religious sanction which we can now only apprehend intellectually, not emotionally. That emotion, however, was the only one to which the masque proper could allow full scope; all passions were by their nature excluded, for they would dwarf the main subject. When Milton made his burning love of chastity the central focus of *Comus*, he magnificently transcended the limitations of the masque, and killed its ceremonial intention. Therefore when the poets looked for subjects suitable to their medium they had to find either those in which the emotion contributed to the main object, as patriotic feeling or personal love of the sovereign would do, or those which contained no real emotion, and merely gave a pleasant titillation to the fancy. Classical mythology, which was folk-lore with its sting drawn and pleasant associations of culture and leisure added, was the most obvious source of subjects, and consequently was the most used by the masque writers; but classical mythology, pleasant as it was, was beginning to grow a little hackneyed, and fairy-lore also had lost its sting. That Ben Jonson used witchcraft so wholeheartedly in *The Masque of Queens* seems to me a sign that, though he may have given an intellectual assent to the belief in it, it had no emotional significance for him.

Already in Queen Elizabeth's reign the pageants and receptions given in her honour had foreshadowed the masques, and had used classical myths, fairy-lore and country customs in the same proportions as the masque writers were to do later. The best known of the fairy poems used in this way is Churchyard's *Handful of Gladsome Verses given to the Queen's Majesty at Woodstock, this Progress 1592*. In his pedestrian jog-trot Churchyard gives an accurate account of the country folk fairies. For him, too, hobgoblins and ghosts have a close connection:

Of old *Hobgoblins* guise
That walkt like ghost in sheetes,
With maides that would not early rise
For feare of Bugs and spreets.

His fairies are dancers like the general run of fairies, and one line rises almost to a suggestion of Ariel.

Some say the fayries faire
Did dance in bednall greene:
And fine familiars of the aire
Did talke with men unseene.

He mentions Hodgepoke as a carousing spirit, and talks of the tumbling down of dishes and platters by 'a mirrie mate' in houses where late hours are kept: and he introduces Robin Goodfellow in his true fairy character as a skimmer of milk bowls:

A further sport fell out,
When they to spoile did fall:
Rude Robin good fellow, the lowt,
Would skime the milke bowls all.¹

Ben Jonson's *Entertainment at Althorpe* in 1603 was a happy extension of this. In it the satyr takes the place of Robin Goodfellow, but he is essentially the same, for the fairies call him Pug, and the fairies whom he teases are the real folk fairies:

Satyre

This is MAB, the mistris-Faerie,
That doth nightly rob the dayrie;
And can hurt, or helpe the churning,
(As shee please) without discerning.

ELFE. PUG, you will anon take warning?

Shee, that pinches countrey wenches
If they rub not cleane their benches,
And with sharper nayles remembers,
When they rake not up their embers:
But if so they chance to feast her,
In their shooe shee drops a tester.

ELFE. Shall we strip the skipping jester?

This is shee, that empties cradles,
Takes out children, puts in ladles:
Traynes forth mid-wives in their slumber,
With a sive the holes to number.
And then leads them, from her borroughs,
Home through ponds, and water furrowes.²

¹ Thomas Churchyard, *A Handefull of Gladsome Verses. Given to the Queene Majesty at Woodstocke this prograce* (London, 1592). Reprinted in *Fugitive Tracts in Verse* (London, 1875). See Appendix II, No. 39.

² Ben Jonson, *Entertainment at Althorpe*, ed. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 122-3.

Finally the fairies drive the satyr away by pinching:

Fayries, pinch him black and blue,
Now you have him make him rue,

and after a song and dance they present the Queen with a gift, cautioning her in the traditional way not to reveal it:

Utter not; we you implore,
Who did give it, nor wherefore,
And when ever you restore
Your selfe to us, you shall have more.

Love Restored, first published in 1616, introduces Robin Goodfellow himself in his proper character and costume: 'ROBIN good-fellow, hee that sweepes the harth, and the house cleane, riddles for the countrey maides, and does all their other drudgerie, while they are at hot-cocles.'¹ He has the fairy body, which can receive blows without injury, though he is too gross to come in through a keyhole or cracked window pane, but must come in at a door. Like all the fairies, he is a shape-shifter; he had vainly tried various disguises to get into the court, and was at length forced to come in his own proper shape as part of the show: 'In this despaire, when all invention, and translation too, fayl'd me, I eene went backe, and stucke to this shape you see me in, of mine owne, with my broome, and my candles, and came on confidently, giving out, I was a part o' the device.'² The broom is here again used as part of Robin Goodfellow's equipment.

Oberon the Fairy Prince, the masque written for Prince Henry to take part in, is more literary than traditional in its treatment of the fairies; the chief masquers are satyrs and sylvans, and though the female masquers are fays, they dissociate themselves from

the course, and countrey *Faery*,
That doth haunt the harth, or dairy.³

The Fairy Prince, Oberon, is subordinate to King Arthur. The satyrs' song,³ which has passed into nursery rhyme, is the only thing in the masque that strikes the folk-song note, though the whole is full of pleasing lines. In *Pan's Anniversary* the fairies

¹ *Love Restored*, ed. cit., Vol. VII, p. 378.

² *Ibid.*, p. 381.

³ Ben Jonson, *Oberon the Faery Prince*, ed. cit., Vol. VII, p. 355.

and nymphs are mingled together in the same way; and in *The Gipsies Metamorphos'd* there are two fairy references, one in the song, 'The faery beame uppon you,'¹ and the other: 'The finest olive-colour'd sprities, they have so danc'd and gingled here, as if they had beene a sett of over-grown flayeries',² which is a reference both to the fairies as dancers and to their small size.

In a letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* of January 26th, 1951 Miss Margaret Dean-Smith emphasizes the folk elements in the anti-masque, and particularly in *The Masque of the Twelve Months*, produced in the year 1611-12, which she ascribes to Chapman.³ The fairies in this masque are something after the style of Ben Jonson's fairies.

Enter MADG HOWLET, hooting, going up towards the KING. *After*
whome follows PIGWIGGEN, a FAIRY calling to her.

FIG. You, myne hostesse of the Ivie bushe! What make ye hooting
in theis walkes?

HOW. What? Lady Pigwiggen, th'only snoutfaire of the fairies. A my
word, hadst thou not spoken like a maid, I had snatcht thee up
for a mouse.⁴

The fairy references in the other masques are not frequent until we come to *Comus*. In Marston's *Mountebanks Masque*, which is in many ways reminiscent of a folk play, we have one, among the mountebanks' list of ills, that he could cure:

If lustie Doll, maide of the Dairie
Chance to be blew-nipt by the Fairie.⁵

Browne's *Masque of the Inner Temple* introduces the sirens, but they are carefully classical in dress and character, and bear little resemblance to our native water fairies. The mermaids in his poems are nearer to native tradition.

Most of the masque writers preferred the more conventional nymphs, satyrs, gods and personifications to the fairies and the country customs. Where Jonson's weighty mind did not supply it with ballast the masque carried as a rule too light a cargo for

¹ Ben Jonson, *The Gipsies Metamorphos'd*, ed. cit., Vol. VII, p. 573.

² Ibid., p. 589.

³ Published in P. Cunningham's *Inigo Jones. A Life of the Architect* (London, 1848).

⁴ Ibid., p. 137.

⁵ Ibid., p. 114.

its top-heavy trimming, and became a mere vehicle for display. In *Comus*, however, Milton reduced the machinery and enormously increased the content; in fact he poured into it poetry so strong that he burst the frail mould. *Comus* is neither quite a masque nor a pastoral interlude, though it is inspired by both forms. Perhaps it is lifted above the tension of drama by the power of its ethical feeling; we never feel the Lady in essential danger, for we are never allowed to doubt the dominance of her integrity. There is some fear for her physical safety, but even that is not acute, for Milton's evil beings are subtle and delicate creations, rather studies of the first steps into sin by which a noble creature perverts itself into a wicked one than full portraits of evil in its hideous flower. *Comus* is an airy and poetic enchanter, intellectually sinister; his home is in the wild woodland, and the sweets of nature are still sweet to him. He has not yet pulled down on himself the arid curse of boredom and zestlessness. He loves to see, if he does not companion, the 'pert Fairies and the dapper Elves'.¹ His rout are grosser, with their hideous and confused noise, their unsuspected, foul deformity; against them *Comus* is a wicked Ariel. It is the same with the dangers to which virginity is exposed. The 'blew meager hag'² suggests no common witch, but the Cailleach Bheur,³ the blue hag who is winter personified; the goblin, or 'swart faëry of the mine' is a fairy creature, dangerous but not gross. Many years later, in *Paradise Lost*, a sudden dewiness strikes across the arid air of Hell, in the comparison of the great fallen angels dwarfing themselves to the size of a troop of elves in the English countryside. Perhaps some memory lingered in Milton's mind of the muryans of Cornwall, who, having started of more than human size, are, in consequence of some forgotten sin, dwindling year by year to the size of ants.⁴

The folk tradition of fairies is most expressly treated by Milton, not in *Comus*, but in the description of the country people's story-telling in *L'Allegro*:

With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat,
She was pincht, and pull'd, she sed,

¹ *Comus. The Poetical Works of John Milton* (Oxford, 1912), p. 52, l. 118.

² Ibid., p. 60, l. 434.

³ See Appendix I.

⁴ See Appendix I.

And he by Friars Lanthorn led
Tells how the drudging *Goblin* swet,
To ern his Cream-bowle duly set,
When in one night, ere glimps of morn,
His shadowy Flale hath thresh'd the Corn
That ten day-labourers could not end,
Then lies him down the Lubbar Fend.
And stretch'd out all the Chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And Crop-full out of dores he flings,
Ere the first Cock his Mattin rings.¹

Here the lubbard Fiend is evidently of more than human size, like the Giant Lob-Lie-by-the-Fire in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*; Mab seems more a female brownie than a fairy queen, and Friar Rush is identified, as in some folk stories, with Will o' the Wisp. The stories chosen are characteristically English, with no hint of pastoral prettinesses.

It is interesting to compare Milton's handling of *Comus* with the treatment of the same plot in an earlier play, *The Wisdome of Doctor Dodypol*, acted by the Children of Paul's at a date previous to 1600, when it was first published. This play is of special interest from the amount of folk-lore which it incorporates in its story. In the main plot a love potion is used, though unsuccessfully, and the story of a nobleman disguised as a portrait painter suggests the Lord of Burleigh; but the chief interest lies in the fairy plot. In the third act there is an episode like the story of the Fairy Goblet in *William of Newbridge*.² A benighted peasant hears music within a green hill. It opens, and he sees fairies banqueting. One of them offers him wine, he asks for food as well, and whilst the fairy is fetching it he runs off with the cup. The green mound with the music inside it, the fairy's hospitality, and the ungrateful greed of the peasant are all true to folk tradition; a variation is that the fairies are governed not by a king but by an enchanter. This is reminiscent of the troop of fairies with a 'maister man' met at the going down of the sun by Katherine Carey, tried in 1610.³ The enchanter, seeing the heroine despised by her husband, leads them into the fairy hill,

¹ Milton, *L'Allegro*, ed. cit., p. 23.

² Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (London, 1900,) pp. 283-4. Motif (F. 352).

³ John Dalryell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1834), p. 536.

binds him, and casts over her a spell of forgetfulness. He almost succeeds in persuading her that he is her forgotten husband, whose love she still remembers; but every time he approaches her to kiss her she finds that she cannot believe it. Before the enchanter can use other force she is rescued by her father with a counteracting jewel, as the Lady in *Comus* is rescued by her brother with a flower. The idea of the play throughout is that enchantments have no final power over love, as in *Comus* they have no power over virginity. The hero Alberdure, though his reason is overset by a love potion, continues to love in spite of it. It is tempting to fancy that the little book, published by Thomas Creede in 1600, was in Milton's library when he was a child. The style of the play is often crude, but all through it there are flashes of poetry, and some passages are beautiful, and even subtle. This is especially so in the scene between the Enchanter and Lucilia, when her husband, Lassinbergh, has been cast into a magic sleep.

ENCHANTER. Lie there, and lose the memorie of her
Who likewise hath forgot the thought of thee
By my enchantments: Come, sit downe faire Nimphe
And taste the sweetnesse of these heavenly cates,
Whilst from the hollow craines¹ of this rocke,
Musick shall sound to recreate my love.
But tell me had you ever lover yet?

LUCILIA. I had a lover I thinke, but who it was,
Or where, or how long since, aye me, I know not:
Yet beat my timerous thoughts on such a thing,
I feele a passionate heate, but finde no flame:
Thinke what I know not, nor know what I thinke.

ENCHANTER. Hast thou forgot me then? I am thy love,
Whom sweetly thou wert wont to entertaine,
With lookes, with vowes of love, with amorous kisses,
Look'st thou so strange? doost thou not know me yet?

LUCILIA. Sure I should know you.

ENCHANTER. Why love, doubt you that?
Twas I that lead you through the painted meades,
Where the light Fairies daunst upon the flowers,
Hanging on every leafe an orient pearle,
Which strooke together with the silken winde,

¹ Probably a misprint for *cranes*.

Of their loose mantels made a silver chime.
 Twas I that winding my shrill bugle home,
 Made a guilt pallace breake out of the hill,
 Filled suddenly with troopes of knights and dames,
 Who daunst and reveld whilst we sweetly slept,
 Upon a bed of Roses wrapt all in goulde,
 Doost thou not know me yet?

LUCILIA.

Yes now I know you.

ENCHANTER. Come then confirme thy knowledge with a kis.

LUCILIA. Nay stay, you are not he, how strange is this.

ENCHANTER. Thou art growne passing strange my love,
 To him that made thee so long since his bride.LUCILIA. O was it you? Come then, O stay a while,
 I know not where I am, nor what I am,
 Nor you, nor these I know, nor any thing.¹

At this point her father enters and breaks the enchantment.

This part of the plot, like the Sacrapant episode in *The Old Wives Tale*, reminds one strongly of Childe Roland. The Enchanter has many of the characteristics of the Elf King. Like him he causes a palace to rise out of the hill, he holds his captives in a trance, and he is lord of the knightly fairies of Elfland as well as of the small fairies who hang dew upon the flowers. Elsewhere in the play the fairies' silver tester is twice mentioned by Haunce, who says: 'Well, I am glad we are haunted so with Fayries: For I cannot set a cleane pump down, but I find a dollar in it in the morning.'²

Peele's *Old Wives Tale*,³ of about the same date, though it contains no fairies, is also a medley of fairy-tales. Its resemblance to the plot of *Comus* is even more marked. The Princess is held under the spell of an enchanter, two brothers seek to rescue her, and she is rescued by a spirit disguised as a servant, not as in *Childe Roland*, by the third brother. In this play, as in *Dr. Dodypol*, there are two sisters, one handsome and one plain. In *Dr. Dodypol* both are good characters, which is not uncommon in folk stories. *Kate Crackernuts*⁴ is an example in this country, and the Flemish story of *White Caroline and Black*

¹ *The Wisdome of Doctor Dodypol* (London, 1600), Act III.

² *Ibid.*, Act I.

³ *The Works of George Peele* (London, 1888), Vol. I.

⁴ See Appendix II, No. 16.

*Caroline*¹ in Belgian folk-lore. To make the ugly sister good and the beautiful sister bad is less common until we get to the late French fairy stories. The three golden heads occur both in German and English fairy-tales,² the ghost servant is part of a widespread belief,³ the enchanted bear is most obviously paralleled by *Snow White and Rose Red*, and the skin as white as snow and as red as blood occurs both in *Snowdrop* and in *Deirdre of the Sorrows*.⁴ We are indebted to the fashion of children's companies for these innocent and lively plays, as well as for Beaumont's delightful *Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

These fairy plays were on the border-land between the two reigns, a relief snatched from the oppressive fear of a disputed succession and the havoc it would bring. The over-lavishness of the Jacobean court productions was an expression of that materialism which followed on the flush of relief at the undisputed succession, and which drove this unsophisticated type of play out of fashion. The taste for fairies did not die with it, however. All through the age the plays are sprinkled with fairy references. There is a typical one in Cartwright's *Lady Errant*:

Like Fayries yet we here could stay
 Till Village Cocks proclame the Day.⁵

Jonson has several, apart from *The Alchemist*, which deserves separate treatment. In *Eastwarde Hoe*, for instance, Gertrude says:

Good Lord, that there are no Fayries now a dayes, *Syn*.

SYN. Why Madame?

GYR. To doe Miracles and bring Ladyes money. Sure, if wee lay in a cleanly house, they would haunt it, *Synne*? Ile trie. Ile sweepe the chamber soone at night, and set a dish of water o' the Hearth. A *Fayrie* may come, and bring a Pearle or a Diamonde. Wee do not know, *Syn*? Or there may be a pot of Gold hid o' the backe-side, if we had tooles to digge for't?⁶

¹ *White Caroline and Black Caroline*. A Flemish Fairy Tale. Retold in *Edmund Dulac's Fairy Book* (London, n.d.), p. 15.

² See Appendix II, No. 3.

³ The subject is fully treated in *The Grateful Dead*, by G. H. Gerould (London, 1908).

⁴ Motif (Z.65.1).

⁵ Motif (F.383.4). *The Comedies, Tragi-comedies with other poems by Mr. William Cartwright* (London, 1651), p. 81.

⁶ Ben Jonson, *Eastwarde Hoe*, ed. cit., Vol. IV, Act V, Sc. i, p. 599.

The pastoral play of *The Sad Shepherd* has a poetic passage in which the fairies are associated with the witches, as they so often were in real life.

There, in the stocks of trees, white Faies doe dwell,
And span-long Elves, that dance about a poole!
With each a little Changeling, in their armes!
And mount the Sphere of fire, to kisse the Moone!¹

The anonymous *Locrine* has a reference in something the same spirit:

And in the fields of martiall *Cambria*,
Close by the boystrous *Iscan's* silver streames,
Where lightfoote fairies skip from banke to banke.²

and later, in the same play:

You *Driades* and lightfoote *Satiri*,
You gracious Faries which, at evening tide,
Your closets leave with heavenly beautie storde,
And on your shoulders spread your golden locks.³

On the whole in drama these mentions are incidental, a matter of simile, or used to suggest a simple or rustic character, like Jonson's Gertrude, or the Citizen's Wife in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. There is such a one in Sampson's *Vow Breaker*. 'That's just like we fooles that rub our shins 'gainst the bed posts in our dreames, and then sweare the fairies pinchd us.'⁴ In drama as in poetry the fairies were considered appropriate to pastoral. In *The Faithful Shepherdess*, for instance, Fletcher uses them as Milton does in *Comus*:

No Goblin, Wood-god, Fairy, Elfe or Fiend,
Satyr or other power that haunts the Groves,
Shall hurt my body, or by vain illusion
Draw me to wander after idle fires.⁵

This is in the same strain as the blue meagre hag and swart goblin of the mine; and, however different its mood, it has

¹ *The Sad Shepherd*, ed. cit., Vol. VII, Act II, Sc. viii, p. 41, ll. 52-56.

² *The Lamentable Tragedy of Locrine. The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. cit., Act III, Sc. i, l. 71.

³ *Ibid.*, Act V, Sc. iv, l. 203.

⁴ William Sampson, *The Vow Breaker* (London, 1636), Act II.

⁵ John Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, ed. cit., Vol. II, Act I, Sc. i, p. 375.

chastity as its subject. The good satyr in it is on the whole a fairy character, though somewhat sophisticated. The passage on the fairy well, though with no exact parallel in surviving folklore, is yet not foreign to it.

A vertuous well, about whose flowry banke
The nimble-footed Fairies dance their rounds,
By the pale moon-shine, dipping oftentimes
Their stolen Children, so to make them free
From dying flesh and dull mortalitie.¹

The fairy ointment with which the eyes of fairy and changeling children are anointed suggests something of this kind, and the water itself is like the Water of Life, drawn from the Fountain of Lions. The whole play is a fairy story, turning on spell and magic, though it is more sophisticated than the Elizabethan fairy plays. Unless we count the satyr, the fairies themselves are only mentioned three times, and the third is a denial of their existence:

Methinks there are no Goblins, and mens talk
That in these Woods the nimble Fairies walk,
Are fables.²

Another dramatist who took some interest in the fairies was Thomas Randolph, a scholar and an amateur dramatist, who died in 1632. He was one of the sons of Ben Jonson, and some of the subjects treated in Ben Jonson's plays were also treated by him. In particular the tricks of the Wests seem to have attracted his attention as they did Jonson's, and the fairies in his plays are generally connected with cozenage. In *Amyntas* the sub-plot turns on this trickery, but in *The Jealous Lovers* it is introduced gratuitously and hardly used. The allusion to the fairies is as perfunctory.

Now am I Oberon prince of Fairie land,
And Phryne shall be Mab, my Empresse fair:
My souldiers two I'll instantly transform
To Will-with-a-wisp, and Robin-Goodfellow;
And make my brace of Poets transmigrate
Into Pigwiggin and Sir Pepper-corn.³

¹ *Ibid.*, Act I, Sc. i, p. 378.

² *Ibid.*, Act III, Sc. i, p. 402.

³ *The Jealous Lovers. Poems*, by Thomas Randolph (London, 1643), Act III, Sc. vii, p. 48.

The names here suggest the small fairies, but otherwise there is nothing to make us suppose them smaller than life size; and it is the same in Randolph's scattered references to Robin Goodfellow and the goblin of the dairy; but the *Amyntas* is in a different key. This is a pleasant piece of work, lit by an agreeable and scholarly nonsense that it is at times not unlike Lewis Carroll's. The birds chirping very good Greek and Latin gives us a shock of amusement, and the catalogue of the language is pretty fooling.¹ The Latin fairy-song of the thieving urchins is equally delightful. In spite of their small size the fairies are cozenages, and the play is therefore a parody of the fashion for a minute fairyland.

How, *Jocastus*?
Marry a Puppet? Wed a mote ith' Sunne?
Go looke a wife in nut-shels? Wooe a gnat
That's nothing but a voice?²

Thesylis' fairy jointure, offered her by the gulled *Jocastus*, is a burlesque of the Herrick vein.

A nut-meg Parlour.
A Saphyre dairy-roome.
A Ginger hall.
Chambers of agate.
Kitchins all of Cristall!
O admirable! This is it for certain!
The Jacks are Gold.
The Spits are Spanish needles.³

This might have laughed the diminutive fairy poetry out of existence if it had had stuff enough to be killed by ridicule. If the vein had been closed by *Amyntas* it would have been as well, for though some of the Jacobean fairy poetry is pretty stuff, it has been imitated in our own day in a spirit of whimsicality which cloyes the palate at its best, and at its worst has weakened our children's literature to an insulting feebleness.

A poem something in Randolph's vein is to be found in Martin Lluellyn's *Men-Miracles*.

For seeing Beast one did bereave her,
Of seaventeene haire, which made his *Beaver*.

¹ *Amyntas*, Randolph, ed. cit., Act I, Sc. iii, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, Act I, Sc. iii, p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, Act II, Sc. vi, pp. 36-37.

He takes a *Silke-wormes* Airy Twist,
(Such *Oberon* ties about his wrist)
That *girts* his *hat*, so big lookes that-band,
As Antique Mid-wives Cipress hat-band.¹

In drama Heywood took more interest in witches than in fairies; but in his long didactic poem *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels* the fairies are mentioned with other spirits, though much of his treatment of them is literary. He quotes German, Scandinavian and classical fairy-lore, and stories from Sprenger or Weyer, but, like his contemporaries, he identifies the kobolds, the incubi and the lares with our native fairies. As for instance:

In *John Milesius* any man may reade
Of Divils in Sarmatia honored,
Call'd *Kottri*, or *Kibaldi*; such as wee
Pugs and Hob-goblins call. Their dwellings bee
In corners of old houses least frequented,
Or beneath stacks of wood: and these convented,
Make fearefull noise in Buttries and in Dairies:
Robin good-fellowes some, some call them Fairies.
In solitarie roomes These uprores keepe,
And beat at dores to wake men from their sleepe;
Seeming to force locks, be they ne'er so strong,
And keeping Christmasse gambols all night long.
Pots, glasses, trenchers, dishes, pannes and kettles
They will make dance about the shelves and settles,
As if about the Kitchen tost and cast,
Yet in the morning nothing found misplac't.²

Here, as in many folk stories, poltergeist hauntings are ascribed to fairies. He has also a pleasant moral story of a Buttery Spirit.³

Campion returns for his fairy queen to Proserpina, harking back to Chaucer, who follows a true strand of folk tradition, as is shown in the ballad of *King Orfeo*. Campion, however was probably unaware of how traditionally he wrote, and intended his 'Hark all you ladies' as no more than a playful turn of fancy. However lightly the poem was intended, he followed a basic folk tradition in making the goddess of Death the goddess also

¹ M. Lluellyn, *Men-Miracles* (London, 1646).

² Thomas Heywood, *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels* (London, 1636), p. 574.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 577.

of Love. Ceres and Proserpine were the twin goddesses of vegetation and death, the corn mother and the corn maiden; and the little that is known of the Celtic goddess of death seems to point to her being also the goddess of fertility. Campion takes this so much as a matter of course that he presents it without comment:

But if you let your lovers moan,
The fairy-queen Proserpina
Will send abroad her fairies every one,
That shall pinch black and blue
Your white hands and fair arms
That did not kindly rue
Your paramours harms.

In myrtle arbours on the downs
The fairy-queen Proserpina,
This night by moonshine leading merry rounds,
Holds a watch with sweet love,
Down the dale, up the hill;
No plaints or groans may move
Their holy vigil.¹

As the golden age of fairy poetry was heralded far off by Chaucer in the Wife of Bath's lament for the fairies, so it was closed by Corbet's *Fairies Farewell*. There were indeed fairy poems later; and Charles Cotton, a belated Jacobean, wrote in the true Jacobean style:

The goblin now the fool alarms,
Hags meet to mumble o'er their charms;
The night-mare rides the dreaming ass,
And dairies trip it on the grass.²

but in the main one can say that Corbet is the last of the writers on fairies who used the full folk-lore tradition. Like Aubrey, Corbet was a scholar, and like him he was not ashamed to draw upon local and traditional knowledge. He was interested in all folk customs, and so accomplished a ballad singer that he is said to have once taken the place of a poor performer, and made a large sum of money for him. He boasts of his ballad knowledge:

¹ *The Works of Dr. Thomas Campion* (London, 1889), pp. 21-22. From *A Book of Ayres* (1601).

² Cotton, *Poems*. Chalmers' *Works of the English Poets* (London, 1810), Vol. VI, p. 732.

Knowing not in truth,
That I had sung John Dory in my youth;
Or that I knew the day when I could chaunt
Chevy, and Arthur, and the Seige of Gaunt.¹

He wrote also on such subjects as the Cotswold Games, revived by Captain Dover, the Maypole, and the Book of Sports. His authority for his fairy-lore was direct oral tradition, the stories of old William Chourne, who was probably the servant who accompanied Corbet and his friends on that journey to the north celebrated in the *Iter Borealis*. The last stanzas of *The Fairies Farewell*, that classic of fairy-lore, are a tribute to him:

Now they have left our quarters
A register they have,
Who looketh to their charters,
A man both wise and grave;
An hundred of theyre merry prancks
By one that I could name
Are kept in store, conn twenty thanks
To William for the same.

I marvell who his cloake would turne
When Pucke had led him round,
Or where those walking fires would burne,
Where Cureton would be found;
How Broker would appeare to be,
For whom this age doth mourne;
But that theyre spiritts live in thee,
In thee, old William Chourne.

To William Chourne of Stafford shire
Give laud and prayes due,
Who every meale can mend your cheare
With tales both old and true:
To William all give audience,
And pray yee for his noddle,
For all the Faries evidence
Were lost if that were addle.²

The *Iter Borealis* supplies a comment on the second verse quoted here:

¹ Richard Corbet, *Poems* (London, 1807), p. 75.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.

Whilst in this mill wee labour and turne round
 As in a conjurers circle, William found
 A menes for our deliverence: Turne your cloakes,
 Quoth hee, for Puck is busy with these oakes:
 If ever yee at Bosworth will be found,
 Then turne your cloakes, for this is Fayry-ground.
 But, ere this witchcraft was perform'd wee mett
 A very man, who had no cloven feete;
 Though William, still of little faith, doth doubt
 'Tis Robin, or some sprite that walks about:
 Strike him, quoth hee, and it will turne to ayre:
 Cross your selves thrice and strike it: Strike that dare,
 Thought I, for sure that massy forrester
 In stroakes will prove the better conjurer.¹

Two hundred years or so later a little girl told Professor Thoms of a man pixy-led in a field, who turned his coat, and how the fairies flew up into the trees and laughed, 'Oh, how they did laugh!—but the man then soon found his way out of the field.'² The belief persisted two hundred years after Corbet recorded it, but it did not find a poet again. The next generation of poets had transplanted themselves into London, and London soon ceased to be a large village. The houses grew up around them, and they forgot the fields.

¹ Ibid., p. 191. Motif (F.385.1).

² W. J. Thoms, *The Folk Lore of Shakespeare*. Contained in *Three Notelets on Shakespeare* (London, 1865), p. 78.

Eight

THE FAIRIES AND THE PRACTITIONERS OF MAGIC

THERE had been a clear connection between fairy-lore and at least some forms of witchcraft from very early times. This connection was much stronger and more explicit in Scotland and the north than it was in the greater part of England. The English folk-fairies were gentler and less dreaded than the Scottish ones, and popular country opinion did not condemn traffic with them. The learned, the Puritans and those influenced by the Continental witchcraft writings did, as we have seen, condemn the fairies as devils, but the poets, and particularly the dramatists, who relied on popular approval, did not treat them so.

Occasional indications of the connection between the witches and the fairies are to be found in England, but the fullest and most explicit occur in the Scottish witches' confessions. It is from them that we get those curiously vivid and convincing pictures of fairy intercourse and life in the fairy hills that almost make one believe in a wild, primitive race which had survived in hiding into historic times. Bessie Dunlop, in 1576, was among the most explicit. Her fairy, Tom Reid, had been killed at the Battle of Pinkie (1547), and was a quiet-seeming man, decently dressed in an antique fashion. She saw him sometimes going among the crowd, but was forbidden to accost him. Once she saw him in a fairy rade by the Lochside, and once she was visited

by the Queen of Elfland, a stout woman who came and sat by her bed.¹ This intercourse was not unlike that in some of the English witch confessions, except that they called their familiars devils, but the strange voluntary confession of Isobel Gowdie (1664) is far more striking. She described in detail her visits to the Fairy Hill and the evil charms she learnt there. The 'routing and skoyling' of the elf bulls affrighted her, and she saw the Elf Queen, brawly clothed in white linen and brown and white clothes, and the Elf King, well favoured and broad-faced. The elf boys, hump-backed and with shrill, ghostly voices, shaped and whittled the flint arrows which the Devil gave to the witches to shoot at their adversaries. Isobel gave the rhymes that accompanied the host and those that enabled them to change their shape.² These were evil fairies and taught them nothing but ill.

Isabel Haldane, who was tried in Perth in 1623, told of a fairyland something the same, though rather less sinister. She was carried from her bed and led into a hollow hill, and like Bessie Dunlop she had a fairy helper, a man with a grey beard, who led her out of the hill again and helped her with magical advice, and also on occasion avenged her on her enemies. She professed no knowledge of magic except through him.³

Alison Peirson (1688) was, according to her confession, unwillingly visited by the fairies, who solicited her allegiance and tormented her with a kind of paralysis.⁴ Her fairy helper, who warned her of the danger of allowing herself to get into their power, was a cousin rather older than herself, a William Sympson who had been carried away by the fairies and was presumed dead. The great danger of which he warned her was that of being used to pay the fairy teind to Hell.⁴ In these matter-of-fact accounts of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century trials we find the same beliefs that seem so poetical in the Scottish ballads and fairy-tales. They show too how accurate was Kirk's reporting of fairy-lore.

In the north of England something of the same relation seems to have been maintained. Durant Hotham in the intro-

¹ R. Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1833), Vol. I, Part II, pp. 49-58. See Appendix III.

² Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 602-16. See Appendix III.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. I, Part II, p. 163. See Appendix III.

³ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 537.

duction to his life of Jacob Behmen has a story which bears this out.

There was (as I have heard the story credibly reputed in this Country) a man apprehended of suspicion of Witchcraft, he was of that sort we call white-witches, which are such as do Cures beyond the Ordinary reasons and deducing of our usual Practitioners, and are supposed (and most part of them truly) to do the same by the ministrations of Spirits (from whence, under their noble favour, most Sciences first grew) and therefore are upon good reason provided against by our Civil Laws as being waies full of danger and deceit, and scarce ever otherwise obtain'd than by a devilish Compact of the Exchange of ones Soul to that assistant Spirit for the honour of its Mountebankery) what this man did was with a white powder, which he said, he receiv'd from the Fayries, and that going to a hill he knocked three times, and the hill opened, and he had access to, and converse with, a visible people; and offer'd, that if any Gentleman present would either go himself in person, or send his servant, he would conduct them thither, and show them the place and persons from whence he had his skill.¹

Webster, in his *Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*, comments on this passage and says he was himself present at the trial. He gives us further and interesting particulars and the gratifying information that the poor man was acquitted.

To this I shall only add thus much, that the man was accused for invoking and calling upon evil spirits, and was a very simple and illiterate person to any mans judgment, and had been formerly very poor, but had gotten some pretty little meanes to maintain himself, his Wife and diverse small children, by his cures done with this white powder, of which there were sufficient proofs, and the Judge asking him how he came by the powder, he told a story to this effect. 'That one night before the day was gone, as he was going home from his labour, being very sad and full of heavy thoughts, not knowing how to get meat and drink for his Wife and Children, he met a fair Woman in fine cloaths, who asked him why he was so sad, and he told her that it was by reason of his poverty, to which she said, that if he would follow her counsel she would help him to that which would serve to get him a good living; to which he said he would consent with all his heart, so it were not by unlawful ways: she told him that it should not be by any such ways, but by doing of good and curing of sick people; and so warn-

¹ D. Hotham, *The Life of Jacob Behmen* (London, 1654), C 3.

ing him strictly to meet her there the next night at the same time, she departed from him, and he went home. And the next night at the time appointed he duly waited, and she (according to promise) came and told him that it was well he came so duly, otherwise he had missed of that benefit, that she intended to do unto him, and so bade him follow her and not be afraid. Thereupon she led him to a little Hill and she knocked three times, and the Hill opened, and they went in, and came to a fair hall, wherein was a Queen sitting in great state, and many people about her, and the Gentlewoman that brought him, presented him to the Queen, and she said he was welcom, and bid the Gentlewoman give him some of the white powder, and teach him how to use it; which she did, and gave him a little wood box full of the white powder, and bad him give 2 or 3 grains of it to any that were sick, and it would heal them, and so she brought him forth of the Hill, and so they parted. And being asked by the Judge whether the place within the Hill, which he called a Hall, were light or dark, he said indifferent, as it is with us in the twilight; and being asked how he got more powder, he said when he wanted he went to that Hill, and knocked three times, and said every time I am coming, I am coming, whereupon it opened, and he going in was conducted by the aforesaid Woman to the Queen, and so had more powder given him. This was the plain and simple story (however it may be judged of) that he told before the Judge, the whole Court and the Jury, and there being no proof, but what cures he had done to very many, the Jury did acquit him: and I remember the Judge said, when all the evidence was heard, that if he were to assign his punishment, he should be whipped thence to Fairy-hall, and did seem to judge it to be a delusion or Imposture.¹

This was a fairy hill far gentler than that entered by Isobel Gowdie, for the spell seems to have been purely benevolent, and was given for love. The English jury, too, seemed unwilling to condemn for intercourse with the fairies.

There are fewer accounts of intercourse between witches and fairies in the south, but John Walsh in 1566 claimed to gain his knowledge from the fairies of the Dorset hills.² In 1555 Joan Tyrie met a fairy at Taunton market who blinded her in one eye,³ a late, personal version of the Fairy Midwife story which constantly recurs in folk-lore from the time of Gervase of Tilbury onwards.

Anne Jefferies' intercourse with the fairies was more on the

¹ J. Webster, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (London, 1677), p. 301.

² C. Hole, *A Mirror of Witchcraft* (London, 1957), p. 74. ³ *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

lines of Beaumont's and was in no way entangled with witch practices. It was a strange case which made much stir at the time, the most sensational thing about it being that Anne claimed to need no other food but what the fairies gave her.¹

From Rutland in the beginning of the seventeenth century we have a tale of a fairy which takes the place of the witch's devil or familiar. This is different from the common run of witch cases in England, where the familiars nearly always took the form of pet animals—a curious offshoot of the Englishman's love of pets. Nor was there any possibility here that the devil or god could be represented by a human being. The familiar here, whether fairy or devil, was believed to be wholly supernatural. The report comes from the trial of Margaret and Philip Flower.

This Examinee saith, That shee hath a Spirit which shee calleth *Pretty*, which was given unto her by *William Berry* of *Langholme* in *Rutlandshire*, whom she served three yeares; and that her Master when he gave it unto her, willed her to open her mouth, and hee would blow into her a Fairy which should doe her good; and that she opened her mouth, and he did blow into her mouth; and that presently after his blowing, there came out of her mouth a Spirit, which stood upon the ground in the shape and form of a Woman, which Spirit asked of her her Soule, which she then promised unto it, being willed thereto by her Master.²

In this case, probably because of the gift of the soul, no attempt seems to have been made to palliate Joan Willimot's guilt by the plea that her familiar was no devil but a fairy; yet in general association with the fairies seems to have rated as comparatively innocent. Claims of special favours from the Fairy Queen were tried as cozenages rather than witchcraft. John West and Alice his wife were only pilloried as cheats, not executed as witches. This may have been chiefly because educated opinion was sceptical about the fairies, but that the country people believed the association to be harmless is shown in a passage of Thomas Jackson's *Treatise Containing the Originall of Unbelief, Misbelief and Misperswasion*.

¹ R. Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England* (London, 1930), pp. 127 and 470.

² *The Wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Philip Flower, Daughters of Joan Flower* (1618). *The Examination of Joan Willimot*, p. 17. Contained in *Rare and Curious Tracts*.

It was my happe since I undertooke the Ministerie, to question an ignorant soule, (whom by undoubted report I had knowne to have been seduced by a teacher of unhallowed arts to make a dangerous experiment) what he saw, or heard, when he watcht the falling of the *Ferne-seed* at an unseasonable and suspitious houre. Why (quoth he) (fearing (as his briefe reply occasioned me to conjecture) lest I should presse him to tell before company, what he had voluntarily confessed unto a friend in secret, about some foureteene yeares before) doe you thinke that the devill hath ought to doe with that good seed? No; it is in the keeping of the *King of Fayries*, and *he* I know will doe me no harme, although I should watch it againe; yet had he utterly forgotten this King's name, upon whose kindnesse he so presumed untill I remembered it unto him out of my reading in *Huon of Bordeaux*.¹

The alchemists, astrologers and magicians, who enjoyed a curious immunity in this time of witchcraft persecution, relied on the general toleration of the fairies, and were ready to claim acquaintance with them as well as with the angels.

It seems curious to us now that while Hopkins was pursuing his murderous way through the counties of England Lilly the astrologer was receiving an annuity from Parliament. The reason is perhaps not far to seek. Alchemy and astrology were still reputed as genuine sciences, though their practitioners were often viewed with some suspicion. This was not so much because there was widespread doubt about the sciences themselves, which were still commonly accepted as genuine, but because it was realized that a large ground on their outskirts was covered by quacks, impostors and dabblers in wicked arts. As early as Chaucer the honest and deluded drudges among the alchemists, the *puffers* as they were called, had been a mark of satire no less than the tricksters;² yet the law of sympathies, the hierarchy of metals and the belief 'as above, so below', upon which alchemy was founded had not been seriously doubted. Astrology enjoyed even more prestige. A man so steadily religious as Marmaduke Langdale would carefully note the aspects of the planets at the time his children were born with no sense

¹ T. A. Jackson, *A Treatise Containing the Originall of Unbeliefe, Misbeliefe and Misperwasion* (London, 1625), pp. 178-9.

² *The Chanoun Yemannes Tale. The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Oxford University Press), p. 659.

that he was taking part in magical practices.¹ Many doctors worked as much by astrology as by medicine. Dr. William Drage of Hitchin, for instance, who was in some ways an innovator and left a case history of 1,400 cases behind him, believed that astrology was at the root of medical treatment,² and Culpepper in his *Herbal* gives the planetary government of every herb. Queen Elizabeth used Dr. Dee as her intelligencer, protected him and gave him a pension, the Duke of Buckingham employed the hated Dr. Lamb. Charles the First seems indeed to have been sceptical, and King James took little interest in the matter compared to other occult questions; but in general the people, from the highest to the lowest, believed in astrology and were eager to learn from it.

The eclipse of these two sciences was startlingly abrupt. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, as we have seen, they enjoyed a high reputation, even till the end they were studied by a number of learned men; but it is hardly an exaggeration to say that by the beginning of the eighteenth they had dropped out of public estimation, plumb onto the rubbish heap of outworn superstitions. They did not even make a large contribution to folk-lore, as many abandoned beliefs have done. The reason of this was probably that both were highly literate studies. Astrology demanded quite complicated mathematical skill, and alchemy needed patience, technical skill and an expensive equipment. Science rather than folk-lore was their legatee. If the astrologers and alchemists had stuck to their profession there would have been little occasion to touch on them here. The Renaissance, however, was no time for specialization, and the astrologers not only practised alchemy but any necromancy, magic or medicine that came to their hands. We are so fortunate as to possess personal records of some of the most famous alchemists and astrologers and they fully illustrate this versatility. They were men of very varying honesty and attainments. Dr. Dee was an honest man and one of considerable learning. As an astronomer and mathematician he had a European reputation, but in his memoirs he dwells more upon the curious conversations of the spirits to whom he was introduced by his

¹ F. H. Sunderland, *The Life of Sir Marmaduke Langdale* (London, 1926), pp. 36-38.

² R. Hine, *Hitchin Worthies* (London, 1932), p. 73.

unreliable medium Edward Kelly, than upon his more solid achievements. These spirits were certainly not angels and were not supposed to be devils; it seems they were presumed to be fairies, elementals, or some kindred creatures.¹

Simon Forman, a younger contemporary, was a man of less respectable character than Dee, and carried on like him a miscellaneous medical and alchemical practice. He was lucky enough to die just in time to be saved from implication in the trial of Sir Thomas Overbury's murderers. Like Dee, Forman left his diary, which gives some insight into the variety of his practices.

'This year,' he wrote of 1579, 'I did profecie the truth of many thinges which afterwarde cam to passe, and the verie spirits were subjecte unto me; what I spake was done.' And in 1581,—'I tok a house in Sarum on the dich by the skinner, and ther I dwelte practising physick and surgery.' In 1588 he was more ambitious. 'This yeare I began to practise necromancy, and to calle aungells and spirits.' and in 1594,—'Abought Michelmas I first beganne to practise the philosopher's stone.'²

William Lilly, who lived well beyond the Restoration, was a magician of something the same type. His *History of his Life and Times* makes one realize the accuracy of Ben Jonson's picture of London. The book might be the raw material of *The Alchemist*. Lilly even tells us how he was left in charge of his master's house during the plague, a trust which he turned to almost as good account as Face, for he had in a master and learned to play on the base-viol, and spent his time gambling at bowls with Wat the Cobbler and Dick the Blacksmith. Ben Jonson's servants, apprentices and city merchants spring to life as we read the book. Lilly is a little reticent about his own more dubious activities, but he gives us some short sketches of his more notorious contemporaries, by which we gain a picture of that shabby, shady debatable land between science and roguery which the less respectable alchemists and astrologers inhabited.

By Lilly's time the vogue for alchemy had a little declined, and he and his friends did not spend much time on the search for the philosopher's stone. Otherwise their activities seem to have

¹ *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee* (Camden Society, 1842).

² *The Autobiography and Personal Diary of Simon Forman* (London, 1889), pp. 15-23.

covered much the same ground as Subtle's. They practised astrology, conjuration, crystal-gazing, medicine, the distillation of spirits, the making of amulets and sigils and divining for buried treasure. Lilly even tells of the raising of the Fairy Queen for a friend, who was much alarmed by the sight.

As it happened not many years since with us, a very sober discreet person, of vertuous life and conversation, was beyond Measure desirous to see something of this Nature; he went with a Friend into my *Hurst Wood*, the Queen of *Fairies* was invocated, a gentle murmuring Wind came first; after that, amongst the Hedges, a smart Whirlwind; by and by a strong Blast of Wind blew upon the Face of the Friend,—and the Queen appearing in a most illustrious Glory. No more, I beseech you (quoth the Friend) my Heart fails; I am not able to endure longer, nor was he; his black curling Hair rose up, and I believe a Bullrush would have beat him to the Ground.¹

Like Subtle, Lilly lays stress upon the necessity of pure living for intercourse with fairies. Indeed this was a commonplace with magicians, whose fairies were more piously disposed than the ordinary folk-fairies. Lilly's description of them is much like Cornelius Agrippa's.

The *Fairies* love the Southern Side of Hills,
Mountains and Groves.—Neatness and Cleanliness
in Apparel, a strict Diet, an upright Life,
fervent Prayers unto God, conduce much to the
Assistance of those who are curious these ways.²

Close as Lilly's doings were to those of *The Alchemist*, there seems to have been a set of practitioners from whom Subtle's doings were even more directly borrowed. Professor Sisson, who is doing so much by his researches in the Chancery Records to throw light on topical allusion in the literature of our period, has unearthed a case which was tried in 1609-10, a few months before *The Alchemist* was acted. A young man called Rogers was the dupe. He was introduced to the fairy queen, and promised that ultimately he should marry her. An outlay of five pounds was necessary to distribute among the fairies.³

¹ W. Lilly, *History of His Life and Times* (London, 1715), pp. 102-3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

³ C. J. Sisson, *A Topical Reference in The Alchemist*, in *J. Quincy Adams Memorial Studies* (Washington, 1948), pp. 789 seq.

Some years earlier, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, a similar case had been investigated. Here the cozeners were Judith Phillips, commonly called Doll Pope. She was a gipsy who had married a poor labouring man and retired to precarious respectability until a wealthy widow was presented to her as a subject for fraud. The first intention had been to persuade the widow to marry a good-for-nothing suitor called Peters, but she presented too easy a target, and soon Doll persuaded her that there was money hidden in the house, which could be found by the help of the queen of the fairies.

Judith then told her that first she must have such gold as she had, which she would not carry away, but leave with her, and within two days the gold hid in her house should come to that place where she appointed her gold should lie. The widow brought certain gold pieces, a chain of gold, 7 rings and a whistle. All which the widow put in a purse and delivered to Judith with her right hand. Judith wrapped it up in yarn, and having wound up two stones in like yarn, closely conveyed the yarn with the stones into the widow's hand, which the widow took and laid up in the appointed place with charge from Judith not to look at it till three days were past. She also told the widow she must have a turkey and a capon to give to the queen of the fairies, which the widow provided. Also she made the widow say certain prayers in sundry places in the house, and then departed. Judith then carried the gold chain, etc., to Peters and Vaughan, opened the yarn, took out the rings and secretly kept them to herself, and the rest was shared between them and her. The next morning, intending to cozen the widow of her plate also, Judith brought the head and leg of the turkey in a basket to the widow and began to tell her that she must lay one leg under the bed, and the rest in other places, but the widow, having discovered the stones in the yarn, knew herself to be cozened and caused Judith to be apprehended.

Judith had used this manner of trade of cozenage a long time and had wandered the country in the company of divers persons naming themselves Egyptians. For that kind of life she was condemned to die at Salisbury, but afterwards had her pardon. She had then married Phillips, and being forbidden by her husband, had not since used the trade of cozenage above two several times.¹

An earlier exploit of Judith Phillips is described by G. B. Harrison in an article published in *The Library*, 'Keep the

¹ *Historical MSS Commission. Hatfield House*, Vol. V (1894), pp. 81-83.

Widow Waking'.¹ This was an ugly case of trickery and drugging, coloured by a little fortune-telling, but without reference to the queen of the fairies. It was the source of a pamphlet, *The Brydlyng, Sadlyng and Ryding of a rich Churle in Hampshire, etc.*, of which the only original is in the Huntington Library in America.

The practices which came nearest to the alchemist's, however, were those of John and Alice West, described in a little pamphlet called: *The Severall notorious and lewd Cousnages of John West, and Alice West, falsely called the King and Queen of Fayries. Practised very lately both in this Citie, and many places near adioyning, to the impoverishing of many simple people, as well Men as Women: Who were Arraigned and Convicted for the same, at the Sessions House in Old Bayley, the 14 of Januarie, this present yeare, 1613.*²

This would be 1614 in our reckoning, and as *The Alchemist* was first performed in 1610 and printed in 1612 it cannot be directly founded on this case. The resemblances seem almost too close to be accidental, however. It is possible that the Wests' doings were common report before they were brought to trial.

In *The Alchemist* the young lawyer's clerk, Dapper, coming to ask for a familiar to help him in gaming, is made to believe that he is a favourite of the Fairy Queen, and after he has been blindfolded and all his money has been taken from him he is introduced to Doll Common, dressed as the Fairy Queen. The Wests played the same trick several times.

This woman takes upon her to be familiarly acquainted with the King and Queene of Fairies, two that had in their power the command of inestimable treasure: and growing inward with a maid servant that belonged to this *Thomas Moore*, communicates to her a strange revelation, how that the fayrie King and Queene had appeared to her in a vision, saying they had a purpose to bestow great summes of gold upon this man and this woman, which by her meanes and directions, was undoubtedly to be compass: in which atchievement, there was nothing so necessary as secrecie, for if they were revealed to any save them three whom it did essentially concerne, they should not onely hazard their good fortune, but incurre the

¹ G. B. Harrison, 'Keep the Widow Waking', *The Library*, Vol. II, Series IV (Oxford, 1930).

² This pamphlet is reprinted in W. C. Hazlitt, *The Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare* (London, 1875).

danger of the Fayries, and so consequently be open to great mishaps, and fearfull disasters. This being by the Maid acquainted to the simple man and his wife, after coniuration of secrecy, they were as greedily willing to receive the benefit, as fearfull loath to entertaine the punishment, and so their simplicitie begat an easier way to their iugling, which, she perceiving, prosecutes to her first devised purpose, and first intreats for money to performe the due rites of sacrifice to his great patron the King of Fayries.¹

By such means a good deal of money was coaxed out of the Moores; and when they began to be suspicious a way was found to raise their hopes.

And to encourage them the further, they brought him into a vault, where they showed him two attired like the King and Queene of Fayries, and by them little Elves and Goblins, and in the same place an infinite company of bags, and upon them written, 'this is for Thomas Moore,' 'this is for his wife,' but would not let him touch anything, which gave him some incouragement, to his almost despairing hope.²

The Wests made a good profit out of their fairy connection, for the pamphlet gives an account of some of their other trickeries—a cozenage of a man and his wife, to know which should die first; a conjuring trick with some money and a napkin and a story of the king and queen of the fairies; sailors' wives deceived, who asked them when their husbands would return; a maid tricked into sitting all night naked in a garden with a pot of earth in her lap, under the belief that it would turn into gold; a goldsmith's apprentice made to believe that he was beloved by the queen of the fairies, and cheated out of his master's plate. All these tricks were as profitable to the Wests as Subtle's were to his gang; until, like Subtle's, they were discovered. The method of working must have been much the same. Face and Subtle play skilfully into each other's hands, Subtle pretending reluctance, Face urging him to give Dapper what he asks, and finally seeming to lose his temper, until Dapper reconciles them. Then in a loudly whispered dialogue they build up Dapper's hopes with the ridiculous story of the Fairy Queen, and send him away to prepare for the show they have ready for him on his return.

¹ Ibid., p. 236.

² Ibid., p. 227.

FACE. Come on, Master Dapper, Ha' you perform'd
The ceremonies were enjoined you?

DAPPER. Yes, o' the vinegar
And the cleane shirt.

FACE. 'Tis well: that shirt may doe you
More worship than you thinke. Your aunt's afire,
But that she will not show it, t'have a sight on you.
Ha' you provided for her Grace's servants?

DAPPER. Yes, here are six-score Edward shillings.

FACE. Good.

DAPPER. And an old Harry's sovereigne.

FACE. Very good.

DAPPER. And three James shillings and an Elizabeth groat,
Just twentie nobles.

FACE. O you are too just.
I would you had the other noble in Maries.

DAPPER. I have some Phillip, and Maries.

FACE. I these same
Are best of all. Where are they? Harke, the Doctor.
(Enter SUBTLE disguised as a priest of Faery.)

SUBTLE. Is her Graces cossen come?

FACE. He is come.

SUBTLE. And is he fasting?

FACE. Yes.

SUBTLE. And hath cried *hum*?

FACE. Thrise, you must answer.

DAPPER. Thrise.

SUBTLE. And as oft *buz*?

FACE. If you have, say.

DAPPER. I have.

SUBTLE. Then to her cuz,

Hoping that he hath vinagard his senses,
As he was bid, the *Faery Queene* dispenses,
By me, this robe, the petticoate of FORTUNE;
Which that he straight put on, shee doth importune.
And though to FORTUNE neere be her petticoate,
Yet, neerer is her smock, the Queen doth note:
And, therefore, even of that a piece shee hath sent,
Which, being a child, to wrap him in, was rent;
And prayes him, for a scarfe, he now will weare it,

(With as much love as then her *Grace* did teare it)
About his eyes, (They blind him with a rag) To shew he is
fortunate.

And, trusting unto her to make his state,
Hee'll throw away all worldly pelfe, about him;
Which that he will performe she doth not doubt him.¹

The Buzz and Hum as a magic conjuration was used by Ben Jonson in the satyr's song in *The Masque of Oberon, the Faery Prince*.

Buz quoth the blue Flie,
Hum quoth the Bee:
Buz, and hum, they crie,
And soe doe wee.²

It has the sound of being a folk tradition, but I have not found it elsewhere. The Mary coins are most valuable to Face as being of a superior, undebased mintage, but they may be supposed to be more valuable to the fairies because they were minted in the times of 'the old profession'. The vinegar was a simple form of the suffumigation used in all intercourse with spirits. In the same way fasting was an almost indispensable preliminary, and it was considered wisest to be blindfolded when fairies passed. These preliminaries arranged the pretended fairies surround Dapper and pinch him, with a little tittering sound, to represent the fairies' chirping, indistinct speech, until he throws away all his valuables. Shirley borrowed the idea of this scene in *The Young Admiral*; but he used it to make fun of another superstition. The fool, Pazorello, wishes to be shot-free, like the soldier mentioned by Aubrey, and Flavia is disguised, not as a fairy, but a witch.³

All these are clear and flagrant cases of cozenage, acknowledged and treated as such by all thinking men, but a proof of how widely held the fairy belief still was among the common people. Learned men of some repute, however, acted on not dissimilar beliefs. Doubtless they despised the credulity of the ignorant, but their manuscripts betray the same hotch-potch of beliefs and practices, in their spells to raise angels, devils,

¹ *The Alchemist*, Act III, Sc. v. Ben Jonson, Vol. V (Oxford, 1937), pp. 355-6.

² *The Masque of Oberon, The Faery Prince*, ed. cit, Vol. VII (1941), p. 349.

³ *The Young Admiral. The Dramatic Works and Poems of J. Shirley* (London, 1833) Vol. IV, p. 1.

elementals, ghosts and heathen deities, as well as recipes that illustrate all varieties of sympathetic magic and broken down astrology and alchemy. A fair sample is a spell to coerce a rebellious spirit contained in British Museum MS. Add. 36674. This is a threefold charm, beginning with a prayer to God to punish the disobedient spirit as He punished the serpent in Paradise, and going on to an injunction to Rhadamanthus:

O thou most puissant Prince Rhadamanthus, who does imprison in thy prison of perpetual perplexity the disobedient devills of hell, and also the grisly ghosts of men dyinge in dredful despaire, I conjure, bind and charge thee by Lucifer, Besebub, Sathanas, Jaconill and by their power and by the homage thou owest unto them, and also charge thee by the triple crowne of Cerberus his head, by Stix and Phlegiton, and by your fellow and private devill Baranter, that you do torment and punish this disobedient N. until you make him come corporally to my sight and obey my will and commandments in whatsoever I shall charge or command him to do. fiat. fiat. fiat.

The third part of the spell is addressed directly to the spirit, and conjures him by the three mighty names of God, Agla, Om and Tetragrammaton, into the bottomless pit, to be tormented there till the Day of Judgement, unless he straightaway appears in the crystal to render obedience.

This strange mixture of a pagan Hades and a Catholic Hell is made all the more impious by the prayer that precedes it; for the object of the whole elaborate rigmarole is power, not grace.

Elias Ashmole, among his accumulation of occult and magical papers, includes some spells for fairies. One conjuration is especially interesting, in which the fairy is invoked as a Christian being, with a soul capable of sharing in the Last Judgement. He has also a recipe for an unguent for the eyes, perhaps something the same as that the fairies used on their own children. Unlike the witches' ointment it is of harmless ingredients, the chief being the tops of wild thyme from 'the side of a hill where the fairies do use to go off'.¹

It is difficult to over-estimate the number of magical manuscripts which must have been scattered about the country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A vivid picture of this

¹ Bod. MS. Ashmole 1406.

thick undergrowth of magical practices is given by an early letter quoted in *Norfolk Archaeology* of 1847. It illustrates so well the background of magic and charlatanism out of which our period grew that I have included it in Appendix IV. It is of especial interest too because it contains an early mention of a spirit with a name very like Oberon.

William Stapleton, a truant monk and unsuccessful magician, was called upon to give an account of himself to Thomas Cromwell, and in the course of the long and ingenuous letter in which he did so he told how the parson of Lesingham had raised, by means of a book and the instruments attached to it, three spirits, Andrew Malchus, Incubus and Oberion. Oberion, however, refused to speak, and Andrew Malchus explained that he could not do so because he was exclusively devoted to the service of Cardinal Wolsey. It was the common practice of magicians to bind spirits in this way.

This was the nineteenth year of King Henry VIII (1528), before Lord Berners' translation of *Huon of Bordeaux* had made Auberon familiar to the literate. In 1510 Oberion was raised near Halifax, but the conjurer confessed himself a trickster.¹ Earlier still, in 1444, a man was pilloried in London, 'the whyche wrought by a wycked spyryte the whyche was callyd Oberycom'.² It is clear that the name was already in native popular tradition before it was imported in the Romance.

These spirits were raised in 'shew stones', or crystals, and some connection with them might partly account for the small size of the Elizabethan fairies. Amylion, for instance, one of the servants of Lord Curzon, who had a licence to seek for treasure in the twelfth year of King Henry VIII, gave evidence of the manner in which it was done. It was thought necessary first to get power over a spirit, who would know where treasure was hidden and also give help against any supernatural guardian who might have been set over it.

The said Amylyon also saith he was at Saunders when Sir Robert Cromer held upon a ston; but he coude not perceyve any thing thereby; but he sede that George Dowsing dede aryse in a glasse a litull thing of the length of an ynche or ther about, but whether it

¹ G. L. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (Cambridge, Mass.), 1928, p. 208.

² *The Gregory Chronicle*, Camden Society, New Series XVII, p. 185.

was a spiret or a shadowe he cannot tell, but the said George said it was a spirett.¹

Of the books of magic left to us there is one in the Bodleian Library which has features of special interest. It is a small, vellum-bound book in an early-seventeenth-century handwriting, number e Mus. 173, and it contains in a small compass so great a variety of spells and treatises that it might be worth publication. Prospero's book would be a more learned one than this, and yet this would give a fair notion of what his was like. There are directions in it for making circles and consecrating the magician's implements, experiments of love and to find treasure, to break enchantments, to discover thieves, to cause a woman to tell in her sleep what she has done, the names of spirits, and all the usual traffic of a magician; but among these there are one or two recipes that depend rather on folk-lore than on the usual rigmarole of book magic. One in particular is so germane to our purpose as to deserve quotation in full. Immediately before it is *The Call of Oberion into a Crystal Stone*, which follows the usual methods of these books. But the experiment itself, described in mongrel language as *Experimentum optimum verissimum for the fairies*, is a pure piece of folk-lore:

In the night before the newe moone, or the same night, or the night after the newe moone, or els the night before the full moone, the night of the full, or the night after the full moone, goe to the house where the fairies mayds doe use and provyde you a fayre and cleane buckett or payle cleane washt with cleere water therein and sett yt by the chimney syde or where fyre is made, and having a fayre newe towell or one cleane washt by and so departe till the morninge, then be thou the first that shall come to the buckett or water before the some ryse, and take yt to the lyght, that you find upon the water a whyte ryme like rawe milk or grease, take yt by with a silver spoone, and put yt into a cleane sawcer then the next night following come to the same house agayne before 11 of the clocke at night, makeinge a good fire with sweet woods and sett upon the table a newe towell or one cleane washt and upon yt 3 fyne loaves of newe mangett, 3 newe knyves wyth whyte haftes and a newe cuppe full of newe ale, then sett your selfe downe by the fyre in a chaire with your face towards the table, and anoynt youre eyes with the same creame or oyle aforesayd. Then you shall see

¹ *Norfolk Archaeology*, Vol. I, Norwich, p. 53.

come by you thre fairye maydes, and as they passe by they will obey you with beeking their heades to you, and like as they doe to you, so doe to them, but saye nothing. Suffer the first whatsoever she be, to passe, for she is malignant, but to the second or third as you like best reach forth your hand and pluck her to you, and wyth fewe words aske her when she will apoynt a place to meete you the next morninge for to assoyle such questions as you will demand of her; and then yf she will graunt you suffer her to depart and goe to her companye till the houre appoynted, but misse her not at the tyme and place. then will the other in the meane tyme whyle you are talkinge with her, goe to the table and eat of that ys ther, then will they depart from you, and as they obey you, doe you the like to them sayinge nothinge, but letting them depart quyetlye. Then when your houre is come to meete, say to her your mynde, for then will she come alone. Then covenant with her for all matters convenient for your purpose and she wilbe alwayes with you of this assure yourselfe for it is proved. ffinis.

The preparation for the fairies is almost exactly like that of the fairy bower in Adam de la Halle's *Jeu Adam*.¹ Even the white-hafted knives are the same. It is also very like the preparation for a vision of future husbands in an anecdote in Bovey's *Pandæmonium*. But the most suggestive point of all is the means of obtaining the fairy ointment. Though the preparation on the second night is only for the fairy maids it is clear that on the first night the fairy mothers must have been there as well, washing their children in the water set ready for them. The scum on the water is the fairy ointment with which the fairy midwife and Cherry of Zennor anointed their charges' eyes. Here is no protective circle, no prayers, no names of power; we have left the strained company of the magicians and are back in the countryside, where the fairies are natural company.

¹ Adam de la Halle, *Le Jeu Adam, ou de la Feuille. Œuvres Complètes du Trouvère Adam de la Halle* (Paris, 1872).

Nine

FAIRIES AND GHOSTS

EVER since the first traceable beginnings of fairy beliefs the dead have been curiously entangled with fairies in popular tradition. Some people have argued that the fairies and the dead are identical, but this is an over-simplification. Some fairies almost certainly derive from ancient gods and some from lesser Nature spirits, and even those who are most closely connected with the dead are generally supposed to be those who died under some special circumstances. It is arguable that the greater part of the British fairies derive from ancient ancestor worship, but it cannot be put definitely to the proof. It is certain at least that by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when there were still a number of people who believed in fairies, there were few who would have regarded them as exactly identical with the dead.

It was one of the most commonly recorded of fairy adventures to visit a fairy hill and meet neighbours there who had long been supposed to be dead, but it was most usually said that these had been carried away by the fairies and could still be rescued. The story of Tacksman's Ox¹ is an example of this belief, and the tradition about Robert Kirk which I mentioned in Chapter Three. In Scotland the identity was often closer, and the fairies were people who had died under certain conditions, in twilight, or cut off in some way before their allotted span, or unbaptized. Kirk goes so far as to say that the fairies are departed spirits

¹ Appendix II, No. 19.

clothed in bodies made of their alms-deeds in this life. In an even more significant passage he says:

There be many Places called Fairie-hills, which the Mountain People think impious and dangerous to peel or discover, by taking Earth or Wood from them; superstitiously believing the Souls of their Predicessors to dwell there. And for that End say they a Mote or Mount was dedicate beside every Church-yard, to receive the Souls till their Adjacent Bodies arise, and so become as a Fairie-hill; they useing Bodies of Aire when called Abroad. They also affirme those Creatures that move invisibly in a House, and cast hug(e) great Stones, but do no much Hurt, because counter-wrought by some more courteous and Charitable Spirits that are everywhere ready to defend Men (Dan. 10. 13), to be Souls that have not attained their rest, thorough a vehement Desire of revealing a Murther or notable injurie done or receaved, or a Treasure that was forgot in their Lifytyme on Earth, which when disclos'd to a Conjuror alone, the Ghost quite removes.¹

In modern times in Ireland Evan Wentz in trying to discover how people accounted for the fairies, found a considerable number who thought that they were some class or other of the dead; one suggestion was that they were the ghosts of the Druids.² We might deduce from these beliefs that the fairies are the pagan dead, and are reinforced by any modern pagans whom they can carry away. In the West Country, for instance, white moths are called 'Pisgies', and are said to be the souls of unchristianed children.³ And the common fairy habit of stealing unbaptized babies might have its origin in the same belief. A curious sidelight on this can be found in Sampson's *Vow Breaker*, in which the unbaptized baby is called 'The Little Pagan' and his grandfather has to take off his hat to him as if he were a being with some special powers.⁴ It seemed that a certain numinousness attached to the unbaptized, by anticipation, it might be, of a possible death that might attach it to the fairy host.

Many folk stories are told indifferently of the fairies and the dead. *The Fairy Funeral*⁵ told by Hunt of Lelant Church is very like a Scandinavian story of a ghostly congregation in a church

¹ R. Kirk, *The Secret Commonwealth* (Stirling, 1933), p. 79.

² E. Wentz, *Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (Oxford, 1911).

³ See Appendix I.

⁴ W. Sampson, *The Vow Breaker, or the Faire Maide of Clifton* (London, 1636).

⁵ Appendix II, No. 17.

inadvertently attended by a living woman.¹ The ghosts, however, were more dangerous than the fairies. The story in Glanvil's *Sadducismus Triumphatus* of a servant who was nearly carried off by a strange company dancing and playing cards might well have been a story of fairies, though they were said to be the dead. On the other hand Bovet's *Fairy Market* was very like a gathering of ghosts. As we have already seen in many quotations, hobgoblins, devils, the fairies and the dead are curiously entangled. William Warner's *Albion's England* contains an excellent example of this mingling of the ghosts, devils and fairies of popular belief, with the infernal deities of classical literature thrown in to make good measure.

Nor thinke he dreamed this in vaine that dreamed this of late:
One seemed to have passed *Stix*, and entring *Plutoes* gate,
Saw *Hecate* new canonized the Soverantissee of hell,
And *Pluto* bad it holiday for all which there did dwell.
Sterne *Minos* and grim *Radimant*, descend their duskie roomes;
The Docke was also cleare of Ghosts, adjorn'd to after doomes:
The Furies and the deadly Sinnes, with their invective scroles
Depart the Barre; the Feendes rake up their ever-burning Coles.
The Elves and Fairies, taking fists, did hop a merrie Round:
And Cerberus had lap enough, and Charon leisure found:
The airy Sprights, the walking Flames and Goblins great and small
Had theare good cheere, and company, and sport the divell and all.²

In this passage, however—a description of a kind of refrigerarium—it is clear that the fairies were supposed to be devils, not ghosts. The extreme Puritan belief, as we have seen was that all fairies were devils; and indeed so far as Puritanism was operative it tended to weaken the popular connection between the fairies and the dead, for the orthodox Protestant belief was that the dead could not walk, since there was no middle place between heaven and hell, and the wicked were confined to hell, while the blessed had no desire to leave heaven. This doctrine, however, gave back with one hand what it took with the other, for, since ghosts and those apparitions raised by necromancers were not the spirits of men but devils masquerading in their forms they might well be described as hobgoblins or fairies, for these also were lesser devils.

¹ W. A. Craigie, *Scandinavian Folk-Lore* (1896), p. 318.

² W. Warner, *Albion's England* (London, 1602), p. 85.

In *Albion's England* we can see how even Warner, an extreme Puritan, accepted the gods of classical Hades as living spirits, and that this was no mere literary or allegorical allusion can be seen from the magical manuscripts which I have already cited in which Rhadamanthus and other infernal spirits are solemnly conjured. It is a striking example of the influence of literature upon popular tradition. With the ghosts of Elizabethan drama, however, we come upon more direct literary borrowing. It is a commonplace that they owe their existence to classical tragedy, and particularly to the dramas of Seneca. There are many types of ghost story and aspects of ghost belief which were known to the Elizabethans, but which were used by them slightly, or not at all; whilst the avenging spectre appears again and again, sometimes obligingly quoting Seneca for us, so as to lay at rest any doubt as to its origin. The *Tenne Tragedies of Seneca*, Englished by various hands, and collected in 1581, continued for some time to be the only English translation. Their language was soon felt to be ridiculous by the perceptive, but they long exercised an influence upon drama, and did not kill the even greater influence of the originals by their grotesqueness. The Banquet of Horrors struck the taste of the time between wind and water. It was the most satisfactory thing to be blood-curdling and classical at once, it was indeed to get the best out of both worlds. The Senecal man pleased the philosopher in the audience, whilst the horrors tickled the groundlings. But, though the dramatists felt themselves to be faithful followers of the Senecan tradition, their ghosts are as characteristic of their period as Inigo Jones's classical costume designs are of the Jacobean. No man can walk abroad save on his own shadow, and an artist is often most characteristic when he imagines himself to be most derivative.

The Senecan ghost, whether in Seneca's own plays or in those attributed to him, was already the sophistication of a folk belief. It sometimes seems as if Seneca treated his ghosts as convenient abstractions to set the mood of the play; and believed in them no more than Hardy believed in the abstracted emotions who act as chorus to *The Dynasts*. This literary use of mythological or abstract personages is especially helpful to the dramatist in indicating the scope and focus of his subject; but it removed his supernatural characters a long way from their origin. Sophis-

ticated though it may be, however, Seneca's ghost reminds us of the ancestral manes from which it derived—the hungry, dangerous spirits of the dead, who still had a concern in the affairs of their descendants. They were often not ghosts in the sense that we use the word, that is apparitions to human eyes or ears, but rather the spirits of the dead crying out on the Furies for vengeance, or working imperceptibly on the minds of their descendants, like the spirit of Tantalus in *Thyestes*. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, one of the earliest and most famous of the revenge plays, has a ghost like this. He is not, as one might expect, the ghost of the murdered Horatio, but of his friend Andreas, who had met his death quite legitimately in battle, and who acts as a prologue and chorus to the play, urging the Spirit of Vengeance on to a rather belated action. In the play itself there is no supernatural intervention.

It was not long so; the folk-lore ghost of a murdered man making a direct appearance to plead for vengeance soon held the stage. A fair sample of the explicit and talkative Elizabethan ghosts is Andrugio in *Antonio's Revenge* (1599) by John Marston. He appears freely in the play, first from his tomb and afterwards in his bed. Though monstrously revengeful against his murderer, he forgives his wife for the complaisance with which she receives his rivals' addresses, and induces his son to forgive her. Albert's ghost, who is more reserved, occasionally joins in the cry for vengeance. Andrugio's first appearance is as good an example of his style as any.

The Ghost of ANDRUGIO Rises. Thy pangs of anguish rip my cerecloth up:

And loe the ghoast of ould *Andrugio*
Forsakes his coffin. *Antonio*, revenge.
I was impoyson'd by *Piero's hand*:
Revenge my bloode; take spirit gentle boy:
Revenge my bloode. Thy *Mellida*, is chaste:
Onely to frustrate thy pursuite in love,
Is blaz'd unchaste. Thy mother yeelds consent
To be his wife, and give his bloode a sonne,
That made her husbandlesse, and doth complot
To make her sonlesse: but before I touch
The banks of rest, my ghost shall visite her.
Thou vigor of my youth, juyce of my love,

Seize on revenge, graspe the stern bended front
 Of frowning vengeance, with unpaized clutch.
 Alarum *Nemesis*, rouse up thy blood,
 Invent some stratagem of vengeance:
 Which, but to thinke on, may like lightning glide,
 With horror through thy breast; Remember this,
*Scelera non ulcisceris, nisi vincis.*¹

This ghost was evidently felt by Marston to be purely Senecan; but there is one point to be noted at the beginning of his speech which belongs as much to later as to classical folk-lore. However anxious Andrugio may have been to appear he seems to have been unable to do so until recalled by the excessive grief of his son. The belief that the dead are hindered from rest by too vehement grief recurs throughout later European folk-lore, but was not so common in earlier times, when exaggerated tokens of mourning were exacted as the tribute of the dead. The idea expressed in *The Unquiet Grave* is found in much of our own folk-lore:

What is it that you want of me,
 And will not let me sleep?
 Your salten tears they trickle down,
 And wet my winding sheet.²

This idea has, perhaps accidentally, crept into the presentation of Andrugio; but on the whole the Elizabethan dramatists, in tragedy at least, are bound to the Senecan ghost, as they understood him, and to that ghost in one form. Rather more variety crept into the treatment on the Jacobean stage, although the Senecan tradition had not yet loosed its hold. The dramatists would have been wise to abandon it; for by the turn of the century it had already received its supreme expression in *Hamlet*. If we want to see what genius can make of a fashionable convention we have only to read *Hamlet* immediately after *Antonio's Revenge*. If one could read *Antonio's Revenge* with no previous knowledge of *Hamlet* I think one would say that it would be impossible to infuse any numinousness into ghosts so explicit, so conversational, and so utilitarian in their appearances. Marston, we should feel, had done his best in a blood-curdling

¹ *Antonio's Revenge*, Act III, Sc. i. *The Plays of John Marston* (London, 1934), Vol. 1, p. 99.

² S. Baring-Gould, *A Book of Folk-Lore* (London, n.d.), p. 134. Motif (E.381).

prologue to get his audience into the right mood; but, given such ghosts, his task was an impossible one. His only course, if he wished to make the ghost effective, would be to make it vaguer, more inhuman, less obvious. Yet in *Hamlet* Shakespeare took a ghost almost identical with Andrugio in scope and type, as definite and precise in its statements, still more characterized, and succeeded triumphantly with it. His ghost, like Marston's, declares itself to have been poisoned, urges its son to revenge, reappears to whet his purpose, and behaves with tender forbearance to its inconstant wife. Like the regular Senecan ghost it describes the pains of its prison house. But the whole thing is presented with such tact, and such delicate intellectual variation that it is difficult to feel the resemblance between Andrugio and the older Hamlet. In the first place, what would be described on the stage as the ghost's *feed* is a tremendous piece of artistry. The cold battlements, the frightened sentinels, the incredulous student so soon to be convinced, are better than any prologue. The shades of different opinion set the scene in the round. The majesty and silence of the apparition, and the awe which follows the clash of the useless weapons communicate themselves to the audience; but beyond these Shakespeare lent credibility to his ghost by mixing current beliefs with the Senecan convention. The beautiful passage upon the cock crowing at Christmas was a late piece of folk-lore, running counter to the older belief that Christmas was a time of special danger from spirits; and even if it was believed by some only of the audience, it would heighten the actuality of the scene. An even greater sense of reality must have been given by the fear shared by Horatio and Hamlet that the ghost was no ghost but a devil. The current Protestant belief was that, since the soul went at death to heaven or hell, it was impossible that it could walk, and that all ghostly apparitions were devils in masquerade. This point is made, lightly though clearly, in *Tarlton's Neves out of Purgatorie* (1590) which, though humorous in intention, is a good illustration of the popular ontology of his time. Some of the beliefs expressed in it are the same as those of the *Lyke Wake Dirge*, of which a version is given by Aubrey, and it is a clear example of the popular mixture of fairy and ghost beliefs.

As thus I lay in a slumber, me thought I sawe one attired in russet with a buttond cap on his head, a great bag by his side, and a

strong bat in his hand, so artificially attired for a Clowne as I began to call *Tarltons* woonted shape to remembrance, as he drew more neere and he came within the compasse of mine eie, to judge it was no other by the verye ghoast of *Richard Tarlton*, which pale and wan sat him down by me on the grasse. I that knew him to be dead, at the sodaine sight fell into a great feare, insomuch that I sweat in my sleep: which he perceiving, with his woonted countenance full of smiles, began to comfort me thus. What olde acquaintance, a man or a mouse? Hast thou not heard me verifie, that a souldier is a souldier if he have but a blew hose on his head? feare not me man, I am but *Dick Tarlton* that could quaint it in the Court, and clowne it on the stage: that had a quarte of wine for my freend, and a sword for my foe: who hurt none being alive, and will not prejudice any being dead: for although thou see me heere in likenes of a spirite, yet thinke me to bee one of those *Familiares Lares* that were rather pleasantly disposed then endued with any hurtfull influence, as *Hob Thrust*, *Robin Goodfellow* and such like spirites as they tearme them of the buttry famozed in every olde wives Chronicle for their mad merrie pranks. Therefore sith my appearance to thee is in a resemblance of a spirite, think that I am as pleasant a goblin as the rest, and will make thee as merry before I part, as ever *Robin Goodfellow* made the cuntry wenches at their Cream-boules. With this he drewe more neere me and I starting backe cried out:—*In nomine Jesu*, avoid Sathan, for ghost thou art none, but a very divell for the soules of them which are departed if the sacred principles of theologie be true, never returne into the world againe till the generall resurrection: for either are they plast in heaven, from whence they come not to intangle themselves with other cares, but sit continually before the seat of the Lambe singing *Alleluia* to the highest, or else they are in hell: And this is a profound and certain aphorisme, *Ab inferis nulla est redemptio*. Upon these conclusive premises, depart from me Sathan the resemblance of whomsoever thou doost carrye. At this pitching his staffe down on the end, and crossing one leg over another, he answered thus: why you horson dunce, think you to set *Dick Tarlton non plus* with your aphorismes? no, I have yet left one chapter of choplodgick, to tewslite you withall, that you were as good as George a Greene I would not take the foile at your hands: & that is this, I perceive by your arguments your inward opinion, and by your wise discretion what pottage you love: I see no sooner a rispe at the house end or a maipole before the doore, but I cry there is a paltry alchouse: & as soon as I heare the principles of your religion, I can saye, oh there is a Calvinist: what doo you make heaven and hell *contraria*

immediata, so contrarie, that there is no meane betwixt them, but that either a mans soule must in post haste goe presently to God, or else with a whirlwind and a vengeance goe to the divell? yes, yes my good brother, there is *quoddam tertium* a third place that all our great grandmothers talkt of, that *Dant* hath so learnedly writ of, and that is Purgatorie.

Tarlton's Description of the Road to Purgatory.

After thy breath hath left thy bodye, and thy soule is set free from this vile prison of earth, where it hath been long inclosed, then doth it wander forward into a faire broade waye, where at the turning of a crosse there are three passages, one on the right hand, and that is verye narrowe and leadeth unto heaven: The second on the left hand, is broad and faire, over a green vale, and that conducteth unto hell: now betwixt these is there a lane neither too broad, nor too narrow, and that is the high way to Purgatory: wherein after you have wandred a while, you come to a bridge, framed all of Needle pointes, and over that you must passe bare-footed, as the first penance for your formost offences. Then sit to have a little ease after that sharpe absolution, shall you come into a faire medowe, and that is all over growne with *Ave maries* and *Creedes*, this is to put you in remembrance of our Ladies Psalter, which if you can say a hundred and fiftie times over before you passe the medow, you escape passing over a whole field of hot burning ploughshares, that day and night lye glowing hotte for such purposes.¹

The possibility of this deception by devils dressed out as ghosts had to be conceded by the Catholics; but they believed that souls in Purgatory were permitted to appear under certain circumstances, and that there might be genuine ghosts. For the purpose of the plot the ghost came explicitly down on the Catholic side, even to the description of the pains of Purgatory; but the question that had been raised had special point at that period, and Hamlet's play was no idle putting-off of time; it was vital to him to know whether the ghost was honest or he was being tricked by a devil into the murder of an innocent man. We have a story, for instance, in Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum* of a hermit being persuaded to kill his own father by a devil dis-

¹ *Tarlton's Newes out of Purgatorie* (London, circa 1590). (Reprinted London, 1884.) There is an excellent essay by May Yardley, *The Catholic Position in the Ghost Controversy of the Sixteenth Century*, appended to the Oxford University Press edition of Lavater (1929).

guised as an angel.¹ At the date when it was first performed the topicality of the question must have added to the convincingness of the whole play; even now the varying predispositions of the characters give it a great air of reality.

Another delicate point is the invisibility of the ghost to Gertrude. Shakespeare could not have afforded to have him invisible to anyone in the first scene, for it is necessary that we should be thoroughly convinced of his existence; yet we have only to imagine Gertrude seeing the ghost to realize what a sudden invasion of doubt that would cause. She was not the kind of person to see ghosts. Further, this partial invisibility is used to make us feel that it is a supernatural creature, and to prevent that effect of mechanical slickness given by the appearance of the ghost in most of the revenge dramas.

A little earlier than *Hamlet*, in *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare, using Plutarch as an authority, suggests that the apparition of Julius Caesar was a demon, or attendant spirit, rather than a ghost;² though the changed personality of ghosts makes their identity difficult to determine at any time. The ghosts in *Richard III* are in the pure Senecan tradition, but only differ from the most usual of the folk-lore ghosts by following a person rather than being bound to a place. In both plays the lights burn blue as the ghosts appear.

After *Hamlet* Shakespeare leaves the Senecan ghost; and the ghost in *Macbeth* is very differently treated. It is possible, and even advisable, to represent Banquo's ghost by an empty chair; Hamlet could never, as the old Punch joke says, give up the ghost. A single play is too slight evidence to build upon, but the change might be due to the growing authority of the Protestant ghost belief. The play is at least so planned that it loses nothing if the ghost is supposed to be an illusion of Macbeth's guilty conscience. The air-drawn dagger prepares us for such a possibility, and Lady Macbeth even reminds us of it when the ghost appears. The apparition of Banquo raised by the witches, like the other personages of their show, would be diabolic rather than ghostly.

The scattered ghost references throughout Shakespeare's

¹ J. Wierus, *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (Basle, 1586), Bk. I, cap. 13, p. 76.

² *Julius Caesar*, Act IV, Sc. iii. *Complete Works of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1914), p. 972.

plays are generally true to folk tradition, and often highly poetic in something of the ballad manner. Two of them occur in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both spoken by Puck:

And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds have gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.¹

Here Puck seems to say that the ghosts' nocturnal habits are voluntary; but perhaps rather means that the damned ghosts, the suicides by land or water, prefer to go to grave before the other ghosts lest they should be seen in twilight. He may have meant that the hell-bound ghosts are allowed a shorter time than those condemned to Purgatory. There is a general folk belief, shared by Hamlet's father, that ghosts who delayed into daylight were punished.

The cock doth crow, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.²

Witches, ghosts and fairies have an equal dislike of cockcrow.

So one tels us, That when the Cock croweth the solemn meetings
of Witches are dissolved.³

and,

Like Fayries yet we here could stay
Till Village Cocks proclame the Day.⁴

Oberon's reply to Puck is that though ghosts were under this restraint, fairies are not, a statement with which all would not have agreed. It was a common belief that fairies must vanish at cockcrow, even if the cock crowed out of season. Marcellus corroborates this:

¹ *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act III, Sc. ii, ll. 380-7.

² Motif (E.452). *The Wife of Ushers Well*, in *Child's English and Scottish Ballads* (New York, 1957), Vol. II, p. 239.

³ Casaubon's preface to *The True and Faithful Relation* (1659).

⁴ Cartwright, *The Lady Errant* (1651), Epilogue, p. 81.

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.¹

This belief is illustrated in the story of *The Smith and the Fairies*.² Ghosts, witches and fairies are combined in Marcellus' speech in an association common in folk belief. Puck's other ghost reference is an evening, not a morning one.

Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide.³

A folk belief not often used in Elizabethan writings is that of the devil ghost, Herne the Hunter, mentioned in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The evil fairies and the devils are little differentiated, and he might be either.

There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner.⁴

The dirge in *Cymbeline* is touching in its attempt to protect the innocent and harmless ghost from being terrified by malignant spirits, or molested by human curiosity.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!⁵

¹ *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act I, Sc. i, ll. 158-64.

² Appendix II, No. 15.

³ *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act V, Sc. ii, ll. 9-12.

⁴ *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act IV, Sc. iv, ll. 29-35. Motif (E.501.13.1.2).

⁵ *Cymbeline*. Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act IV, Sc. ii, ll. 270-5.

Even in folk belief, where the dead are usually feared, love will follow individual spirits, and try to secure their good, though they be ghosts. So in the West of England there was often a race between funerals, for it was believed that the latest arrival in the churchyard must guard it till a new arrival comes; and the mourners were anxious to spare their dead so painful a duty.¹ So the brothers imagine the gentle spirit banished far away by an exorcist, or raised from sleep by a witch, or frightened by an evil inhabitant of its own world; and they wish to protect it from such dangers. The pain and reluctance of the dead man reanimated by necromancy in Lucan's *Pharsalia* may have been present to Shakespeare's mind.

The vampire and the reanimated corpse of Scandinavian tradition are aspects of ghost belief known to the Elizabethans and Jacobeans, which were neglected by the dramatists, particularly in tragedy. The Elizabethan ghosts were visible, often only too audible, but not tangible, although they could occasionally manipulate solid properties. The ghosts of the murdered senators in Massinger's *Roman Actor*,² for instance, although they appeared only in a dream, carried away the statue of Athene between them. The Scandinavian ghosts, on the other hand, were tangible and physically dangerous, vampires rather than apparitions. They aroused a primitive type of ghost fear; and this ravening spirit comes in some ways near to the original of the Senecan ghost. The Jacobeans were familiar with a typical and interesting example in Saxo Grammaticus, the story of Asmund's conflict with the vampire spirit of Aswid. It is interesting because the ghost had completely changed in affections and character after death. The compact by which the survivor of the two friends should be walled up in the other's tomb arose out of their heartfelt affection; but death cancelled that. Every night the dead man came to life again, a ravenous ghoul; and when he had devoured his horse and dog he attacked his friend, who only escaped by chance from the tomb, wounded and mortally exhausted.³ Nothing quite like that distortion of character appears in the

¹ Thistleton Dyer, *The Ghost World* (London, 1893), p. 344. J. M. Macpherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North East of Scotland* (London, 1929), pp. 127-8.

² *The Roman Actor*, Act V, Sc. i. *The Plays of Phillip Massinger*, ed. Cunningham (London, n.d.), p. 219.

³ Saxo Grammaticus, *The Nine Books of Danish History* (London, 1905), pp. 332-5.

Elizabethan drama. Andrugio's ghost shows an inhuman cruelty; but in the overstrained temper of the play it is impossible to say whether this is an intentional effect. The rawhead-and-bloody-bones so often mentioned by the Elizabethans was probably a native ghost of the ghoulish Scandinavian type; and many other ghoulish spirits existed in British folk-lore; such as the red-caps,¹ who inhabit lonely peel towers where violence has been committed, and love to redip their caps in human blood, or the beautiful baobhan siths,² who allure young men to dance with them, and suck their blood as they dance. The Irish story of *Trunk-without-a-Head*³ is an example of a dangerously murderous ghost, who was as explicit as any of Chapman's, for he appeared in court to assist at the conviction of his murderer. A type as primitive, of the nature of the lares, is the grateful soul of the man whose body has been saved from indignity, and who comes to life to serve his benefactor. Peele, whose *Old Wives Tale* is rich in folk-lore, uses this story, which occurs in Grimm, Hans Andersen, and the Irish folk-tale of *The King of Ireland's Son and the Well of the Western World*:⁴ and is indeed common through European and Asiatic folk-lore. The skeleton of the story is used by Massinger in *The Fatal Dowry*, but the supernatural element has disappeared.⁵

Ben Jonson only uses a ghost in his direct imitation of Seneca, and the ghost in *Catiline* adds nothing to the tradition of English Senecan ghosts. Of all the Jacobean Chapman treats the Senecan ghost in the most Elizabethan manner; he has not noticed that Shakespeare has said the last word on the subject. The ghosts in the two Bussy d'Ambois plays are a curious study, though difficult to pronounce upon because the living characters are so fluctuating. The Friar, who, though generally described as a worthy man, has been a magician and has betrayed his office as confessor in a most infamous way, becomes a sanctimonious ghost, who is yet bent upon the same courses as he followed alive. His advice seems to be meant to be good. Its chief intention is to save Bussy from his murderers and to persuade Montsurry to be reconciled to his wife. Some limitations of a ghost's

¹ See Appendix I.

² See Appendix II, No. 18.

³ See Appendix II, No. 14.

⁴ See Appendix II, No. 8.

⁵ There is a detailed study of this subject in *The Grateful Dead*, by G. H. Gerould (London, 1908).

powers are artistically necessary; but the Friar's seem to be rather arbitrarily imposed, considering his usual mobility and explicitness. It is not necessary for him to be conjured before he can speak, and his presence strikes little fear, except into the underlings.

His first appearance is well enough, heralded not by cold and dimming candles, but by heat, close air and thunder, as if he were a diabolic spirit, not a ghost. The beginning of his speech has a touch of numinousness, but the end is almost casual.

Note what I want, dear son, and be forewarn'd:
O there are bloody deeds past and to come:—
I cannot stay; a fate doth ravish me;
I'll meet thee in the chamber of thy love.¹

Bussy, who has shown a little uneasiness before the spirit appears, receives it almost nonchalantly. It is apparently the most normal thing in the world to see a ghost.

What dismal change is here; the good old Friar
Is murder'd, being made known to serve my love;
And now his restless spirit would forewarn me
Of some plot dangerous and imminent.
Note what he wants? He wants his upper weed,
He wants his life and body: which of these
Should be the want he means, and may supply me
With any fit forewarning?²

In spite of this, and of the even more explicit warning of the devil Behemoth, whom Bussy proceeds to raise, reminded by the ghost's visit of a previous supernatural experience which had slipped his memory, Bussy is completely deceived by Montsurry, disguised in the Friar's gown. Like Hamlet, he is aware that ghosts may turn out to be devils. 'Oh lying Spirit,' he exclaims, 'To say the Friar was dead! I'll now believe Nothing of all his forg'd predictions,'³ and he follows Montsurry into the trap. The Friar, finding it useless to warn one victim, speeds away to Tamyra, and tries to rouse her to call out to her lover. Bussy scorns even this warning, believing himself to be invincible; and the Friar, after frightening back the murderers for a

¹ *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, Act V, Sc. iii. *The Tragedies of George Chapman*, ed. by T. M. Parrott (London, 1910), p. 65.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 67.

time, and warning Bussy of an attack in his rear, has to abandon him to his fate, and concentrate on making the peace between Montsurry and Tamyra. It is only fair to say that Bussy d'Ambois is hampered in the fight by Tamyra's request that he will not hurt her husband. Even so he dies not so much from his wounds as from a broken heart at seeing how Tamyra has been ill-used. When he has died the Friar pronounces a funeral oration over him and disappears.

In the next play Bussy's ghost is as full of practical advice, and as calmly received. This is to be expected from Clermont, who is the perfect Senecal man, but the others take the presence of a ghost almost equally as a matter of course. When the ghost suddenly intervenes in a dispute among the conspirators no one seems much perturbed.

UMBRA. Away, dispute no more; get up and see!

Clermont must author this just tragedy.

COUNTESS. Who's that?

RENEL. The spirit of Bussy.

TAMYRA. O, my servant!

Let us embrace.

UMBRA. Forbear! The air in which

My figure's likeness is impress'd, will blast;

Let my revenge for all loves satisfy,

In which, dame, fear not, Clermont shall not die:

No word dispute more, up, and see th'event. (Exeunt Ladies)

Make the guard sure, Renel; and then the doors

Command to make fast when the Earl is in.

The black, soft-footed hour is now on wing,

Which, for my just wreak, ghosts shall celebrate,

With dances dire and of infernal state.¹

Apart from the unintentional humour of this passage the most interesting thing in it is the theory about the nature of a ghost—that it is, as it were, a piece of electrified air. It comes near to being an arguable scientific hypothesis. Another interesting piece of theory is contained in the reflections of Clermont d'Ambois, always sententious, when he sees the ghost of Bussy, Guise, the Cardinal, Monsieur and Chatillon executing a

¹ *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, Act V, Sc. iii. *The Tragedies of George Chapman*, ed. cit., pp. 138–9.

triumphal dance round the body of Montsurry. His surprise is largely due to his not having known that Guise and the Cardinal were already dead.

How strange is this! the Guise amongst these spirits,
And his great brother Cardinal, both yet living!
And that the rest with them, with joy thus celebrate
This our revenge! This certainly presages
Some instant death both to the Guise and Cardinal.
That the Chatillon's ghost too should thus join
In celebration of this just revenge,
With Guise, that bore a chief stroke in his death,
It seems that now he doth approve the act,
And these true shadows of the Guise and Cardinal,
Fore-running thus their bodies, may approve
That all things to be done, as here we live,
Are done before all times in th'other life.
That spirits should rise in these times yet are fables;
Though learned'st men hold that our sensitive spirits
A little time abide about the graves
Of their deceased bodies, and can take
In cold condens'd air the same forms they had,
When they were shut up in this body's shade.¹

This piece of speculation is an attempt to account for ghosts without contradicting the orthodox Protestant opinion of the time, as well as to account for the wraiths of Guise and the Cardinal. It is a perfectly sound piece of folk belief that the forms of those about to die may be seen amongst the dead. All through rural England it was believed not very long ago that anyone watching in the church porch through the vigils of St. John and St. Mark could see all those who were to die in the course of the year going round the church. Presumably they would be the tail-end of the procession of the dead, which passed by at that time. In many modern ghost stories the apparitions appear at the moment of death to their friends.

I have discussed the ghosts in these two plays at some length because Chapman gives a typical and full presentation of the ghosts of his period. It will be seen that, faithful though they attempt to be to the classical model, there are omissions and additions, and a different focus. The quality which removes these

¹ *Ibid.*, Act V, Sc. v, p. 145.

ghosts furthest from the usual ghost of folk-lore is their pliability. The ghost of Bussy, though bent on revenge against Montsurry, is ready to be on friendly terms with the Guise, who had engineered his death, and had really been more guilty than poor Montsurry, the injured husband. The reason for this forbearance is the lately sprung-up friendship between Clermont and the Guise. The traditional ghost is rarely so adaptable, or so placable. Chapman's ghosts are more practical pieces of machinery and less devices for raising the horror of the atmosphere than his original's. It is likely that he scorned to tickle the common taste by devices for heightening the horror; but it is possible that he would have been ready to give their full horror to the ghosts if he had not been handicapped by the character of his hero. The Senecal man combines badly with the Senecal ghost. If an audience is to feel an emotion it must receive some lead from the stage. If the actors appear unmoved, the audience will be so too. Shakespeare, however, surmounts this difficulty too. Horatio is the Senecal man, and his steady sense is the best evidence of the ghost's reality.

The Second Maiden's Tragedy has some variations on the ghost theme. The ghost walks because her body has been taken from the tomb by the amorous duke, whose dishonourable attentions she had escaped by suicide. The opening of the tomb is the prelude to her appearance, and is enlivened by some comic talk by the soldiers, who have their own ghost fears.

2ND SOLDIER. I fear nothinge but the whoorish ghost of a queane, I kept once, she swore she would so haunt me, I should never pray in quiet for her, and I have kept myself from Church these fiftene years to prevent her. . . .

3RD SOLDIER. I love not to disquiet ghostes
Of any people lyving.¹

The conversation between Giovanni and the spirit of his lady at the empty tomb is in something the same tone of feeling as *The Unquiet Grave*. Later the ghost appears by her own body, and accompanies it to the grave. If it were adroitly contrived this might be effective. The ghost appears a little too explanatory, but is not in reality more so than Hamlet's father. The

¹ *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, Act IV, Sc. iii (Licensed 1611). The Malone Society Reprints (1909), pp. 55 and 56.

difference is in the weaker imagination and the less delicate management.

On the whole the Jacobean ghosts tended to be more sparingly used than the Elizabethan. Susannah's ghost, in *The Witch of Edmonton*, stands silently beside her husband's bed, and *The Revenger's Tragedy* has no ghost at all. A portentous star, and thunder and lightning are the only supernatural touches that soften that dry, dark, lurid sky. The ghosts in Massinger's *Unnatural Combat* are silent, and express their meaning only by their gestures. The ghost in Middleton's *Changeling* is silent too, and deeply effective in his silence. In Webster's *White Divil* too there is a silent ghost, a walking figure from an emblem book, in a leather cassock and breeches, boots and a cowl, like Robin Goodfellow. Ghosts and hobgoblins were both sometimes dressed in leather. Brachiano's ghost, however, beyond this traditional costume carries a pot of lilies with a skull hid in it, and after standing silently, throws the earth over Flamineo, and shows him the skull.¹ There is a curious passage in *The White Divil*, which also connects ghosts with hobgoblins:

I pray speake Sir, our Italian Church-men
Make us beleve, dead men hold conference
With their familiars, and many times
Will come to bed to them, and eat with them.²

There were, however, exceptions among the less fashionable dramatists. Sampson's *Vow Breaker* gives us a late example of a conversational ghost. Sampson was a Nottingham man, who presumably wrote for a provincial audience; and his play uses a theme very common in folk-lore, that of the broken troth-plight, and the ghost who comes to fetch his false love. Many folk customs and beliefs and contemporary jokes are touched on in this play. There is, for instance, a really funny version of the joke of the Presbyterian cat, and some birth and marriage customs of a good deal of interest. But though the ghost is essentially a folk-lore ghost, his talk is thick with classical references.

Thou can'st not fly me,
There is no Cavern in the Earth's vast entrails

¹ *The White Divil*, Act V, Sc. iv. *The Works of Webster* (London, 1927), Vol. I, p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

But I can through as pearcant as the light,
 And finde thee, though thou wer't entomb'd in stone,
 Thou can'st not catch my unsubstantiall part,
 For I am aire, and am not to be touch'd.
 From flameing fires of burning *Phlegeton*,
 I have a time limited to walke,
 Untill the morning Cocke shall summon me
 For to retire to misty *Erebus*.
 My pilgrimage has no cessation,
 Untill I bring thee with me to the place
 Where *Rhadamant*, and sable *Æacus* dwell
 Alive or dead, tis I that must enjoy thee.¹

This is poor enough stuff, and derivative; but where we come to the genuine folk-lore it is more vigorous. A piece of true folk belief not otherwise used in the drama is that the ghost can do Anne no harm while she is with child. As soon as she is delivered her time of peril begins. Anne is the only person who can see the ghost, and this gives a touch of subtlety to the presentation.

ANNE. Are you blinde, or will you make your selves so?
 See! how like a dreadfull magistrate it standes,
 Still pointing at me the blacke offender;
 And like a cunning poysoner, will not kill me,
 But lets me linger on, for daies, and yeares.
 It stares, beckons, points, to the peece of Gold
 We brake betweene us; looke, looke there, here there!

BOOTS. I see nothing, perceive nothing, feele nothing!

URSULA. Nor I, no quicke thing, neyther cloath'd nor nak'd.

BOOTS. No, no, no! you dranke *Baulme*, *Burrage* or *Buglosse* last night to bed-ward, that makes you thinke on your dreames this morning.

ANNE. But I will too't, hug, and embrace it.

GHOST. Thy time is not yet come; i'm now exild

I may not touch thee, for thou art with chil'd.

(Exit GHOST)

¹ William Sampson, *The Vow Breaker* (London, 1636), Act III, Sc. i. There is an eighteenth-century chapbook version of the plot called *Bateman's Tragedy* or the *Perjured Bride Justly Rewarded*, which is like the play in all particulars. A late seventeenth-century version is a broadside ballad, *A Godly Warning for Maidens*. It is unlikely that these were taken from the play, as Miles sings a snatch from the ballad in Act V of the play.

ANNE. You do not heare it neyther?

BOOTS. Whom should we heare?

ANNE. Young *Batemans* visage.

In every limbe as perfect as he liv'd.

BOOTS. If it be so, 'tis done by sorcery,

The father has combined, with some witch,

To vex thy quiet patience, and gaine credit,

That he would haunt thee dead, as oft he said,

Hell can put life into a senseles body,

And raise it from the grave, and make it speake;

Use all the faculties alive it did,

To worke the Devill's hellish stratagems!¹

Boots holds the orthodox opinion that ghosts are disguised devils; but Bateman is a genuine ghost of a type very common in folk-lore.² He is used in the next century with an unintentionally comic effect in *Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene*.

If the tragedies follow on the whole a classical rather than a native tradition, the case is different in the comedies and romantic plays. Here we have a variety of ghost treatments and of references to ghost beliefs, particularly in Beaumont and Fletcher. One of the most unusual is the episode of the dead host in Fletcher's *Lover's Progress*. The play is taken with unusual fidelity from d'Audiguier's *Histoire des Amours de Lysandre et de Caliste*; but Fletcher has made some alterations in the ghost story which have changed the motive and the whole atmosphere. D'Audiguier's story is perhaps the commonest of all ghost stories, that of the murdered man who haunts his old home and makes it uninhabitable, until a bold man sleeps there, hears the ghost's story, and lays it by finding the body and giving it burial. Such a story belongs to every age, from Plinius Secundus down to the present. An unusually full seventeenth-century version of it is given in a chapbook published in 1676.³ Here the apparition began in a house in Northampton with poltergeist hauntings, and proved to be that of a man who had been murdered over two hundred and fifty years before, and had been laid by a friar for two hundred and fifty years. He had been murdered while on a journey, and his body hidden in a ditch.

¹ Ibid., Act III, Sc. i.

² Motif (E.210).

³ *The Rest-less Ghost, or Wonderful News from Northamptonshire and Southwark* (London, 1676).

The body was found and buried, but the ghost had still another request to make. He made an appointment with his benefactor to meet him at Southwark, where he led him to a house where papers were hidden. When his property had been equitably disposed of he departed in great joy. This is the normal ghost story in full. D'Audiguier's contains only the murder motive, and he has invested the scene with that urbane and satirical humour which is familiar to us in Perrault's fairy stories. Fletcher has given it another atmosphere, that peculiar touch of pathos, half wistful, half solemn, in which a true ghost story lives. It has not the power of passion behind it that one finds in the great ghost ballads, *The Wife of Usher's Well*, or *Fair Margaret's Ghost*; but it is full of a wistful memory of good fellowship and merry hours turned to dust; and a kind of sense, too, of the affection created by serving, even by trivial services. The light key in which it is written makes it more readily moving than a solemn treatment would do. It is moving to read, and since Fletcher knew his stagecraft would probably be more so in presentation. The first scene of the episode is worth transcribing.

A Country Inn. Enter DORILAUS, CLEANDER, CHAMBERLAIN

CLEANDER. We have supp'd well friend; let our beds be ready,
We must be stirring early.

CHAMBERLAIN. They are made Sir.

DORILAUS. I cannot sleep yet, where's the jovial host
You told me of? 't has been my custom ever
To parley with mine host.

CLEANDER. He's a good fellow,
And such a one I know you love to laugh with;
Go call your Master up.

CHAMBERLAIN. He cannot come Sir.

DORILAUS. Is he a bed with his wife?

CHAMBERLAIN. No certainly.

DORILAUS. Or with some other guests?

CHAMBERLAIN. Neither and't like ye.

CLEANDER. Why then he shall come by your leave my friend,
I'll fetch him up my self.

CHAMBERLAIN. Indeed you'l fail Sir.

DORILAUS. Is he i'th' house?

CHAMBERLAIN. No, but he is hard by Sir;
He's fast in's grave, he has been dead these three weeks.

DORILAUS. Then o' my conscience he will come but lamely
And discourse worse.

CLEANDER. Farewel mine honest Host then,
Mine honest merry Host; will you to bed yet?

DORILAUS. No, not this hour, I prethee sit and chat by me.

CLEANDER. Give us a quart of wine then, we'l be merry.

DORILAUS. A match my Son; pray let your wine be living,
Or lay it by your Master.

CHAMBERLAIN. It shall be quick sir. . . .
(*The chamberlain brings the wine.*)

DORILAUS. Well done; Here's to *Lisander*.

CLEANDER. My full love meets it; make fire in our lodgings,
We'l trouble thee no farther; (*Exit CHAMBERLAIN.*) to your Son.

DORILAUS. Put in *Clorange* too; off with't, I thank ye;
This wine drinks merrier still, O for mine Host now,
Were he alive again, and well dispos'd,
I would so claw his pate.

CLEANDER. Y' are a hard drinker.

DORILAUS. I love to make mine Host drunk, he will lye then
The rarest, and the roundest, of his friends,
His quarrels, and his guests, and they'ore the best bauds too,
Take 'em in that tune.

CLEANDER. You know all.

DORILAUS. I did Son, but time and arms have worn me out.

CLEANDER. 'Tis late Sir, I hear none stirring. (*A lute is struck.*)

DORILAUS. Hark, What's that, a Lute?
'Tis at the door I think.

CLEANDER. The doors are shut fast.

DORILAUS. 'Tis morning sure, the Fiddlers are got up
To fright mens sleeps, have we ne're a pispot ready?

CLEANDER. Now I remember, I have heard mine Host that's dead
Touch a lute rarely, and as rarely sing too,
A brave still mean.

DORILAUS. I would give a brace of *French Crowns*
To see him rise and Fiddle—Hark, a song.

(*Song within.*)

'Tis late and cold, stir up the fire;
Sit close, and draw the Table nigher;

Be merry, and drink wine that's old,
 A hearty medicine 'gainst a cold.
 Your beds of wanton down's the best,
 Where you shall tumble to your rest;
 I could wish you wenches too,
 But I am dead and cannot do;
 Call for the best the house may ring,
 Sack, White, and Claret let them bring,
 And drink apace while breath you have,
 You'll find but cold drink in the grave;
 Plover, Partridge for your dinner,
 And a Capon for the sinner,
 You shall find ready when you are up,
 And your horse shall have his sup:
 Welcom welcom shall flye round,
 And I shall smile, though under ground.

CLEANDER. Now, as I live, it is his voice.

DORILAUS. He sings well, the Devil has a pleasant pipe.

CLEANDER. The fellow lyed sure. (*Enter HOST.*)
 He is not dead, he's here: how pale he looks!

DORILAUS. Is this he?

CLEANDER. Yes.

HOST. You are welcom, noble Gentlemen,
 My brave old guest most welcom.

CLEANDER. Lying knaves,
 To tell us you were dead, come sit down by us,
 We thank ye for your Song.

HOST. Would 't had been better.

DORILAUS. Speak, are ye dead?

HOST. Yes, indeed am I Gentlemen,
 I have been dead these three weeks.

DORILAUS. Then here's to ye, to comfort your cold body.

CLEANDER. What do you mean? stand further off.

DORILAUS. I will stand nearer to him,
 Shall he come out on's coffin to bear us company,
 And we not bid him welcom? come mine Host,
 Mine honest Host, here's to ye.

HOST. Spirits Sir, drink not.

CLEANDER. Why do ye appear?

HOST. To wait upon ye Gentlemen,

'Thas been my duty living, now my farewell;
 I fear you are not us'd accordingly.

DORILAUS. I could wish you warmer company, mine Host,
 How ever we are us'd.

HOST. Next to entreat a courtesie,
 And then I go in peace.

CLEANDER. Is't in our power?

HOST. Yes and 'tis this, to see my body buried
 In holy ground, for now I lye unhallowed,
 By the clark's fault; let my new grave be made
 Amongst good fellows, that have died before me,
 And merry Hostes of my kind.

CLEANDER. It shall be done.

DORILAUS. And forty stoops of wine drunk at thy funeral. . . .

CLEANDER. Pray ye one word more, is't in your power, mine Host,
 Answer me softly, some hours before my death,
 To give me warning?

HOST. I cannot tell ye truly,
 But if I can, so much alive I lov'd ye,
 I will appear again, adieu. (*Exit HOST.*)

DORILAUS. Adieu, sir.

CLEANDER. I am troubl'd; these strange apparitions are
 For the most part fatal.

DORILAUS. This if told, will not
 Find credit, the light breaks apace, let's lie down
 And take some little rest, an hour or two,
 Then do my host's desire, and so return,
 I do believe him.

CLEANDER. So do I, to rest, Sir.¹

The ghost keeps his promise, and comes to Cleander. Indeed the only structural reason for this scene is to give the audience some warning that Cleander's death is to be expected, in a play that is otherwise a comedy. In a way the whole temper and mood of the scene is classical. It reminds one of the little lyric of *Heraclitus* translated by Carey. In spite of the host's desire to be buried in the churchyard, he is a pagan; but it is the kind of paganism that entered into folk-lore. Like Banquo this ghost comes at a wish. It is traditionally a dangerous thing to wish

¹ John Fletcher, *The Lover's Progress*, Sc. i. *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* (Cambridge, 1907), Vol. V, Act III, Sc. i., pp. 113-17.

for the presence of the dead, or indeed for any unspecified visitor. Campbell has a version of *The Horned Women*¹ which shows the danger of even an unprecise wish. Dorilaus was lucky to meet no worse.

The Night Walker, a more farcical piece of work, is one of the plays in which there is a pretended ghost. Shirley's *Witty Fair One* is another. These often contain valuable references to folk beliefs, because the servants' alarms are treated in them. The ghosts feared by the household in *The Night Walker* are of the goblinish, diabolic kind, nearer to the Scandinavian ghosts than the Senecan ones. The servants are alarmed at the wake of the heroine—supposed to be dead—by two thieves, disguised as a giant, one on the other's shoulders. The coachman and the nurse, who see it, are already in a state of tipsy lugubriousness, and easily deceived:

NURSE. Oh, 'tis a sad time, all the burnt wine is [drunke] Nic.

TOBY. We may thank your dry chaps for't, the Canarie's gone too.

No substance for a sorrowful mind to work upon,
I cannot mourn in beer, if she should walk now,
As discontented spirits are wont to do.

NURSE. And meet us in the Cellar.

TOBY. What fence have we with single beer against her?

What heart can we defie the Devil with?

NURSE. The March beer's open.

TOBY. A fortification of March beer will do well

.....

NURSE. Methinks the light burns blew, I prethee snuff it.

There's a thief in't, I think.

TOBY. There may be one near it.

NURSE. What's that that moves there i'th name of—*Nicholas*?

That thing that walks.

TOBY. Would I had a Ladder to behold it,

Mercy upon me, the Ghost of one oth' Guard sure,
'Tis the devil by his clawes, he smels of Brimstone,
Sure he farts fire, what an Earth-quake I have in me;
Out with thy Prayer-book, Nurse.

NURSE. It fell ith' frying pan, and the Cat's eat it.

TOBY. I have no power to pray, it grows still longer,

¹ Appendix II, No. 32.

'Tis Steeple high now, and it sayls away Nurse.
Lets call the butler up, for he speaks Latine,
And that will daunt the devil: I am blasted,
My belly's grown to nothing.

Later, Toby says:

The devil's among 'em in the Parlour sure,
The Ghost three stories high, he has the Nurse sure,
He is boyling of her bones now, hark how she whistles.¹

This is the real bogy ghost of folk-lore.

In the more serious authors there is sometimes an ambiguity between the words 'ghost' and 'spirit'. Henry More, for instance, in giving the names of the six kinds of devils calls them 'Air-trampling ghosts'. It is doubtful whether in *Psychathanasia* he is describing a ghost raising by a necromancer or a spirit raised by a magician. Whichever it is he makes a point not often made at his time, that spirits not in themselves bad are made dangerous by being improperly raised:

Like troubled Ghost forc'd some shape to assume;
But it its holding foe at last doth quite consume.

And then like gliding spright doth straight disappear,
That earst was forc'd to take a fiery form:
Full lightly it ascends into the clear
And subtle aire devoid of cloudy storm,
Where it doth steddy stand, all-uniform,
Pure, pervious, immixt, innocuous, mild,
Nought scorching, nought glowing, nothing enorm,
Nought destroying, not destroy'd, not defil'd;
Foul fume being spent, just 'fore its flight it fairly smil'd.²

In his cantos on ghosts in *The Præ-Existency of the Soul*, however, it is clear that More is speaking of human spirits; and in a passage at once poetical and exact he attempts to account for the appearance of ghosts, and to describe their habits:

For men that wont to wander in their sleep
By the fixt light of inward phantasie,

¹ Fletcher and Shirley. *The Night Walker*, Act II, Sc. i. *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, ed. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 328–30. Motif (F.257).

² *Psychathanasia. A Platonic Song of the Soul* (Cambridge, 1647), Book I, Canto II, vv. 21–22, p. 85.

Though a short fit of death fast bounden keep
 Their outward sense and all their Organes tye;
 Yet forth they fare steared right steddily
 By that internall guide: even so the ghosts
 Of men deceas'd bedewed with the sky
 And night's cold influence, in sleep yclos'd
 Awake within, and walke in their forewonted coast.

In shape they walk much like to what they bore
 Upon the earth: for that light Orb of air
 Which they inact must yelden evermore
 To phansies beck, so when the souls appear
 To their own selves alive as once they were,
 So cloath'd and conversant in such a place,
 The inward eyes of phansie thither steare
 Their gliding vehicle, which bears the face
 Of him that liv'd, that men may reade what wight it was.

And often ask'd what would they, they descry
 Some secret wealth, or hidden injury.
 That first they broach that overmost doth ly
 Within their minds: but vanish suddenly
 Disturb'd by bold mans importunity.
 But those that on set purpose do appear
 To holden talk with frail mortality
 Make longer stay. So that there is no fear
 That when we leave this earthly husk we perish clear.¹

This might be a description of the ghost in *Hamlet*, for the two have in common many of the features of the traditional ghost. Like Hamlet's ghost, it must first be addressed, it wears its most characteristic clothes and not a winding sheet, and it is recognizable in appearance. It walks also because of wrong done to it, or buried treasure. This seems to be one of the most generally recognized reasons for walking after death, so much so that in Massinger's *Old Law* the old wife about to be executed threatens to bury treasure before she is killed, so that she may haunt her callous husband.² In later times this was supposed to be because a man died preoccupied with earthly things, and so became earth-bound. More primitively it may have had its

¹ *The Præexistence of the Soul. A Platonick Song of the Soul*, ed. cit., vv. 18 and 19, pp. 259-60.

² *The Old Law*, Act IV, Sc. ii. *The Plays of Phillip Massinger*, ed. cit., p. 583.

origin in the custom of killing a man, so that his spirit could guard buried treasure.¹ The habit in the border country of committing hidden treasure to the care of a brownie or dobie probably had the same origin. In many stories the brownie is supposed to be a ghost.²

It has been seen that in their use of ghosts as a piece of machinery the dramatists and poets have to a certain extent used current folk beliefs; but on the whole the dramatic ghost tradition was a literary one; dark figures which they did not use haunted the imaginations of the people about them. The Gabriel Ratchets,³ the corpse candles,⁴ the vampire, the fetch⁵ and the spectral funeral, some at least of these are mentioned here and there in the prose literature,⁶ but are not put to dramatic use. The more impressive ghosts derived from Greece and Rome, the local and modern ones appeared in the homelier form of Robin Goodfellow.

¹ This was last observed by pirates. Thistleton Dyer, *The Ghost World*, ed. cit., p. 71.

² See Appendix I.

³ See Appendix I.

⁴ Baxter made an investigation into *Corpse Candles* for *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (London, 1691), pp. 131-46).

⁵ See Appendix I.

⁶ Effective use was made of lycanthropy in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, but the true werewolf is another popular horror which did not touch English tradition so late, for there were no wolves left in the country.

MERMAIDS AND MONSTERS

MERMAIDS occupy a place of their own in mythology; for some reason they are often hardly regarded as fairies, though they seem to have all the necessary qualifications. It may be because they are half regarded as natural rather than supernatural, as hybrid monsters, women to the waist, fishes below; just as gryphons had the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion. This classification may have been partly founded upon Pliny's *Natural History*; for he places his nereids, glossed by Philemon Holland as mermaids, among the fishes.

In the time that *Tiberius* was Emperour, there came unto him an ambassador from *Ullisipon*, sent of purpose to make relation, That upon their sea-coast there was discovered within a certain hole, a certain sea goblin, called Triton, sounding a shell like a trumpet or cornet, and that he was in forme and shape like those that are commonly painted for Tritons. And as for the Meremaids called Nereides, it is no fabulous tale that goes of them; for look how painters draw them, so they are indeed: onely their bodie is rough and skaled all over, even in those parts wherein they resemble a woman. For such a Meremaid was seen and beheld plainly upon the same coast and neere to the shore: and the inhabitants dwelling neere, heard it a far off, when it was a dying, to make a pitteous mone, crying and chattering very heavily. Moreover, a lieutenant or governor under *Augustus Caesar* in Gaule, advertized him by his letters, That many of these Nereides or Meremaids were seen cast upon the sands, and lying dead. I am able to bring forth for mine authors divers knights of Rome, right worshipfull persons and of

good credit, who testifie that in the coast of the Spanish Ocean neer unto Gades, they have seen a Mere-man, in every respect resembling a man as perfectly in all parts of the bodie as might be. And they report, moreover, that in the night season he would come out of the sea aboard their ships: but look upon what part soever he settled, he waied the same downe, and if he rested and continued there any long time, he would sinke it cleane.¹

The description here might be supposed to apply to seals, or other sea creatures in whom a resemblance to humanity could be imagined; for good will goes a long way in seeing likenesses; but the Triton, 'sea-goblin', with his horn, and the merman whose weight sank the ship, both belong to true folk-tradition. This account of Pliny's was the source from which many later writers, Isidore of Seville² and Bartholomaeus Anglicus³ and Gesner,⁴ drew. With additions and slight alterations it gained credit until the end of the seventeenth century. Ambroise Paré, who is sceptical of the unicorn, appears to have no doubt of the mermaid; nor does he consider it in the strict sense a monster.

These last mentioned creatures were wonderfull in their originall, or rather in their growth: but these which follow, though they be not wonderfull of themselves, as those that consist of their owne proper nature, and that working well and after an ordinarie manner; yet they are wondrous to us, or rather monstrous, for they are not very familiar to us. For the raritie and vastnesse of bodies, is in some sort monstrous. Of this sort there are many, especially in the Sea, whose secret courses and receptacles are not pervious to men: as Tritons, which from the middle upwards are reported to have the shape of men. And the Sirenes, Nerēides or Mere-maides, who (according to *Pliny*) have the faces of women, and scaly bodies; yea where as they have the shape of man: neither can the fore-mentioned confusion and conjunction of seeds take any place here, for, as we have lately said, they consist of their owne proper nature.

When *Mena* was President of *Egypt*, and walked on the bankes of *Nilus*, he saw a Sea-monster in the shape of a man, comming forth

¹ *The Natural History of Plinius Secundus*, translated by Philemon Holland (London, 1634), Book IX, Chap. V, p. 236.

² Isidore of Seville, seventh century. His book on Etymology covered most of the knowledge of his time.

³ Bartholomaeus Anglicus, twelfth century. The author of *De Proprietatibus Rerum*.

⁴ Konrad Gesner, a Swiss naturalist, 1516-65. Translated by Topsell.

of the waters: his shape was just like a man even to the middle, with his countenance composed to gravity, his haïres yellow, yet intermixed with some gray, his stomach bony, his armes orderly made and jointed, his other parts ended in a fish. Three daies after in the morning there was seene another Sea-monster, but with the shape or countenance of a woman, as appeared by her face, her long haire, and swollen breasts: both these monsters continued so long above water that anyone might view them very well.¹

Swan, in his *Speculum Mundi*, follows the same tradition. 'But above all,' he says, 'the *Mermaids* and *Men-fish* seem to me the most strange fish in the waters. Some have supposed them to be devils or spirits, in regard of their whooping noise that they make.'² He has a story of a sea woman taken in Holland in about 1403. Like Ralph of Coggeshall's merman she was completely human in all her parts, but never learned to talk.

Ralph of Coggeshall's sea man is of the same type, but without the fish's tail. His account has the curiously convincing air of these oddities in the early chronicles.

In the time of King Henry II, when Bartholomew de Glanville kept Orford Castle, it happened that the sailors there, fishing in the sea, caught a wild man in their nets, whom they brought to the Castellán as a curiosity. He was completely naked, and had the appearance of a man in all his parts. He had hair too; and though the hair of his head seemed torn and rubbed, his beard was profuse and pointed, and he was exceedingly shaggy and hairy about the breasts. The Castellán had him guarded for a long time, by day and night, lest he should escape into the sea. What food was put before him he ate eagerly. He preferred raw fish to cooked; but when they were raw he squeezed them tightly in his hands until all the moisture was pressed out, and so he ate them. He would not utter any speech, or rather he could not, even when hung up by his feet and cruelly tortured. When he was taken into the church he showed no sign of reverence or even of belief, either by kneeling or bowing his head at the sight of anything sacred. He always hastened to bed as soon as the sun sank, and stayed there until it rose again. Once they took him to the sea-gate and let him go into the water, after placing a triple row of very strong nets in front of him. He soon made for the deep sea, and, breaking through all their nets, raised himself again and again

¹ *The Works of Ambrose Parey*, translated by T. Johnson (London, 1634), pp. 1000-1.

² John Swan, *Speculum Mundi* (Cambridge, 1635), p. 375.

from the depths, and showed himself to those watching on the shore, often plunging into the sea, and a little after coming up, as if he were jeering at the spectators because he had escaped their nets. When he had played there in the sea for a long time, and they had lost all hope of his return, he came back to them of his own accord, swimming to them through the waves, and remained with them for another two months. But when after a time he was more negligently kept, and held in some distaste, he escaped secretly to the sea, and never afterwards returned. But whether he was a mortal man, or a kind of fish bearing a resemblance to humanity, or an evil spirit lurking in the body of a drowned man, such as we read of in the life of the blessed Audon, it is difficult to decide, all the more so because one hears of so many remarkable things, and there is such a number of happenings like this.¹

This reads something like an account of the Blue Men of the Minch, who used to swim out and attack ships in the narrow straits of water between Long Island and the Shiant Isles on the west coast of Scotland.² Ralph of Coggeshall's poor, mis-used wild man seems, however, to have been quite harmless.

Topsell includes no mermaid in his version of Gesner, for it would come among the fishes, but there is a suspicion of a watery nature about his *Lamia*, or *Phairy*. He says:

This word *Lamia* hath many significations, being taken sometimes for a beast of *Lybia*, sometimes for a fish, and sometimes for a Spectre or apparition of women called *Phairies*. And from hence some have ignorantly affirmed, that either there were no such beastes at all, or else that it was a compounded monster of a beast and a fish.³

Topsell is concerned to prove his creatures natural, and he treats the *Lamia* of the poets, with her exemptile eyes and changing shape, as an allegory of a harlot; but his natural *Lamia* is strange enough for a fairy-tale; the hind parts are like a goat, the fore parts like a bear, the head and breasts like a woman's, and it is scaled all over like a dragon. Menippus' *Lamia*, whose story was so often re-told in the seventeenth century,⁴ seems to have been a water spirit, for she was first

¹ Ralph of Coggeshall. Rolls Series 66, pp. 117-18. See Appendix IV for the Latin.

² Donald Mackenzie, *Scottish Folk-Lore and Folk Life* (London, 1935), Chap. IV.

³ Edward Topsell, *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* (London, 1607), p. 452.

⁴ E.g. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London, 1638), Part III, sect. ii, p. 438.

encountered near a fountain. Topsell himself gives a version of it.

Between nereides and sirens the Elizabethan interest in mermaids might well be accounted for; but there is a full and widely diffused folk tradition in Britain, which seems independent of classical sources. The pleasure the writers of that time took in mermaids may have been partly due to the satisfaction of combining a classical allusion with a tradition in which they themselves had been brought up. At any rate mermaids were used more often for ceremonial occasions than their traditionally ominous character would seem to warrant. An example is the Triton in the form of a mermaid who greeted Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth,¹ and who is generally supposed to have inspired the famous passage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.²

Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music.

Here the mermaid is as musical as the sirens, and indeed a love of music is common to all water fairies, even to the Seal People. Many of the mermaid poems are directly classical, and are about sirens rather than mermaids. What song the sirens sung was not, as Sir Thomas Browne said, beyond conjecture; and several of the Jacobeans conjectured very melodiously. Browne uses them in his masque of the Inner Temple; and his siren's song is perhaps the best known.

Steer hither, steer, your winged pines,
All beaten mariners,
Here lie Love's undiscover'd mines,
A prey to passengers;
Perfumes far sweeter than the best
Which make the Phoenix' urn and nest.

¹ *The Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth Castle*, p. 498. In *The Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, Vol. I, sub anno 1575 (John Nichols, London, 1823).

² *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act. II, Sc. i. *The Works of William Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1914), p. 201.

Fear not your ships,
Nor any to oppose you save our lips,
But come on shore,
Where no joy dies till love hath gotten more.¹

This is carefully classical in inspiration. The sirens are described as women in their upper parts, and like hens, not fishes below, and Hyginus and Servius are quoted as authorities. The sirens' description of Circe's power is a translation from the often-quoted passage in Horace. Except where a reference to a comb and glass creeps in we may dismiss the seventeenth-century sirens as being classical in origin. The comb appears first in medieval times, and belongs to the mermaid. In many of the folk-tales the possession of the mermaid's comb is believed to give power over her, just as the roane's skin² and swan maiden's feathered cloak does in stories of a similar though different type. Occasionally the mermaid gives her comb to a favoured mortal so that he can summon her, as the merrow gave his red cap in Crofton Croker's story.³ The mermaid's character in folk-lore is by no means invariable, and the mermaid stories in the Appendix will give an idea of the varieties that can occur; but the central strain is the ominous and evil mermaid of *Clerk Colvil*,⁴ who fascinates men to their death, or that which is a portent of shipwreck in the well-known song:

There we did see a fair pretty maid
With a comb and a glass in her hand.

Richard III's 'I'll down more sailors than the mermaid shall,'⁵ is true to the sinister tradition; the mermaids of Ariel's song seem kindlier. Browne's mermaids belong to this more sympathetic type:

But (of great Thetis' train)
Ye mermaids fair,
That on the shores do plain
Your sea-green hair,

¹ *The Inner Temple Masque. The Poems of William Browne*, Muses Library, Vol. II, p. 170.

² See Appendix II, No. 2.

³ See Appendix II, No. 34.

⁴ F. J. Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (New York, 1957), Vol. I, p. 371.

⁵ *The Third Part of Henry VI*, Act II, Sc. ii. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (London, 1914), p. 668.

As ye in trammels knit your locks,
Weep ye; and so enforce the rocks
In heavy murmurs through the broad shores tell
How Willy bade his friend joy and farewell.¹

Again there is:

See, the salmons leap and bound
To please us as we pass;
Each mermaid on the rocks around,
Lest fall her brittle glass,
As they their beauties did despise,
And lov'd no mirror but your eyes.²

The glass and the green hair make these the real mermaid. No heraldic mermaid was complete without her glass and her comb.³

The river spirits are akin to mermaids in folk-lore; like the salmon they came far upstream. As a rule they are avid for human life, like Peg Powler of the Tees⁴ and Jenny Greenteeth;⁴ but these dangerous river spirits were little used by the poets. There seems a spark of genuine folk tradition about the Sabrina of *Comus*, though she had been euhemerized by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Drayton takes the nymphs of the rivers as characters in *Polyolbion*, but they are mere personifications, and have none of the darker qualities of the water spirits and kelpies.

It is curious that even this domain, which might be supposed to belong wholly to nature spirits, has been invaded by the dead. We have seen that some brownies and many fairies were believed to be ghosts, and that angels and devils were sometimes thought to be the spirits of the dead. In the same way one possible explanation of his sea man offered by Ralph of Coggeshall was that he was the body of a drowned man re-animated; the spirit of the Severn is traced back to a princess drowned in it, and Peg o' Nell, the cruel spirit of the Ribble, who demands a life every seven years, was supposed to be a servant in Waddow Hall, who drowned herself in the river. Many argue from this that all supernatural beings derive from the spirits of the dead; but it is at least equally arguable, and more consistent with the

¹ *Britannia's Pastorals. The Poems of William Browne*, ed. cit., Vol. I, p. 197.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 358.

³ *Physiologus*. Bod. MS. Ashmole 1511.

⁴ See Appendix I.

incurably personifying nature of the human mind, that the rivers, the sea and the earth were first personified, and supposed to demand a human victim; and that the victim became part of the spirit it reinforced, and was transformed into him.

Allied on one side to nature spirits, and even to human ghosts, the mermaids are still more closely allied to the monsters of the medieval bestiaries and the heraldry books. The curious beliefs about some of the animals which really existed would seem enough to give them the title of monsters; but leaving aside the jointless elephant, the gall-less dove, the uneven-legged badger, the formless bear cub and the sweet-scented panther as the property of folk natural history, we have still enough true monsters to wonder at.

Before, however, we come to the monsters of natural history we should perhaps consider those creatures of folk-lore, the giants. These too had their bookish foundations, and were partly derived from the Classics. Milton's

Briarios or Typhon, whom the Den
By ancient *Tarsus* held¹

could only be called at second remove traditional, and Gogmagog and Corineus, the giant figures of Guildhall, had their immediate origin in the literary histories of Britain, though they were founded upon a folk tradition. Those wicker-work giants who paraded in so many of the processions, as, for instance, in the Burford Whitsuntide rejoicings,² were true products of folk tradition. It has been suggested that they were originally the wicker-work figures in which human beings were, according to Caesar's account, burnt alive by the ancient Britons,³ but this can hardly be called more than a supposition. However that may be the giants played a large part in folk-lore, and any great and heroic character tended to swell to giant's size in popular memory, particularly in the north. King Arthur himself is no exception, as Arthur's Seat, near Edinburgh, shows. Not far from Sewingshields on the Roman Wall there are two crags, the King's Crag and the Queen's Crag, about a quarter of a mile apart, on which Arthur and Guinevere are said to have sat quarrelling once, while Guinevere combed her hair. The King

¹ *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I. *The Works of John Milton* (Oxford, 1912), p. 186.

² Camden, *Britannia* (London, 1695), p. 267.

³ L. Spence. *Myth and Ritual in Dance, Game and Rhyme* (1947), p. 66.

was so much annoyed by something which the Queen said that he threw a rock at her, which she turned aside with her comb. The marks of the comb are still to be seen on the rock, which weighs about twenty tons.¹ Robin Hood himself was credited with some of the giants' stone-throwing feats. Robin Hood's Pennistone, near Halifax, is said to be part of a rock kicked into the air by Robin Hood. It broke under the impact, and the Pennistone, which weighs several tons, landed in Sleights Pastures.² Even Macbeth was locally supposed to be a giant, if the Long Man's Grave near Dunsinane is any evidence.

Tales of Giants and Giant-Killers were popular in tradition and in chapbooks in the seventeenth century, but they figured less in literature. Drayton drew on Geoffrey of Monmouth in his account of Brut's conquest of Britain and the fight of the two giants, Gogmagog and Corineus.

Then, foraging this Ile, long promised them before,
Amongst the ragged Cleaves those monstrous Giants sought:
Who (of their dreadfull kind) t'appall the Trojans, brought
Great Gogmagog, an Oake that by the roots could teare:
So mightie were (that time) the men who lived there:
But, for the use of Armes he did not understand
(Except some rock or tree, that comming next to hand
Hee raz'd out of the earth to execute his rage)
Hee challenge makes for strength, and offereth there his gage.
Which, *Corin* taketh up, to answer by and by.
Upon this sonne of Earth his utmost power to try.
All, doubtful to which part the victorie would goe,
Upon that loftie place at *Plimmoth* call'd the *Hoe*,
Those mightie Wrastlers met; with many an irefull looke
Who threatned, as the one hold of the other tooke:
But, grapled, glowing fire shines in their sparkling eyes.
And, whilst at length of arme one from the other lyes,
Their lusty sinewes swell like cables, as they strive:
Their feet such trampling make, as though they forc't to drive
A thunder out of earth; which staggered with their weight:
Thus, eithers utmost force urg'd to the greatest height.
Whilst one upon his hip the other seekes to lift,
And th'adverse (by a turne) doth from his cunning shift,
Their short-fetcht troubled breath a hollow noise doth make,
Like bellowes of a Forge. Then *Corin* up doth take

¹ C. Hole, *English Folk Heroes* (1948), p. 67.

² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

The Giant twixt the grayns; and, voyding of his hould
(Before his combrous feet he well recover could)
Pitcht head-long from the hill; as when a man doth throw
An Axtree, that with sleight delivered from the toe
Rootes up the yeelding earth: so that his violent fall,
Strooke *Neptune* with such strength, as shouldred him withall;
That where his monstrous waves like Mountaines late did stand
They leap't out of the place, and left the bared sand
To gaze upon wide heaven: so great a blowe it gave.
For which, the conquering *Brute* on *Corineus* brave
This horne of land bestow'd, and markt it with his name;
Of *Corin*, *Cornwall* call'd to his immortall fame.¹

In the notes Selden, in his sceptical and scholarly way, casts doubt on the existence of giants, on the historical foundation of the story and on the origin of the name. But perhaps Drayton was more concerned to record a tradition than a fact.

Most of the other references to giants are as bookish in origin, though in the plays there are some scattered references to folk giants. The Citizen's Wife in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* refers with tantalizing brevity to *Lob-Lie-by-the-Fire*, the giant who had a witch for his mother.² There is a good story lost here, of a grimmer character than the Lob who has survived. She mentions too the 'Giants and Ettins of Portugal',³ an old Scandinavian name which has survived in Scottish folk-lore. John Bunyan must have been nurtured on real giant stories, for he prefers giants to devils for his abstractions of evil—Giant Despair, Giant Maule and Giant Sluggard. They belonged to the ogre breed.

Now the Gyant was rifling him, with a purpose after that to pick his Bones, for he was of the nature of *Flesh-eaters*.⁴

Giant Despair's wife, who belongs to the second edition, helps to add the real fairy-story flavour to Doubting Castle, even though she is not the usual compassionate giantess of tradition.

In the more bookish monsters of natural history we must

¹ M. Drayton, *Polyolbion*, Song I. *The Works of Michael Drayton* (Oxford, 1933), Vol. IV, pp. 13-14.

² *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Act III, Sc. i. *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, Vol. VI (Cambridge, 1908), p. 205.

³ *Ibid.*, l. i, p. 173.

⁴ J. Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come*, Second part (Oxford, 1928), p. 280.

understand that in the strictest technical sense a monster is the offspring of two separate and incompatible species; but the word had a rather wider meaning, well defined by Ambroise Paré.

Wee call Monsters, what things soever are brought forth contrary to the common decree and order of nature. So wee terme that infant monstrous, which is borne with one arme alone, or with two heads. But we define Prodigies, those things which happen contrary to the whole course of nature, that is, altogether differing and dissenting from nature: as, if a woman should bee delivered of a Snake, or a Dogge.¹

Even this definition has to be a little stretched, as Paré himself admitted, to include some of the creatures which we should undoubtedly describe as monsters, both because of the 'rarity and vastness of their bodies' and because of their fabulousness. The chimera was a true monster, for it was a compound of creatures, and unique; but the dragon generated after its kind and could only be called a monster because of its largeness and ferocity. The dragon is the most widespread of the fabulous monsters; rumours of it come from Europe, Asia and North Africa. It belongs also most undoubtedly to folk-lore, and no collection of fairy stories will be complete without some combat with norms or dragons. Topsell² treats it gravely and at great length, describing the different varieties, the winged and the wingless, the small-mouthed, and those with ferocious jaws, and telling of their outstanding characteristics, their hot and poisonous breath and their love of gold. He has also some anecdotes of affectionate dragons, who laid aside their general hostility to mankind for the sake of some favourite. References to dragon slaying and to dragons occur in seventeenth-century literature, but they are not so profuse as those to the dragon's small cousin, the cockatrice, or basilisk. The venom of its eye made it useful for metaphor, though sometimes the reference is so brief as to be no more than an epithet. Shirley and Chapman's

Thou basilisk! . . .
Whose eyes shoot fire and poison!
Malicious as a witch, and much more cunning.³

¹ *The Works of Ambrose Parey*, ed. cit., p. 961.

² Edward Topsell, *Historie of Serpents* (London, 1607), pp. 153-73.

³ Chapman and Shirley, *The Ball*, Act III, Sc. iv. *The Comedies of George Chapman* (London, 1914), p. 573.

is a fair sample of them. The *Malleus Maleficarum* carefully accounts for the fact, too well-known to need to be authenticated, that the basilisk's eye was fatal if it saw a man first, but that if the man saw it first it died, by suggesting that the man saw the basilisk first and produced a mirror, and when the creature looked at it the venom of its eye was refracted, and it died of auto-intoxication. The authors, however, confessed themselves surprised that the man was not himself killed by the venom.¹ This creature, the supreme example of the power of the evil eye, was a true monster, for it had the legs and head of a cock, and the body, neck and tail of a wyvern. It was self-engendered by an old cock, and hatched by a toad in a dungill. Wicked and venomous though it was it had a certain prestige because of its great potency, and was assumed as an heraldic charge by those who preferred power to virtue. *The Accedens of Armorye* describes it well:

This, though he bee but at the most a foote of length, yet is hee kinge of all Serpentes, of whom they are most afraide, and flee from. For with his breth and sight hee sleeth all thinges that come within a speares length of him. Hee infecteth the water, that hee cometh neere. His enemye is the wesell, who when he goeth to fyght with the Cockatrice, eateth the herbe, commonly called Rewe, and so in byting him hee dyeth, and the wesell therewith dyeth also.²

Thomas Browne was incredulous both of its ancestry and its maleficent eye. He believed only that a serpent called the basilisk existed, with a white-spotted head, which gave it the appearance of wearing a crown.³

The gryphon is another true monster, with the fore-part of an eagle and the back of a lion; it was one of the most popular of the heraldic monsters, and had a term to itself in heraldry, *segreant* because, being between a bird and a beast, it could be neither rampant nor displayed. The gryphons were avid for gold, and guarded their hoards as carefully as dragons. There is a fine account of the gryphon in Sylvester's *du Bartas*.

¹ *Malleus Maleficarum*, translated by M. Summers (London, 1948), p. 18.

² Gerard Legh, *The Accedens of Armorye* (London, 1568), p. 62.

³ *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, Bk. III, Chapter vii. *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne* (London, 1928), Vol. II, pp. 203-4.

In the swift Rank of these fell Rovers, flies
 The *Indian Griffin* with the glistening eyes,
 Beak Eagle-like, back sable, sanguin brest,
 White (Swan-like) wings, fierce talons, alwaies prest
 For bloody battails; for with these he tears
 Boars, Lions, Horses, Tigres, Bulls and Bears.
 With these our Grandam's fruitfull panch he pulls,
 Whence many an Ingot of pure Gold he culls,
 To floor his proud nest, builded strong and steep
 On a high Rock, better his thefts to keep:
 With these, he guards against an Army bold
 The hollow Mines where first he findeth Gold.¹

We could go on almost indefinitely with the monsters. There is the gorgan, or 'strange Libyan beast', the crocuta, a monster engendered between a lion and a hyena, the boas, and the mantichora, whose picture looks more like a political cartoon than a sober attempt to draw a real animal.² But most of these monsters had little place in literature. Far more important, and a much pleasanter animal is the unicorn, the noblest of all the monsters. The heraldic unicorn is a strange compound, footed like a stag, with the head and body of a horse and the tail of a lion, distinguished from all these by its single, convoluted horn, precious in medicine. The natural historians had more various opinions, and their description of the unicorn was sometimes intended to represent the rhinoceros and sometimes a kind of gazelle. As early as the fifteenth century a rhinoceros was pointed out to a band of pilgrims to Sinai as the unicorn,³ and in the achievement of arms granted to the Apothecaries in James the First's reign the two supporters are the unicorn and the rhinoceros, evidently considered even then as variants of the same beast. For this reason Ambroise Paré, who accepts much stranger creatures, rejects the unicorn, for he concludes that 'the speech of truth is but one, and that alwaies simple and like it selfe; but that of a lye is divers, and which may easily repell it selfe by the repugnancie and incongruity of opinions, if one should say nothing'.⁴

¹ Du Bartas *His Divine Weekes and Workes*, translated by J. Sylvester (London, 1621), p. 106.

² E. Topsell, *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes*, ed. cit., p. 441.

³ H. Prescott, *Once to Sinai* (London, 1957), p. 72.

⁴ *The Workes of Ambrose Parey*, ed. cit., p. 814.

Topsell was shocked by this incredulity, and his passage upon the unicorn is full and inclusive. He gives us not only Pliny's description, but a prose version of Spenser's account of the battle between the lion and the unicorn, and the often repeated story of the unicorn's capture by a maiden.¹ Here, however, he follows Ctesius and makes the unicorn gullible, so that a young man dressed as a woman can allure him. The more mystical medieval unicorns were infallible judges of virginity.

Odell Shepard in *The Lore of the Unicorn*² traces the legend of the unicorn back to its various sources, to travellers' tales about the rhinoceros and the oryx, to reconstructions from the nar-whal's horn, to early symbols and artistic conventions, and to the three-legged, one-horned ass of the Zoroastrian religion, who purified the waters which the creatures of Ahriman had defiled. This legend seems to have been somewhere behind the belief which made the unicorn interesting to the seventeenth century. In medieval times it had been the vision of the proud, fierce, gentle, untamable unicorn, who could be subdued only by his reverence to virginity, which had held men's imaginations. He became the symbol at once of chastity and of knightly love. The allegory of the Holy Hunt could not be followed to its logical conclusion, but it had great emotional and symbolic appeal. In sacred symbolism the unicorn represented Christ, and secularly it was the type of the good knight, fierce with his equals but protector of the weak, unconquerable in battle, but meek to his lady. At the Renaissance, when religious mysticism and chivalric ideals were alike weakened, another aspect of the unicorn came into prominence. This was the story of the unicorn stepping down to the envenomed waters to purify them by dipping his horn into the river, while the thirsty creatures waited his coming on the bank. The Renaissance rulers had only too much reason to take a practical interest in the prophylactics against poison, and its antidotes; and in the sixteenth century a complete unicorn's horn was worth a king's ransom. These horns were used as detectors of poison, the horn was said to sweat when poison was present; and powdered horn, or water in which the horn had been steeped, was used as an antidote. It was therefore natural that the literary references to the unicorn should stress

¹ E. Topsell, *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes*, ed. cit., p. 719.

² Odell Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn* (London, 1930).

its anti-venefic powers. In the full-dress accounts of the naturalists, such as Topsell and Swan, we have still the capture by a virgin given a prominent place, but in the poets the focus of interest has shifted to the treasure of his brow. *The Accedens of Armorye* gives a brief summary of the naturalists' conclusions about the unicorn:

When he is hunted hee is not taken by strengthe, but onely by thys pollicye. A mayde is sett where he haunteth, and shee openeth her lappe, to whom the Unicorne, as seeking rescue from the force of the hunter, yeldeth hys hed, and leaveth all his fiercenes, and resting him selfe under her proteccion, sleapeth until he is taken, and slaine. His proper colour is bay. Hee hath in his head only one horne, whereof he taketh his name. It is vertuous against veneme, and is truly called yvery. Isidore saith, the Unicorne is cruell, and mortall enemy to the Olephant.¹

The reference to his horn here is brief; but in the poets of the time it is of more importance. In the famous Spenser passage we have, 'His precious horne, sought of his enimies'.² Chapman gives us a brief account of a human attempt on the horn, which ended happily for the unicorn.

I once did see,
In my young travels through Armenia,
An angry unicorn in his full career
Charge with too swift a foot a jeweller,
That watch'd him for the treasure of his brow,
And ere he could get shelter of a tree,
Nail him with his rich antler to the earth.³

Chapman here uses a curious word for the single horn of the unicorn. The jewel for which the jeweller watched was not so much the horn as a jewel supposed to be formed at the base of it, like the jewel in the head of a toad, and, like toadstone, sovereign against poison. This way of catching unicorns was, according to Decius Brutus, a favourite topic with Julius Caesar,⁴ and survived into folk-lore; for in Grimm's *Fairy Tales* the Little Tailor catches his unicorn in just this fashion.⁵

¹ Gerard Legh, *The Accedens of Armorye*, ed. cit., p. 52.

² E. Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*, Book II, Cant. V, x. 7.

³ Chapman's *Tragedies*. *Bussy d'Ambois*, ed. cit., Act II, Sc. i, p. 20.

⁴ *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act II, Sc. i, p. 956.

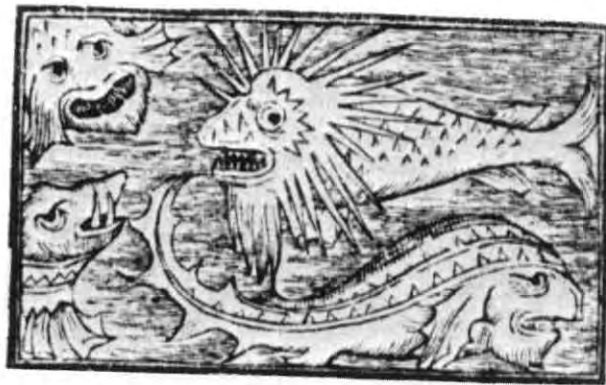
⁵ *The Valiant Little Tailor*. *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (London, 1948), pp. 112-20.

The effigies of the Triton and Siren of Nilus.



Merman and Mermaid

From *The Works of Ambrose Percy* translated by T. Johnson (London 1634)



Sea Monsters

From *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, by Olaus Magnus (Rome 1555)

Already in the sixteenth century Marini and Paré had written against the belief in unicorns; and that scepticism was fairly common was shown by Sebastian's contemptuous exclamation, 'Now I will believe that there are unicorns.'¹ Experience had shown at any rate, that not all that was sold as unicorn horn was effective in its working, and various ways of testing it were recommended. One was to make a circle of unicorn water round a spider or scorpion and see if it acted as a barrier. Webster has a reference to this in *The White Devil*:

As men, to try the precious Unicorne's horne
Make of the powder a preservative Circle,
And in it put a spider.²

This experiment must have been more often described than practised, or all the unicorns' horns in Europe would have been discredited. In spite, however, of Marini and Paré, who disbelieved in the unicorn, and Olaus Wormius and Sir Thomas Browne, who pronounced his horn to be an imposture, it continued in good repute until nearly the end of the seventeenth century.

The strangest reference to the unicorn is to be found in *Antonio's Revenge*:

O poore knight, O poore Sir Gefferey; sing like an Unicorne
before thou dost dip thy horne in the water of death; o cold, o sing,
o colde, o poore Sir Geffrey, sing, sing.³

Unless this has reference to some story now lost it is a strange confusion, although a poetical one. We hear nowhere else of the unicorn singing in death like a swan, though Topsell writes of his great and terrible voice. It seems here that the unicorn dipped his purifying horn into the cold and poisonous river of death, and found the poison too lethal and the stream too cold for him. Or there may be an allusion to some homelier legend in which the unicorn thrust his horn into a freezing river and found himself held fast by the ice; though this seems unlikely since he came from Ethiopia. Perhaps only Marston could tell us what he meant by it; and even he may never have known.

¹ *The Tempest*. Shakespeare, ed. cit., Act III, Sc. iii, p. 17.

² *The White Devil*, Act II, Sc. i. *The Complete Works of John Webster* (London, 1927), Vol. I, p. 122.

³ *Antonio's Revenge*, Act V, Sc. ii. *The Plays of John Marston* (London, 1934), Vol. I, p. 124.

As we read account after account of the fabulous monsters, passed briskly from hand to hand down the ages, we may well feel that we are looking at a purely literary invention, and that each account smells more strongly of the lamp than the one before it. And yet darkly behind them all hangs the shadowy myth. Perhaps Sir Thomas Browne said the last word on them, when he derived them from the early hieroglyphic writings, pieces of symbolism misunderstood by the vulgar.

And first, Although there were more things in Nature than words which did express them; yet even in those mute and silent discourses, to express complexed significations, they took a liberty to compound and piece together creatures of an allowable form into mixtures inexistent. Thus began the descriptions of Gryphins, Basilisks, Phoenix, and many more; which Emblematists and Heralds have entertained with significations answering their institutions; Hieroglyphically adding Mantegres, Wivernes, Lion fishes, with divers others. Pieces of good and allowable invention unto the prudent Spectator, but are lookt on by vulgar eyes as literal truths, or absurd impossibilities; whereas indeed, they should be commendable inventions, and of laudable significations.¹

¹ Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, ed. cit., Vol. III, Bk. V, cap. xx, p. 137.

Eleven

SPIRITUAL CREATURES

THE different orders of spirits were so closely interlocked in seventeenth-century beliefs, as well as in folk traditions, that it seems almost necessary to know what was believed about angels, devils, and those agents that the magicians described as 'spiritual creatures' if we are to get at the root of the contemporary fairy beliefs. In this matter, as in others, there were a great many gradations of opinion, shading down from those of the learned to those of the mass of the people, with occasional uprushes of folk belief into literature. The fairies were much more closely connected with the devils than with the angels; but since theologically the devils were no less than fallen angels the relationship between angels and fairies would be at but one remove. Let us therefore first examine the orthodox angels of the period before we come to the points on which folk belief dethroned theology.

The Angelic Hierarchy had an important place in the ontology of the seventeenth century; a disbelief in angels and devils was counted no better than atheism, and a precise and detailed tradition lies behind many of the literary references to angels, which makes them strange to the vaguer and looser beliefs of our day. Much of the definite and didactically given information about the exact degrees, powers and functions of angels may seem to us like the building of card houses, delicately poised on a hint from an Early Father here and a Talmudic tradition there, but such questions as the extent of angelic knowledge and the corporality

or non-corporality of spiritual creatures were of more than academic importance, they had practical effects on the witch trials. No aspect of theology can be neglected by even the most practical man; it has a way of spilling over into ordinary life.

The twofold foundation of the Christian belief in angels was the old Jewish Rabbinical tradition, of which hints are given in the Canonical Scriptures but which is more explicitly stated in the Apocrypha and the Talmud, and the Neo-Platonic belief in daemons and angels which was strong in the days of the Early Church. Apuleius' *On the God of Socrates* is of good example of the Neo-platonic beliefs on this subject, and was often quoted:

Besides, there are certain divine powers of a middle nature, situate in this interval of the air, between the highest ether and the earth below, through whom our aspirations and our desires are conveyed to the Gods. These the Greeks call by the name 'daemons', and, being placed as messengers between the inhabitants of earth and those of heaven, they carry from the one to the other, prayers and bounties, supplications and assistance, being a kind of interpreters and message carriers for both.¹

In the Old Testament writings of the pre-exilic period there is little evidence of distinction between good and bad angels except as regards function. An evil spirit was one who did harm to Man, but he served the will of Jehovah as dutifully as a good one. Satan, the accuser, appears in Zechariah (iii, 2), and in the Book of Job as sceptical of Man's good qualities and anxious for his punishment, but still as one of the servants in the court of Jehovah. At the same time, however, there is evidence of the belief in a kind of malignant fairy—night demons and hairy spirits inhabiting lonely places²—a belief which the Hebrews shared with the other Semitic peoples. After their exile, when the Hebrews had come under the influence of the dualistic Persian philosophy, the problem of evil assumed more importance, and Sammael, the Angel of Death, with the tempting and deceiving angels, began to be considered bad in themselves, and to be associated with the gods and spirits of surrounding nations.

We learn more of the popular beliefs about both angels and devils from the Apocrypha and Talmud than we do from the

¹ Apuleius, *On the God of Socrates* (Bohn's Library, London, 1853), p. 356.

² The Se'irin (Isaiah xiii, 21) and Lilith (Isaiah xxxiv, 14).

Canonical Scriptures. The Book of Enoch treats them most fully. In the prophetic parts of the book there are some fine descriptions of angels and a rudimentary account of the Hierarchy.

And he will summon all the host of the heavens, and all the holy ones above, and the host of God, the Cherubin, Seraphin, and Ophannin, and all the angels of power, and all the angels of principalities, and the Elect One, and the other powers on the earth (and) over the water.¹

This book is a mosaic of fragmentary passages, but one of the most complete is the elaboration of the often-discussed passage in Genesis vi which is to be found in Chapters i to v of Enoch. Here the fall of the Watchers is ascribed, not to pride, but to desire after the beautiful daughters of men. This is the source of the stories of incubi so much discussed by later theologians, or rather perhaps the authority on which they accepted folk stories of intercourse with supernatural creatures. Here the Demons, the gigantic offspring of the Watchers, are distinguished from the Angels as a different type of being.

Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men, and from the holy watchers is their beginning and primal origin; they shall be evil spirits on earth, and evil spirits shall they be called.

As for the spirits of heaven, in heaven shall be their dwelling, but as for the spirits of earth, on the earth shall be their dwelling.²

The Book of Tobit was of even more importance to the later belief in angels, for we have here an angel like the Christian guardian angel and a devil who is a loathly fiend, with no trace of angelic origin. It is probable from his name that Asmodey came directly from Persian demonology, and had no connection with the tradition of the Watchers.

The Babylonian Talmud, though it dates from the fourth century A.D., records some earlier traditions than the Apocrypha. In many of its stories the good and bad angels are undifferentiated. Sammael, the Angel of Death, for instance, though he performed his work in direct obedience to God, was so far an evil spirit that he could be kept at bay by prayer or meditation on the Scriptures. The very good were out of his jurisdiction.

¹ *The Book of Enoch*, ed. R. H. Charles (London, 1912), lxi, 10.

² *Ibid.*, xv, 9 and 10.

Sammael has no power over Moses, and God Himself took him with a kiss.¹

The Talmud would not have had the direct effect upon the thought of the ordinary man in the seventeenth century that the Apocrypha had; but some of the traditions upon which it drew were part of the heritage of the Early Church, and the Christian Fathers combined them with the Neo-Platonic beliefs about daemons and guardian genii. The Early Christians had a vivid sense of the presence of these spiritual beings. *The Paradise of the Fathers* is full of diabolical temptations and angelic visions. There are several examples in it of the belief in guardian angels, which was a point in dispute at the time. Paul the Simple, for instance, who had the gift of seeing the state of every man's soul, once watched a company of monks going into church, and the guardian angel of each man went rejoicing beside him, and the light of grace shone from him, except for one man, and he was led by the nose by two devils, his mind was black and his guardian angel walked sadly and at a distance. While he was in church Paul prayed vehemently for him, and to such good purpose that the devils were banished, and his angel led him out of the church rejoicing.²

The presence of angels and devils was a matter of lively faith in those days, but the elaborate structure of angelic belief awaited completion by the medieval schoolmen. St. Jerome was the first of the Fathers to mention the Hierarchy of the Angels, and the various grades into which they fell. He described seven orders, not nine. St. Augustine, who had much to say about angels, and whose writings were formative of later opinion, refused to dogmatize about them. He gave great importance to the place of angels in the Universe, but discouraged the angelic cult. The first writer by whom the angelic hierarchy was set out in detail was the pseudo-Dionysius at the beginning of the sixth century. His writings were profusely quoted in the seventeenth century, perhaps even more than those of Thomas Aquinas, who determined the medieval ideas on angels, even to the smallest particulars. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 settled the question of the non-materiality of angels and devils,

¹ *The Babylonian Talmud* (Hodgkinson, London, 1903), Vol. V, 'Tractate Aboth, pp. 47-48.

² Palladius, *The Paradise of the Fathers* (London, 1907), Vol. I, p. 279.

at least so far as the Roman Catholic world is concerned. As Tauler was to say in the fourteenth century:

Therefore with what words we can or ought to speak of these most pure spirits I do not know, for they have neither hands nor feet, neither appearance, shape nor matter. There is nothing of them therefore that we can perceive or comprehend. And how then have we the power to talk of them?¹

In spite of this, other writers continued to conceive of the vehicles of spirits—probably arbitrarily assumed by them—as something less immaterial, nearer to the astral bodies ascribed by Kirk to the fairies, made of congealed air. The gnostic writings upon angels exercised almost as great an influence as those of the Fathers and Schoolmen, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hermes Trismegistus,² Porphyrius,³ Iamblichus,⁴ Nemesius,⁵ Proclus⁶ and Psellus⁷ were as much quoted by Burton, Heywood and their like as were the Fathers themselves.

Various matters continued in debate; but by the seventeenth century there was a pretty general consensus of educated opinion upon angels and devils. It was held that the angels were divided into three hierarchies, each one sub-divided into three orders, and that they ruled severally over the planets, the sun, the sphere of the fixed stars and the primum mobile. Satan and his evil angels were confined within the air of this world and to hell. All beneath the moon was more or less in his power. The angelic spirits were fixed in their state, the good angels in one of sal-

¹ Joannis Thauleri, *Sermones* (Paris, 1623). In *Solemmitate S. Michaelis*, p. 617. 'Itaque quibus verbis de his purissimis Spiritibus aut possimus aut debeamus dicere,' etc.

² Supposed to be a sage of remote antiquity. The writings ascribed to him were first transcribed by Psellus and first printed by Ficino in 1471 as *Mercurii Trismegisti Pimander*.

³ A third-century anti-Christian philosopher. His *De Divinis atque Daemonibus* was translated by Ficino.

⁴ Died 333. Author of *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum, Chaldeorum, Assyriorum*, translated by Ficino.

⁵ A Christian philosopher of the late fourth century. His *Of the Nature of Man* was translated by George Wither, 1636.

⁶ A fifth-century anti-Christian philosopher. His *De Anima et Daemone* was translated by Marsilio Ficino.

⁷ Michael Psellus was a Byzantine scholar of the eleventh century who revived the study of Plato.

vation and the evil of damnation. Origen had doubted this, and had thought it possible that Satan might finally be saved,¹ but this notion was dismissed as heretical. It was believed also that the angels, and by consequence the devils, learned all that they knew by direct perception, and were incapable of further education. They had the power of almost miraculous speed of movement, but were not omnipresent nor omniscient. They could not foretell the future, nor could they see men's thoughts, for God only knows what is in Man's heart. This last limitation would make temptation a tedious and puzzling piece of work for the devils. Being invisible, they could only introduce temptation into the mind, and yet they could never see into the mind to know if it was working. It was therefore very well worth while for the tempted Christian to pray aloud, for his tempters would not know whether his faith was active or not. They could only judge by his words.

We shall doe well, to use vocall prayers: if it bee but onely, to fright the devill. For, he sees not our hearts, but he heares our tongues: and when he heares our words, because he knowes not our hearts; hee feares they come from our hearts, and in that feare he trembles: and we shall doe well, as much as wee can; to keepe him under our Feare: seeing he indeavours, as much as he can, to bring us under his Power.²

It was generally accepted that angels are of another order from humanity; but from the earliest times an occasional suggestion had been made that men's souls would be raised to the rank of angels when they died. In the folk-lore of all nations there is a confusion between the spirits of the dead and other spiritual creatures. In Ireland, for instance, the fairies are sometimes regarded as the spirits of the dead and sometimes as fallen angels.³ This confusion crept back into the angelic beliefs, perhaps partly encouraged by a suggestion, discussed by Anselm, that Mankind was created to fill up the vacancy left by the revolted spirits, and that when enough men were saved to complete the number of the world would come to an end. This is

¹ Origen, *De Principiis*. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XI, Lib. III, cap. 21, pp. 301-2.

² R. Baker, *Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Lord's Prayer* (London, 1638), p. 7.

³ Evan Wentz, *Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (Oxford, 1911), pp. 67, 76, 77.

one example of the fascination which numbers exercised over the medieval mind. A mathematical progression was to them almost a proof.

Devils and angels alike were assumed to have the power of levitation, though a few people thought that this might be a matter of glamour with the devil, and that the witches might laboriously travel across the country over which they imagined themselves to have flown.¹ In the same way it was often questioned if the Devil had power to transform the body of a man into a beast's; it was considered more likely that he could throw a glamour over men's senses, so that they imagined that it was an animal they saw.

The good angels were not, even in folk beliefs, confused with the fairies, but, as we have seen earlier, they were increasingly identified with the dead. With the devils, however, it was otherwise; from very early times the forerunners of our fairies—liliths, hairy ones, fauns, nymphs, satyrs, were described as devils. There were various authorities for this identification. The long-continued discussion on the meaning of Genesis vi had its place in this. The Book of Enoch was an authoritative gloss on the passage, though it was not accepted as canonical. It was an authority for the existence of devils of lesser status than the original fallen angels. St. Augustine's tentative identification of the incubi and succubi as the Pans, fauns, dusii and satyrs of the heathen world pointed the way to a belief that we find widespread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the fairies, pucks and hobgoblins were downright devils. This is unhesitatingly stated by the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*; and most of the writers on witchcraft say no less, as we have seen earlier.

There was another possibility, however, that could fit equally well with St. Augustine's theory, and was almost as widely received as the other. This was that the fairies, nymphs and spirits of the Gentiles were not devils but an intermediate creation between humanity and pure spirits, of an ethereal body, a life longer than human life but still mortal, and an eternal destiny still unfixed, so that they were capable of salvation. Such spirits were those that Cardan claimed to have seen raised by his father, whose life was some thousand years, and who 'did

¹ Jean Nyder, *Formicarius* (Douai, 1602), Lib. II, cap. iv, pp. 123-4.

as much excell men in dignity, as wee doe juments . . . and the spirits of the meaner sort had commonly such offices' (that is to look after men) 'as we make horsekeepers, neat-herds, and the basest of us, overseers of our cattle'.¹

Cardan claims largely for his spirits. Those of the seventeenth-century writers who do not include this sort among the devils often give them, as Kirk does, an intermediate place between men and devils. Of these Meyric Casaubon is one:

But if it were so that all *Spirits* are either Divels or Angels, what shall we make of those that are found in mines, of which learned *Agricola* hath written; of those that have been time out of minde called *Kobaloi* (from whence probably, as we have said elsewhere, *Gobelin* in English is derived) who live in private Houses, about old Walls and stalks of Wood, harmless otherwise, but very thievish, so frequent and so known in some Countreys, that a man may as well doubt whether there be any Horses in *England*, because there are none in some parts of the World; not found in all *America*, I think, till some were carried thither; Neither can I believe that those Spirits that please themselves in nothing else but harmless sports and wantonnesse, such as have been known in all Ages; such as did use to shave the hair of *Plinius Secundus* his Servants in the Night, as himself relates (a very creditable man, I am sure) in his Epistles, and the like; that such Spirits, I say, have any relation either to Heaven or to Hell.²

This comes very near to the folk belief about fairies, and others of the learned, even among the Puritans, held the same. Durant Hotham puts it the most prettily in a passage which is almost a poem.

The Mole lives in his Hill, and the industrious Ant hath her little Cottage higher than the Surface of the Earth, and the bigger Mountains (whether thrown up by them I will not dispute) are the dwellings of other Creatures, some lodg'd there by confinement or their own choice, others born and bred in the Earth, who delight in places abounding with strong Metalline and Mineral Vapours, both as suitable to their natures, and where the casual lying of the Rocky Ore makes handsome Caverns and Chambers for these darksom Guests. . . . Nor is the Aery Region disfurnisht of its

¹ R. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London, 1638), Part I, Sect. II, Memb. I, sub-sect. 2, p. 42. Cardan; a sixteenth-century doctor and astrologer, was much quoted for his account in his autobiography of the spirits raised by his father.

² M. Casaubon, *A True and Faithful Relation*, etc., ed. cit., p. 1.

inhabitant Spirits; Some of the *Jewish* Rabbins say, that by the creation of the Fowls of Heaven mentioned in *Genesis*, is understood not those only whose Bodies we see, and catch, and feed upon, but that far more numerous Progeny of Aerial Spirits, lodg'd in Vehicles of a thinner-spun thred than is (otherwise than by condensation) visible to our dim sight.¹

Richard Baxter, another Puritan, admitted a similar possibility.

Yea; we are not fully certain whether these Aerial Regions have not a third sort of Wights, that are neither Angels, (Good or Fallen) nor Souls of Men, but such as have been placed as Fishes in the Sea, and Men on Earth; and whether those called *Fairies* and *Goblins* are not such.²

The fullest exposition of the belief, however, comes from quite another quarter, from the writings of a French Franciscan, Louis Marie Sinistrari, who was born in 1627. His *Daemonialitas* remained in manuscript until it was found by Isidore Liseaux, who published it with a French translation in 1876. It cannot therefore have had a wide influence in its own period, but it sums up a view which was held by a certain number of thinkers, though perhaps not many worked it out so fully. The author goes with unnecessary detail into the question of incubi and succubi, but his argument can be briefly stated; it is founded upon two grounds. In the first place Sinistrari accepts as final the pronouncement of the Fourth Lateran Council that devils are incorporeal creatures, and in the second he accepts the stories of carnal intercourse between demons and human beings as historically proved. Together with this he adduces such stories as that of the appearance of the satyr to St. Anthony, and the behaviour of many possessing demons which were not to be put to flight by the sign of the cross or the name of Christ. From these premises he concludes that there is an order of creatures whom he describes as 'spiritual animals', higher than mortals and lower than angels, with bodies composed entirely, or almost entirely, of one element, those of earth and water being lower and nearer to man than those of fire and air. These creatures are capable of sin and virtue, and their state, like that

¹ D. Hotham, *The Life of Jacob Behmen* (London, 1654), p. C 2.

² R. Baxter, *Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (London, 1691), p. 4.

of Man, is balanced between salvation and damnation. These Sinistrari calls *demons*, differentiating them, as he claims that the New Testament does, from devils, and he thinks them referred in the words of Our Lord, 'Other sheep I have who are not of this fold.' It was the fiery and aerial spirits among these who had intercourse with the daughters of Cain, and the giants sprang from them. Since the flood the atmosphere of earth has been moister and more allergic to these creatures than before; so that the modern changelings are generally the offspring of earthy or watery spirits, and therefore less vigorous. St. Anthony's little satyr was one of these earthy spirits, and a representative of a large number like him.

Folk stories everywhere show evidence of a similar belief. In this country there is the story of *The Bible Reader and the Fairy Woman*.¹ The theme is more charitably treated in the Scandinavian story of *The Neck and the Flowering Staff*.² In most of the stories the fairies are treated as not higher but spiritually lower than men; they tremble on the edge of damnation, and are only to be saved by a kind of miracle. The Scottish fairies have the devil for their over-lord, and are bound to pay a tribute to hell every seven years. Some of the Irish beliefs, however, seem to agree with Sinistrari's. Most folklorists would say with Casaubon that the fairies have no concern with either heaven or hell; that they are elemental creatures, whose lives are as long as the mountains, but who, when they perish, melt into nothingness.

Many of the magicians, as we have seen, claimed to deal with these intermediate creatures. Kelly, whose talk was as silly as that of any modern quack medium, used to report the prattle of a little spiritual creature called Madini, presumably not a ghost but one of these elemental spirits. It was carefully tuned to edification; 'I love you now you talke of God,' and such pious chat, for the benefit of the honest and credulous Dr. Dee.³

John Beaumont believed himself to be tormented for some time by spirits of this nature.

So it was with myself, two Spirits constantly attending me, Night and Day, for above Three Months together; who call'd each

¹ See Appendix II, No. 41.

² W. A. Craigie, *Scandinavian Folk-Lore* (London, 1896), p. 243.

³ M. Casaubon, *A True and Faithful Relation*, etc., ed. cit., p. 1.

other by their Names, and several Spirits would often call at my Chamber Door, and ask, whether such Spirits lived there, calling them by their Names, and they would answer, they did. As for the other Spirits that attended me, I heard none of their Names mentioned, only I ask'd one Spirit which came for some Nights together, and rung a little Bell in my Ear, what his name was, who answered *Ariel*.¹

And again, later in the book:

Their second coming to me was some years after, when at first there came Four, as I have set forth in my Fourth Chapter, and presently after there came Hundreds, and I saw some of them dance in a Ring in the Garden, and sing, holding Hands round, not facing each other, but their Backs turned to the inner part of the Circle. I found these of a promiscuous Nature, some good and some bad, as among Men; for some of them would now and then curse and swear, and talk loosely and others would reprehend them for it. Yet none of these ever persuaded me to any ill thing; but all would dissuade me from drinking too freely and any other irregularities.²

These are in something the same tradition as Elidor's fairies. The back-to-back ring was used by both witches and fairies, and occurs in a few children's singing games, of apparently ritual origin. *Water Water Wallflowers* is the best known of these.

It is difficult to know what exactly Cornelius Agrippa and the practising magicians thought of their demons and angels, but they generally seem to have regarded them as having bodies formed out of one of the four elements, not compounded of the four, as they believed Man's to be. In J. Freake's translation of Cornelius Agrippa we find, for instance:

The other *Demons* are neither so appearable, nor invisible, being sometimes conspicuous are turned into divers figures, and put upon themselves bodies like shadows, of blood-less images, drawing the filthiness of a gross body, and they have too much communion with the Wood (which the Ancients did call the wicked soul) and by reason of their affinity with earth, and water, are also taken with *Terrene* pleasures, and lust; of which sort are hobgoblins, and Incubi, and Succubi, of which number it is no absurd conjecture to think that *Melusina* was; yet there is none of the *Demons* (as *Marcus* supposeth) is to be supposed male or female, seeing this

¹ John Beaumont, *A Treatise of Spirits* (London, 1705), p. 91.

² *Ibid.*, p. 394.

difference of sex belongs to compounds, but the bodies of *Demons* are simple, neither can any of the *Demons* turn themselves into all shapes at their pleasure; but to the fiery, and airy it is easie so to do, viz: to change themselves into what shapes their imagination conceives: now subterranean and dark Demons, because their nature being concluded in the streights of a thick and unactive body, cannot make the diversity of shapes, as others can. But the waterie and such as dwell upon the moist superficies of the earth, are by reason of the moistness of the element, for the most part like to women; of such kinde are the fayries of the Rivers and *Nymphs* of the Woods: but those which inhabit dry places, being of dryer bodies, shew themselves in the form of men, as Satyrs, or *Onosceli*, with Asses legs, or *Fauni*, and *Incubi*, of which he saith, he learned by experience there were many, and that some of them oftentimes did desire, and made compacts with women to lie with them; and that there were some Demons, which the French call *Dusii*, that did continually attempt this way of lust.¹

It seems probable, since there was never a question of regarding angels as elementals, that the author did not believe these elemental demons to be of the same substance as angels, and therefore, like Sinistrari, thought devils and demons two different orders of creatures. Later he says:

There is moreover as hath been above said, a certain kind of spirits not so noxious, but most neer to men, so that they are even affected with humane passions, and many of these delight in mans society, and willingly dwell with them: Some of them dote upon women, some upon children, some are delighted in the company of divers domestick and wild animals, some inhabit Woods and Parks, some dwell about fountains and meadows.²

He goes on to give some general directions for raising them:

He therefore that will call upon them, may easily doe it in the places where their abode is, by alluring them with sweet fumes, with pleasant sounds, and by such instruments as are made of the guts of certain animals and peculiar wood, adding songs, verses, incantments sutable to it, and that which is especially to be observed is this, the singleness of the wit, innocency of the mind, a firm credulity, and constant silence; wherefore they do often meet children, women, and poor and mean men.

¹ Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, translated by J. F. (1651), pp. 403-4.

² Ibid., p. 450.

A spirit something of this kind is that famous one mentioned by Aubrey in his *Miscellanies*:

Anno 1670, not far from Cirencester, was an apparition: being demanded, whether a good spirit, or a bad? returned no answer, but disappeared with a curious perfume and most melodious twang. Mr W. Lilly believes it was a fairy.¹

John Freake goes on: 'Of this kind are hobgoblins, familiars and ghosts of dead men,' a list which shows how loose and confused the classification was at the time, for three more different types of spirits it would be difficult to bring together; but it is characteristic of the working magician's attitude; for as we have seen in many of the surviving spells religion, folk-lore and mythology are jumbled indiscriminately and often impiously together, and angels, ghosts, elementals and classical deities are often invoked in one breath.

It was a common boast among the magicians of the time that they worked by means of angels. Lilly tells us of Sarah Skelbourn, spectatrice (that is medium) to Arthur Gauntlett—'The Angels would for some years follow her, and appear in every Room of the House, until she was weary of them.' Her call began—'O ye good Angels, only and only!'² Ellen Evans, on the other hand, worked by the Fairy Queen, and her call began—'O Micol, O tu Micol, regina Pigmeorum veni.' Aubrey has a passage on converse with spirits in his *Miscellanies*, and tells us of Dr. Nepier, rector of Lydford in Bucks, who worked only by the means of angels and whose knees were horny with prayer.³ He seems to have been a man of real piety, but Lilly does not say as much for Dr. William Hodges, the Royalist astrologer, though his opinion may have been embittered by political feeling. 'His angels were *Raphael*, *Gabriel* and *Uriel*; his Life answered not in Holiness and Sanctity to what it should, having to deal with these holy Angels.'⁴

Though there was a general agreement that the Fall of the Angels was from pride there were slight variations in the accounts of the motive for their rebellion. In the *Malleus Male-*

¹ J. Aubrey, *Miscellanies* (London, 1890), p. 81.

² W. Lilly, *History of his Life and Times* (London, 1705), p. 102.

³ J. Aubrey, *Miscellanies*, ed. cit., p. 159.

⁴ Lilly's *Life and Times*, ed. cit., p. 50.

*ficarum*¹ Satan was said to have desired to be the sole means of Creation; in *Paradise Lost*² he thought himself diminished by the Enthronement of the Son, and in Heywood's *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels* a rumour of the Incarnation had spread through heaven, and the Angels were jealous because the Son proposed to take the inferior form of a man rather than to make Himself an angel.³ There is some subtlety in the conception by which Satan's rebellion against the intention became the means by which it was brought to pass. The English *Faust Book* gives a popularized and less subtle version.

Mephistopheles answered, My lord Lucifer was a fair angel, created of God's immortal, and being placed in the Seraphims, which are above the Cherubims, he would have presumed upon the Throne of God, with intent to thrust God out of his seat; upon this presumption the Lord cast him down headlong, and where before he was an angel of light, now dwells in darkness, not able to come near his first place, without God send for him to appear before him.⁴

Here we have a mention of the Hierarchies before the Fall, but few persisted, as did the authors of *Malleus Maleficarum*, in retaining the Hierarchies after the Fall. As a rule they were content to follow Psellus and classify the devils by their earthly habitat. Perhaps it was felt to be part of the degeneration following upon their fall that their natural orders were dissolved into chaos. According to popular estimation they soon degenerated in appearance. In the early traditions of Byzantine art the angelic origin of the devils was remembered, and they were represented as like the angels except that they were blue and clothed in blue.⁵ The phrase 'blue devils' seems founded on a very early tradition. As time went on, however, it was supposed that sin had brought deformity with it, or the fallen angels began to be identified with the heathen demons. By medieval times the horns and tail of the devil are taken as a matter of course, and any beauty that might appear in one is considered as no more than

¹ *Malleus Maleficarum*. Jacob Sprenger and Henry Institor. Frankfort 1588. Part I, Quest. XIII, p. 167.

² *Paradise Lost. The Poetical Works of John Milton* (Oxford, 1912), Bk. V, ll. 655-62.

³ T. Heywood, *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels* (1636), Bk. VI, p. 339.

⁴ *The English Faust Book* (1592). In Thom's *Early English Prose Romances*, p. 800.

⁵ H. I. Marrou, *Satan. Études Carmélitaines* (Paris, 1948), p. 38.

a disguise. The opinion persisted into the seventeenth century among the learned and the illiterate alike. We have for instance in Alexander Roberts' *Treatise of Witchcraft*:

Yet he cannot so perfectly represent the fashion of a man's body but that there is some sensible deformity by which he bewrayeth himself.¹

Some of the traditional fairies have the same disability, as the limping *henkies*² of Shetland, the Scandinavian *ellerwomen*, whose faces are beautiful but whose backs are hollow, and the goat-footed *glaitigs*³ of the Highlands.

There are many literary treatments of angels and devils in the period we are covering before we reach the supreme mastery of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Heywood's *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels* is the most exhaustive, though very little founded on folk tradition. He quotes largely from the Neo-Platonic authors, but appears to allow no intermediate creation between man and angel; his fairies are all devils. The only exception is a quotation from the Rabbi Akiba on the Nature spirits whose concord brings fruitful seasons, but it may be intended as no more than a quotation.⁴ It is often difficult with Heywood, as with Burton, to know if his quotations were meant to give authority to his own opinions or merely to show the extent of his reading. Perhaps they were rather assembled in fairness, to put all sides of the question before the reader. Burton took the same views; though he groups the fairies under their elements he counts them all as devils. Neither Burton nor Heywood hit on Sinistrari's distinction between devils and demons. If that had been generally maintained seventeenth-century opinion on the devils would have been clearer. Both follow Psellus with his six divisions, and ignore the Hierarchy. Henry More, in his *Præ-Existency of the Soul*, does the same.

There be six sorts of sprights, *Lelurion*
Is the first kind, the next are nam'd from Air.
The first aloft, yet farre beneath the Moon
The other in this lower region fare.
The third Terestriall, the fourth Watery are,

¹ A. Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (1616), p. 87.

² See E. M. Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore* (1913), p. 207.

³ See Appendix I.

⁴ *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels*, ed. cit., Bk. IV, p. 200.

The fift be Subterranean, the last
And worst, Light-hating ghosts, more cruel farre
Then Bear or Wolf with hunger hard opprest,
But doltish yet and dull like an unwieldy beast.

If this sort once possesse the arteries
Of forlorn man: Madnesse and stupor seize
His salvag'd heart, and death dwells in his eyes.
Ne is there remedy for this sad disease,
For that unworthy guest so senselesse is
And deaf, no Exorcist can make him hear,
But would in vain with Magick words chastise.
Others the thundering threats of *Tartar* fear,
And the drad names of Angels that this office bear.¹

These spirits which cannot be exorcised are those which Sinistrari calls demons, and he accounts for their immunity, not by their brutishness, but by their superiority to man. More almost seems to describe them as if they were germs.

For they been all subject to passion.
Some been so grosse they hunger after food,
And send out seed of which worms spring anon,
And love to liggen warm in living blood,
Where they into the veins do often crowd
Of beasts as well as men wherein they bathe
Themselves, and sponge-like suck that vitall flood,
As they done also in their aery path
Drink in each unctuous steam, which their dire thirst
allayth.²

The aerial devils, however, he makes sound very like the bogy beasts of folk-lore.

But those of air can easily convert
Into new forms, and then again revert,
One while a man, after a comely maid,
And then all suddenly to make thee stert,
Like leaping Leopard he'll thee invade,
Then made a man again he'll comfort thee afraid.

Then straight more quick then thought or cast of eye
A snarling Dog or bristled Boar he'll be:

¹ *The Præ-Existency of the Soul. Complete Works of Henry More* (1647), Stanzas 37 and 38, p. 264.

² *Ibid.*, Stanza 39, p. 265.

Anon a jugge of milke if thou be drie,
So easily's turnd that aire-consistency
Through inward sport and power of phantasie.
For all things virtually are contained in aire,
And like the sunne, that fiery planet free,
Th'internall soul, at once the seed doth rear,
Waken and ripe at once as if full ag'd they were.¹

It seems from this that Henry More must have known some tale like that of the Old Woman and the Hedley Kow.²

Milton expresses the same thought, with less particularity but far more poetic force, in the first book of *Paradise Lost*.

For Spirits when they please
Can either Sex assume, or both: so soft
And uncompounded is their Essence pure,
Not ti'd or manac'd with joynt or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
Dilated or condens't, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aerie purposes.³

Milton was a materialist, who believed that there was no soul without a body of some kind. There was saltpetre in his heaven and gold in his hell, and his angels were sufficiently embodied to be impeded by their armour and damaged by gunpowder. Donne, who was a more orthodox theologian, held the Catholic position that angels are immaterial but can assume bodies of air to make themselves visible to man.

Then as an Angell, face and wings
Of aire, not pure as it, yet pure doth weare,
So thy love may be my love's speare.

Just such disparitie
As is twixt Aire and Angells puritie,
'Twixt womens love, and mens will ever bee.⁴

I have already quoted many of Shakespeare's references to angels, devils and spirits. His plays are full of them. Ariel is more a sylph than a fairy, and Caliban's father may well have

¹ *Ibid.*, Stanzas 40 and 41, p. 265.

² *Paradise Lost*, ed. cit., Bk. I, ll. 423-30.

³ *Aire and Angels. Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne* (London, 1939), p. 15.

⁴ See Appendix II 43.

been a watery devil, to judge from the clown's comments on his appearance. A devil of some kind he seems to have been, not only from Prospero's opinion but from the title *mooncalf* given him by Stephano. A mooncalf was the mis-shaped offspring of a witch and an incubus. Drayton's satiric poem, *The Mooncalf* is founded on that belief.

The classical conception of the guardian genius is several times referred to in Shakespeare's plays, most commonly in the Greek and Roman ones, but not invariably so. In *Troilus and Cressida* we have:

Hark! you are called: some say the Genius so
Cries 'Come!' to him that instantly must die.¹

This is appropriate to its setting, but we find such a reference even in *Twelfth Night* where Sir Toby's 'His very genius hath taken the infection of the device'² is a particularly interesting example of a belief in the gullibility of the guardian angel or spiritual double. In primitive beliefs ghosts are similarly gullible.

In the classical plays the spirits are generally borrowed directly from Plutarch, and the guardian angel becomes the Socratic genius. *Antony and Cleopatra* contains the fullest treatment of them, perhaps because its spaciousness calls for an ontological setting. The soothsayer's warning to Antony that his genius was over-crowded by Caesar's, so that it was not lucky for him to be within Caesar's ambit,³ was evidently of great interest to Shakespeare, for he refers to it in *Macbeth*:

And under him
My genius is rebuk'd, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Caesar.⁴

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, too, there is the beautiful and poetic passage in which Mark Antony's luck, or genius, is heard leaving him.

The Tragedy of Othello, with its Renaissance villain, is naturally pervaded with thoughts of devils and angels. Othello's

¹ *Troilus and Cressida*, Act IV, Sc. iv. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1914), p. 795.

² *Twelfth Night*, *ibid.*, ed. cit., Act III, Sc. iv, p. 360.

³ *Antony and Cleopatra*, *ibid.*, ed. cit., Act II, Sc. iii, p. 1142.

⁴ *Macbeth*, *ibid.*, ed. cit., Act III, Sc. i, p. 989.

colour suggests the conventional black man of the witches' Sabbath. In the first scene Iago's speech to Brabantio turns on the notion, and references to it flicker through the play. As Dr. Spurgeon has pointed out the images used in each of Shakespeare's plays go far to set the emotional tone;¹ and here the picture of a bright creature entangled by an evil intelligence is sharpened by glancing mentions of angels and devils and dragonish monsters. One can pick a handful of them:

'Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,—'²

'O! the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil,—'³

'Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation,—'⁴

'It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil
wrath,—'

and

'Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil,—'⁵
(To which Iago replies that wine is a good familiar creature,
and indeed it has done a familiar's work for him.)

'This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it,—'

'Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!'

'I look down at his feet, but that's a fable.'⁶

These images are the more operative in a play that has little natural relief. Iago's close-working and foul imagination has closed it in. In spite of the sea-voyage and the windy walls of Cyprus the atmosphere is of indoors, or of close-walled towns. Even the lovely Desdemona is the most domestic of Shakespeare's great heroines. Cassio is a student soldier, Iago is at

¹ C. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery*, Part II (Cambridge, 1935).

² *Othello*, *ibid.*, ed. cit., Act IV, Sc. ii, p. 1120. ³ *Ibid.*, Act V, Sc. ii, p. 1127.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Act V, Sc. ii, p. 1128.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Act II, Sc. iii, p. 1106.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Act V, Sc. ii, p. 1129.

SPIRITUAL CREATURES

home in taverns and dark corners; the State itself is represented by the close and secret Senate of Venice. Only Othello, with his images of the sea and his talk of the Anthropophagi and Egyptian sibylls and distant battlefields, comes from the wide world, where marvels and adventures are true.

Of all the great tragedies *Hamlet* is the most clearly enacted in the sight of the angels, from the first, 'Angels and Ministers of Grace defend us!' to Horatio's 'flights of angels sing thee to thy rest'. But these are the great angels of the central Christian tradition. Only in Laertes' speech at Ophelia's grave does the folk belief in angels as the spirits of the dead intrude. The pagan world of *King Lear* can know little of angels, but the devils enter in fantasy, with the pretended possession of Edgar, and his story of the tempting fiend, more of a folk demon than a theological devil.

This is above all strangeness
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

GLOUCESTER. A poor unfortunate beggar.

EDGAR. As I stood here below methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea:
It was some fiend.¹

This is one of the barguest devils.

Edgar's Mad Tom, though some of his material is borrowed directly from Harsnet, is part of the Tom o' Bedlam tradition which was common at that time, both in literature and folk-lore. Part of the significance of the meeting between Tom and the Fool is that they represent different ramifications of an early belief that the madman and the simpleton is a divinely inspired creature. In the Fool the original sanctity had been deflected into entertainment, and in Mad Tom the possessed had come to be feared as diabolic rather than demonic; but shreds of an idea of gnomish wisdom clung to them, and made their sayings significant.

The last word on the medieval, hierarchic conception of the angels was spoken by Milton. Though in the machinery of *Paradise Lost* the hierarchies are a little neglected, and though

¹ *King Lear*, *ibid.*, ed. cit., Act IV, Sc. vi, p. 1081.

SPIRITUAL CREATURES

there are occasional eccentricities of thought peculiar to Milton, yet the whole is a magnificently fused conception. In the fifth book we have a shining picture of the cosmology in action, the whole passage presenting the doctrine of the movements and music of the spheres with incomparable poetic force.

That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred Hill,
Mystical dance, which yonder starrie Spheare
Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheelles
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervold, yet regular
Then most when most irregular they seem.
And in thir motions harmonie Divine
So smooths her charming tones, that Gods own ear
Listens delighted.¹

The poem imaginatively realized a hundred prose discussions of angels, from Origen to Heywood. After Milton's time the belief in the Hierarchy fell into ruin; and for two hundred years its scattered detritus was all that was left to our literature.

¹ *Paradise Lost*, ed. cit., Bk. V, ll. 618-27, pp. 286-7.

Appendix I

SOME OF THE PERSONAE OF FAIRYLAND

Afanc. (Welsh. Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*.) A Welsh water demon who haunted a pool in the river Conway, and dragged down all living things into its depth. He was at length captured through the treachery of a girl whom he loved, and dragged ashore by oxen. The Deluge in Welsh folk-lore is connected with a monstrous crocodile called Afanc i Llyn.

Banshee. The banshee is known both in Ireland and Scotland. In Scotland she is sometimes called *The Little Washer of Sorrow*, or *The Washer at the Ford*. She can be heard wailing by the riverside as she washes the clothes of the man destined for death. If a mortal can seize and hold her, she must tell the name of the doomed man, and also grant three wishes. She is no beauty, for she has only one nostril, a large, starting-out front tooth and web feet. The Irish banshee only wails for the members of the old families. When several banshees wail in chorus, it foretells the death of someone very great or holy. The banshee has long, streaming hair and a grey cloak over a green dress. Her eyes are fiery red from continual weeping.

In the Highlands of Scotland the word *Banshi* means only a fairy woman, and is chiefly used for the fairies who marry mortals.

Baobhan Sith. (Highland. D. Mackenzie, *Scottish Folk Lore and Folk Life*.) Malignant, blood-sucking spirits, who sometimes

SOME OF THE PERSONAE OF FAIRYLAND

appeared as hoodie crows or ravens, but generally as beautiful girls, with long, trailing green dresses hiding their deer's hooves. See Appendix II, No. 18.

Barguest. (Yorkshire. Henderson.) A creature of something the same kind as the boggy beast. It sometimes appears in human form, but generally as an animal. In the fishing villages, a barguest funeral is a presage of death. The barguest in whatever form has eyes like burning coals; it has generally claws, horns and a tail, and is girdled with a clanking chain.

Billy Blind. (F. Child, *English and Scottish Ballads* (New York, 1957), Vol. I.) A friendly domestic spirit of the Border Country, chiefly mentioned in ballads. He wears a bandage over his eyes. Auld Hoodie and Robin Hood are perhaps only different names for the same spirit. Billy Blind's chief function seems to be to give good advice. It was he who advised and helped Burd Isobel in the *Ballad of Young Bekie*, and it was the Billy Blind whose advice cured the young wife bewitched by her mother-in-law.

Black Annis. (Leicestershire. C. J. Billson, *County Folk Lore, Leicestershire*.) A malignant hag with a blue face and only one eye, very like the Highland Cailleach Bheur in character. Her cave was in the Dane Hills, but has been filled up. She devoured lambs and young children.

Black Dogs. The black dog is large—about the size of a young calf—black and shaggy, with fiery eyes. It does no harm if left alone; but anyone who speaks to it or touches it is struck senseless, and dies soon after. There are stories of the black dog from all over the country. One haunted the guard-room of Peel Castle in Man. There are stories about it in Buckinghamshire, Hertford, Cambridge, Suffolk, Lancashire, Dorset and Devon. There is a very good and full account of black dogs in *English Fairy and Folk Tales*. In the seventeenth century a pamphlet of Luke Hulton's described and attempted to explain the Black Dog of Newgate.

Blue Men of the Minch. (Highland. D. Mackenzie, *Scottish Folk Lore and Folk Life*.) These blue men belong entirely to the Minch, and particularly haunt the strait between Long Island and the Shiant Islands. They are a malignant kind of mermen,

but they are blue all over. They come swimming out to seize and wreck ships that enter the strait; but a ready tongue, and particularly a facility in rhyming, will baffle them. They have no power over the captain who can answer them quickly and keep the last word. Beyond their activities as wreckers they conjure up storms by their restlessness. The weather is only fine when the blue men are asleep. The islanders think they are fallen angels like the fairies and the *Merry Dancers*, as the Aurora Borealis is called there.

Bodach. (Highland. J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*.) The Scottish form of Bugbear or Bug-a-boo. He comes down the chimney to fetch naughty children.

Boggart. A North Country spirit. (Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) He is like a mischievous type of brownie. He is exactly the same as the poltergeist in his activities and habits.

Bogle. The Scottish version of the Yorkshire boggart, though perhaps less exclusively domestic in his habits.

Bogy beast. A general name for boggarts, brashes, grants and other mischievous spirits. Widely distributed.

Brash. See Skriker.

Brollachan. (J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the Western Highlands*.) Brollachan is the Gaelic for a shapeless thing, and it is probably something like Reginald Scot's Boneless. There is the story of one, the child of a Fuath, told by Campbell. It is something the same plot as *Ainsel*.

Brownie. The best known of the industrious domestic hobgoblins. The brownie's land is over all the North of England and up into the Highlands of Scotland. The brownie is small, ragged and shaggy. Some say he has a nose so small as to be hardly more than two nostrils. He is willing to do all odd jobs about a house, but sometimes he untidies what has been left tidy. There are several stories of brownies riding to fetch the nurse for their mistress. The brownie can accept no payment, and the surest way to drive him away is to leave him a suit of clothes. Bread and milk and other dainties can be left unobtrusively, but even they must not be openly offered. The Cornish *Brownie* is

of the same nature. His special office is to get the bees to settle. When the bees swarm the housewife beats a tin, and calls out: 'Brownie! Brownie!' until the brownie comes invisibly to take charge.

Brown Man of the Muirs. (Border Country. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) A spirit of the moors, who guards the wild life, but is malignant and dangerous to man.

Buccas or Knockers. (Cornish. Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*.) These are the spirits of the mines, something like the German Kobolds. They are said to be the spirits of the Jews who once worked the tin mines, and who are not allowed to rest because of their wicked practices. They are, however, friendly to the miners, and knock to warn them of disaster, and also to show what seams are likely to be profitable.

Bug-a-boo, Bugbear, Boggle-bo. There is a great variety of names for this bogle, which is generally used to frighten children into good behaviour.

Bwbachod. The Welsh brownie people. (W. Sikes, *British Goblins* (London, 1880).) They are friendly and industrious, but they dislike dissenters and teetotallers. Sikes gives an amusing story of a bwbach and his quarrel with a Methodist minister.

Cailleach Bheur. (The Blue Hag.) (Highland. D. Mackenzie, *Scottish Folk Lore and Folk Life*.) A giant hag who seems to typify winter, for she goes about smiting the earth with her staff so that it grows hard. When spring comes and she is conquered, she flings her staff in disgust into a whin bush or under a holly tree, where grass never grows. She is the patroness of deer and wild boars. Many hills are associated with her, particularly Ben Nevis and Schiehallion. Her general appearance is terrible and hideous, but in some stories she changes at times into a beautiful maiden. There is a version of the Wife of Bath's Tale told of her, and she is also the villainess of a story rather like Nix Nought Nothing. At times she also turns into a sea-serpent. Particulars of her are given in Mackenzie's *Scottish Folk Lore and Folk Life* and she is mentioned in Campbell's *Tales of the Western Highlands*.

Cauld Lad of Hilton. A brownie haunting Hilton Castle who is

definitely described as a ghost, and yet was laid, as brownies are always laid, by the present of a cloak and hood.

Ce Sith. (The Fairy Dog.) (Highland.) This is a great dog, as large as a bullock and with a dark green coat. He is very like the English Black Dog.

Cluricane. (Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland.*) Another name for the leprecaun.

Daoine Sidhe. (Irish.) These are the Heroic Fairies of Ireland, very like the Highland Sleeth Ma. May Eve—Beltane—and November Eve—Samhain—are their great festivals. On Beltane they revel, and—the door being open from fairyland to the mortal world that night—they often steal away beautiful mortals as their brides. On Samhain they dance with the ghosts. They live under the fairy hills, offerings of milk are set out for them, and in all ways they partake of the fairy nature. Some say that they are the fallen angels who were too good for hell and some that they are the remnants of the heroic Daanan race.

Devil's Dandy Dogs. (Cornish. Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England.*) A pack of black hounds, fire-breathing and with fiery eyes, which the devil leads over lonely moors on tempestuous nights. They will tear any living man to pieces, but they can be held off by the power of prayer.

Dobie. (Border Country. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties.*) A rather clownish and foolish brownie. The dobie is sometimes invoked as the guardian of hidden treasure; but those who can get him prefer the cannier brownie as less likely to be outwitted. Ghosts are called dobies in Yorkshire.

Dracae. Water spirits. (English. Gervase of Tilbury.) It was their custom to entice women to the water by appearing as wooden dishes floating down the stream. When a woman took hold of one it would resume its proper shape and drag her down into the water to nurse its children. Gervase of Tilbury tells a story of the Dracae and a magic ointment which is very like the Somerset story of the Fairy Midwife.

Elves. The Anglo-Saxon word for spirits of any kind, which later become specialized into creatures very like the Scandinavian light elves. Sir Walter Scott, in his *Demonology and Witchcraft*, describes elves as 'Sprites of a coarser sort, more

laborious vocation and more malignant temper and in all respects less propitious to humanity than the Fairies'. This, however, applies only to Scottish elves, and the little Scandinavian light elves, who looked after flowers, and whose chief faults were mischief and volatility, fit the general conception better. In Orkney and Shetland flint arrow-heads are called elf shot, and are said to be fired by the trows, so that trow and elf seem synonymous terms with them.

Fetch. A common term for a double or wraith. When seen by daylight it portends no harm, but at night it is a certain death portent.

Fuath. (Highland. J. G. Campbell, etc.) The general name for a Nature spirit, often of water, generally malignant. Urisks were sometimes called Fuaths. The Brollachan was the child of a Fuath.

Gabriel Ratchets. (Northern Counties. E. M. Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore.*) The Gabriel Ratchets are like the Wisht Hounds, except that they hunt high in the air, and can be heard yelping overhead on stormy nights. To hear them is a presage of death. Some say that they are the souls of unchristened children, who can find no rest.

Ganconer or Gacanagh. (The Love-Talker.) (Irish. E. M. Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore.*) The Love-Talker strolls along lonely valleys with a pipe in his mouth, and makes love to young girls, who afterwards pine and die for him. In a story quoted in *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales* the Ganconers appear in numbers, live in a city under a lough, hurl and play together, and steal human cattle, leaving a stock behind, just like ordinary trooping fairies.

Glaistig. (Highland. D. Mackenzie, *Scottish Folk-Lore and Folk Life.*) The Glaistig is a female fairy, generally half-woman, half-goat, but sometimes described as a little, stout woman, clothed in green. She is a spirit of mixed characteristics, and seems, indeed, to be all fairies in little. She is supposed to be fond of children and the guardian of domestic animals. Milk is poured out to her, and she does something of a brownie's work about the house. She is specially kind, too, to old people and the feeble-minded. On the other hand she has darker qualities; there

are stories of her misleading and slaying travellers. If the traveller named the weapon he had against her she could make it powerless; but if he only described it he could overcome her. The Glaistig seems partly a water spirit. She might often be seen sitting by a stream, where she would beg to be carried across. She could be caught and set to work something like a kelpie.

Grant. (English.) A demon, mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis, very like the Picktree Brag. He is like a yearling colt in shape, but goes on his hind legs and has fiery eyes. He is a town spirit, and runs down the middle of the street at midday or just after sundown, so that all the dogs run out barking. His appearance is a warning of danger. Some people connect him with Grendel, whom Beowulf killed; but Grendel was a sea monster.

Gwragedd Annwm. (Welsh. Sikes, *British Goblins*.) Lake maidens, not unlike Malory's Lady of the Lake. They are beautiful, and not so dangerous as the mermaids and nixies. They often wedded mortals.

Habitrot. (Scottish Border. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) The Spinning-Wheel Fairy. A shirt made by Habitrot was considered efficacious against illness. Habitrot, though very ugly, was friendly to mankind.

Hedley Kow. (Northumbrian. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) A kind of bogy beast that haunted the village of Hedley. Its great amusement was to transform itself into one shape after another so as to bewilder whoever picked it up; but, like most spirits of its kind, it was fond of turning itself into a horse. Once it assumed the likeness of a pair of young girls, and led two young men into a bog. It is rare for a spirit to be able to make a double appearance.

Hob or Hobthrush. (Yorkshire and Durham. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) A brownie with most of the usual brownie characteristics, but a specialist in whooping cough. Children with whooping cough used to be brought to Hobhole in Brunswick Bay to be cured by Hob. The parents would call: 'Hobhole Hob! Hobhole Hob! My bairn's got kincough. Tak't off! Tak't off!' Like other brownies he is driven away by a present of clothes.

Jenny Greenteeth. (Lancashire. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) A malignant water fairy. She drags people down into the water and drowns them. Her presence is indicated by a green scum on the water.

Kelpie. (Scottish.) A malignant water spirit, which is generally seen in the form of a horse, but sometimes appears like a handsome young man. A kelpie's great object is to induce mortals to mount on its back and plunge with them into deep water, where it devours them. A man who can throw a bridle over the kelpie's head, however, has it in his power, and can force it to work for him.

Mara. An old English name for a demon, which survives with us in *Night-mare* and *Mare's Nest*. In Anglo-Saxon the echo was called a *wood-mare*. In Wales at Twelfth Night the boys used to carry round a horse's skull decked with ribbons, which they called Mari Lwyd.

Maug Moulach or *Hairy Meg.* (Highland. Grant Stewart, *Highland Superstitions and Amusements*.) A spirit something between a brownie and a banshee. She haunts Tullochgorm and gives warning of the approaching death of any of the Grants. She also does brownie work. Maug Vulucht, a spirit very like her, once haunted a Highland household with a companion Brownie Clod.

Mermaid. The mermaid is a much more sinister character than the mild roane, though harmless mermaids have been known. Her appearance and habits are well known to everyone from Scotland to Cornwall. It was considered a certain omen of shipwreck for a ship to sight a mermaid. The mermaids sometimes penetrated into rivers and sea lochs as the story of the *Mermaid of Knockdolian* shows. In Suffolk, indeed, they are said to haunt ponds as well as rivers. Like many other fairies the mermaids have a great desire for human children. In the folk-lore of a good many countries the mermaids and other water fairies are supposed to be very anxious to gain a human soul. Their lives are long, but when they die they perish utterly.

Merrows. (Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*.) The merrows are the Irish mer-people. Like the roane they live on dry land under the sea, and need an enchantment to make them able to pass through the water.

The merrows' charm lies in their red caps. The merrows' women are very beautiful, but the men have long red noses, green teeth and hair and short finny arms.

Muryans. (Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*.) The muryans are the dwindling fairies of Cornwall. Long ago they were of more than human size, but for some crime they committed they were condemned to dwindle year by year, till they turned into ants, and so perished.

Nuckelavee. (Scottish. *Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales*.) A horrible monster who came out of the sea, half-man and half-horse, with a breath like pestilence and no skin on its body. The only security from it was that it could not face running water.

Old Lady of the Elder Tree. (Lincolnshire. *County Folk-Lore, Lincolnshire*.) A tree spirit rather like Hans Andersen's *Elder Flower Mother*.

Padfoot. (Yorkshire. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) A demon dog that haunts lonely lanes near Leeds.

Peg o' Nell. (Mrs. Gutch, *County Folk-Lore, North Riding of Yorkshire*.) The Spirit of the Ribble. She is said to be the ghost of a servant girl from Waddow Hall who was drowned in the river. She is supposed to demand a life every seven years.

Peg Powler. (*County Folk-Lore, North Riding of Yorkshire*.) The Spirit of the Tees. She has long, green hair, and is insatiable for human life. The frothy foam on the high reaches of the Tees is called Peg Powler's suds.

People of Peace. (*Tales of the Western Highlands*.) This is the Highland name for the fairies, corresponding to the Lowland 'Good Neighbours'. They are much like them in character. Campbell's story of the *Woman of Peace and the Kettle* is characteristic.

Picktree Brag. (Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties*.) This is a Durham version of the boggy beast. It appears in various forms, sometimes as a horse, sometimes as a calf or a dick ass, sometimes as a naked man without a head. It plays all the usual tricks of the boggy beast.

Pixies or Piskies. (Devonshire and Cornwall.) These are small trooping fairies of which many stories are told by Hunt and Mrs. Bray. There are also occasional stories of the brownie type

told of them. The white moths that come out in twilight are called piskies in parts of Cornwall, and are regarded by some as fairies and by others as departed souls. In parts, too, they say that pixies are the spirits of unbaptized children.

Pooka or Phooka. (Irish.) The Irish Puck is in many ways like the Dunny or Brag. He is in appearance like a wild, shaggy colt, hung with chains. He generally haunts wild places, but in one story, though still keeping his animal form, he works like a brownie, and is stopped in his career of usefulness in the same way by the present of a coat. In this story, like the Cauld Lad, he is said to be the ghost of a servant.

Portunes. (English.) These are a strange kind of fairy reported by Gervase of Tilbury and not surviving in any modern folklore. They came in troops into farmhouses at night, and, after working, rested themselves at the fire and cooked frogs for their supper. They were very tiny, with wrinkled faces and patched coats. It was their nature to do good, not harm. Their only mischievous trick was that of misleading horsemen.

Pwca. (Welsh. Sikes, *British Goblins*.) The Welsh Puck is much the same character as in England and Ireland. He likes his nightly bowl of milk, but does not seem to work for it as the bwbachod do. He is specially found of misleading night wanderers.

Rawhead and Bloody Bones. (Yorkshire, Lancashire and Lincolnshire. *County Folk-Lore*.) A malignant pond spirit who dragged children down into ponds and old marl pits. Sometimes called Tommy Rawhead.

Redcap. (Border Country. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) A malignant spirit who haunts old peel towers and places where deeds of violence have been done. He is like a squat old man, with grim, long-nailed hands and a red cap, dyed in blood. It is dangerous to try to sleep in any ruined castle that he haunts, for if he can he will re-dip his cap in human blood. He can be driven off by words from Scripture or the sight of a cross-handled sword. In other places he is less sinister. There is, for instance, a redcap who haunts Grandtully Castle in Perthshire, who is rather lucky than unlucky.

Roane. (The Highland mermen. Grant Stewart, *Highland Superstitions and Amusements*.) These mermen are distinguished

from others by travelling through the sea in the form of seals. In the depths of the sea caves they come to air again, and there, and on land, they cast off the seal skins which are necessary to carry them through water. The roane are peculiarly mild un-revengeful fairies of deep domestic affections, as the stories of the *Fisherman and the Merman* and the *Seal Catcher's Adventure* show. The Shetlanders call the roane sea trows, but their character is substantially the same.

Seely Court. (Lowland Scots.) Seely means blessed, and this name stands for the comparatively virtuous heroic fairies. The malignant fairies and demons were sometimes called the Unseely Court.

Silky. (Northern Counties. Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*.) A name for a white lady. The Silky of Black Heddon in Northumberland had one close resemblance to a brownie. If she found things below stairs untidy at night she would tidy them, but if they had been tidied she flung them about. She was dressed in dazzling silks, and went about near the house, swinging herself in Silky's Chair—the crossed branches of an old tree which overhangs a waterfall—riding sometimes behind horsemen or stopping them by standing in front of their horses. But on the whole perhaps she belonged more to the class of ghosts than of brownies, for she was laid by the discovery of a treasure, which must have been troubling her.

Skriker. (Yorkshire and Lancashire. Hartland, *English Fairy and Folk Tales*.) A death portent. Sometimes it is called a brash, from the padding of its feet. It sometimes wanders invisibly in the woods, giving fearful shrieks, and at others it takes a form like Padfoot, a large dog with huge feet and saucer eyes.

Spriggans. (Cornish. Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*.) Some say the spriggans are the ghosts of the giants. They haunt old cromlechs and standing stones and guard their buried treasure. They are grotesque in shape, with the power of swelling from small into monstrous size. For all commotions and disturbances in the air, mysterious destruction of buildings or cattle, loss of children or substitution of changelings, the spriggans may be blamed.

Tom Tit Tot. (Suffolk.) The English Rumpelstilzkin. He is described as a black thing with a long tail, and sometimes as an

impet. Tom-Tit, or Tut or a Tut-gut is a Lincolnshire name for a hobgoblin.

Trwtyn-Tratyn. The Welsh Tom Tit Tot. (Clodd, *Tom Tit Tot*.)

Tylwyth Teg, or Fair Family. (Welsh.) It is difficult to get a clear picture of the Tylwyth Teg. The name is very much used, and for differing types of fairies. They are sometimes described as of mortal or more than mortal size, dressed chiefly in white. They live on an invisible island; they ride about hunting and reward cleanliness with gifts of money; they dance in fairy rings, and mortals joining them are made invisible and carried off for ever, unless they are rescued before cockcrow. Others wear rayed clothes of green and yellow, are small and thieving, particularly of milk and children. Unlike many fairies the Tylwyth Teg are golden haired and will only show themselves to fair-haired people. The usual brownie story is also told about them. They are very friendly with goats whose beards they comb on Thursdays.

Urisk. (Highland. Grahame, *Picturesque Descriptions of Perthshire*, G. Henderson, *The Norse Influence in Celtic Scotland*, etc.) A kind of rough brownie, half-human and half-goat, very lucky to have about the house, who herded the cattle and worked on farms. He haunted lonely waterfalls, but would often crave human company, and follow terrified travellers at night, without, however, doing them any harm. The Urisks lived solitary in recesses of the hills, but they would meet at stated times for solemn assemblies; a corrie near Loch Katrine was their favourite meeting place.

Werewolves. The earlier attitude to the werewolf is more tolerant than that towards the *loup-garou* in seventeenth-century France. Giraldus Cambrensis has a story of a priest called to shrive a dying woman in wolf form. It was thought in Ireland to be a curse that might fall on any man for a certain number of years. In the medieval romance of *William and the Werewolf* the wolf is a good character, and the victim of enchantment.

Whuppity Stoorie. (Scottish. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*.) This name is apparently taken from the circular scud of dust upon which fairies are supposed to ride. It was the name

SOME OF THE PERSONAE OF FAIRYLAND

of a Scottish Tom Tit Tot fairy, and also of the fairy in one version of the Habitrot story.

Will o' the Wisp. This is the commonest of the many popular names for the *ignis fatuus*. It is sometimes described as the soul of a wicked man, but more generally as a kind of pixy.

Appendix II

FAIRY-TALES CITED IN THE COURSE OF THE BOOK

1. THE GWRAIG AND THE THREE BLOWS¹

A young farmer fell in love with a water maiden who used to row about the lake in a golden boat, singing. He saw her close at hand by watching the New Year in at the edge of the lake, and courted her by floating gifts of bread and cheese upon the water. He did this from Midsummer Eve till the New Year, when she again appeared to him, and consented to be his wife, but warned him that if he struck her three times she must leave him. They lived happily for a long time, and she was a loving and dutiful wife, though she had strange ways. Once they went to a child's christening, and she would do nothing but weep. Her husband tapped her reprovingly, and she said to him: 'How can I do else but weep, when the poor child is born into a world of sorrow? And that is the first blow.' A little later the baby died, and they went to its funeral. Here, where everyone else was sad, she danced and sang. Her husband tapped her again. 'The Baby is gone from temptation to be happy for ever,' she said. 'How can I help rejoicing? Be careful, that is the second blow.' Some time later they went to a wedding, where a beautiful young girl was wedded to an old miser, and in the middle of the feast the gwraig burst into tears, and cried out: 'Beauty is wedded to age, not for love but greed. It is the devil's compact!'

¹ Sikes, *British Goblins*, pp. 40-44. A variant of Mt.400, Motif (C.901.1.3).

Angry and scandalized, her husband struck her, and said: 'Be quiet.' She looked with sorrowful love at him, and said: 'It is the third blow, I must leave you.' She vanished as she spoke, and the rich dowry of fairy cattle she had brought went with her.

2. THE SEAL WOMAN¹

A young man of Uist was once walking on the seashore, when he saw a number of sea people dancing, with their discarded seal-skins lying beside them. He crept up and seized one, and carried it away. The dancers put on their skins and took to the sea; but one beautiful creature was left behind. She begged him to return the skin, but he would not, and only asked her to marry him. In the end she consented, and they lived together for some years, and had several children. One day, when her husband was out, one of the children found a seal-skin hidden in a stack of corn, and ran with it to his mother. She received it with delight, kissed her children, and ran down to the sea. Her husband was only in time to see her plunging into the water. A big dog seal came up and greeted her. When she was safely out of reach she turned and said to her human husband: 'Farewell. I loved you well enough, but I always loved my first husband more.'

3. THE KING'S DAUGHTER OF COLCHESTER²

There was once a King in Colchester who had one good and beautiful daughter; but when his wife died he married again, a widow with one girl who was both ugly and ill-tempered. They treated the poor Princess so badly that she asked her father if she might go out into the world to seek her fortune. Her stepmother gave her a bottle of flat beer and some sour bread for her dowry, and away she went. She walked till she came to a thick hedge of thorns, and near it an old hermit was sitting. 'Good morning,' said he, 'what have you in your bundle?' 'Bread and beer,' said the Princess. 'Would you be pleased to share it with me?'

¹ Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, p. 169. A variant of Mt.400, Motifs (D.361), (D.531).

² Hartland, *English Fairy and Folk Tales*, pp. 20-24. A variant of Mt.403.

'And thankful,' said the hermit, and they sat down together. When they had finished he gave her a stick and said: 'Go straight in front of you, and when the hedge seems too thick to pass, strike it with this stick, and say: "Please hedge, let me through", and it will open to you. And my blessing go with you.'

The Princess did as he said, and got safely through the hedge. Beyond it was a well, and she was sitting by it, eating the last bit of her bread, when up came a golden head, singing:

'Wash me and comb me and lay me down softly.'

'That I will,' said the Princess; but no sooner had she finished than a second came up, and then a third, with the same request. She washed and combed them all, and as she finished her meal the three heads talked together.

The first said: 'I weird that she shall be thrice as beautiful as before.'

The second said: 'I weird that her breath shall be as sweet as the sweetest flowers.'

The third said: 'I weird that she shall marry the greatest king on earth.'

No sooner had they spoken than it was so. A King came riding through the wood a-hunting with his court, and he saw the Princess shining like gold. He spoke to her and her breath was like violets. They were married; and the King took her in his golden coach to visit her father and stepmother. After this nothing would please the stepsister but she must seek her fortune too. She followed the path the Princess had taken, but she took her evil temper with her. She would not share her meal with the old hermit, so that she came torn and bleeding through the hedge; and she answered the golden heads with nothing but bad words. So they laid an evil weird on her. The first said that her skin should be covered with blotches, and the second that her breath should be foul and her tongue blistered, and the third that she should be glad to marry a poor cobbler. And so it befell. For when she came to a village she was so ugly that everyone ran from her but an old cobbler, who happened to have a flask of healing water. He understood from her mumbled speech that she was a queen's daughter, and undertook to heal her if she would marry him. So it happened; and when they got back to the King's court the Queen was so mortified that she hanged

herself, and the King gave the cobbler a bag of gold to take his wife to a far part of the land, where she was as wretched as she deserved to be.

4. CHILDE ROLAND¹

There were once three King's sons, the youngest of whom was called Childe Roland, and they had a sister called Burd Helen. One day, as the boys were playing football, Childe Roland kicked the ball over the church. Burd Helen ran to fetch it, but never returned. At length the eldest brother set out to find her, and went, by his mother's advice, to learn what he should do from the wizard Merlin. Merlin told him that when he got to Elfland he must chop off the head of everyone who spoke to him until he met Burd Helen, and must bite no bit nor drink no drop while he was in Elfland. He set out, but never returned. The second received the same advice, but fared no better. At length Childe Roland, girded with his father's good sword, set out by the same way. Following Merlin's instructions, he cut off the head of the King of Elfland's horseherd and cowherd, ox-herd, swineherd and henwife. Then he came to the green fairy knowe, and encircled it three times widdershins, crying, 'Open door! Open door!' The third time the door opened, and he found himself in the Dark Tower of Elfland, where there was neither sun nor moon, and the walls shone with gems. There in the great hall he found Burd Helen, who greeted him sadly, and told him that their brothers lay in a deep death trance. They talked long and Childe Roland grew hungry, and asked for meat and drink. Burd Helen had no power to warn him; she brought him what he asked; but before he drank he looked at her, and dashed the cup to the ground. At the sound the Elf King came in with an ogreish cry, and they fought together until Childe Roland forced the Elf King to the ground, and made him promise to restore his brothers to life and set Burd Helen free. The Elf King fetched a phial of red liquor, and touched the ears and eyelids, nostrils, lips and fingertips of the two princes, so that they revived. Then he freed Burd Helen from her spell, and they went home together in great joy.

¹ Jamieson, *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, pp. 398-403. (It is told in prose interspersed with ballad verse.) A variant of Mt.471, Motifs (H.1385.6), (H.1242), (D.700).

5. TOM TIT TOT¹

Once there was a woman baking pies, and when she took them out they were baked too hard, so she said to her daughter: 'Put 'em on the shelf, and may be they'll come again.'

By that she meant that they'd come soft; but her daughter thought: 'If they'll come again, I'll eat 'em;' and she ate 'em, all five.

Come dinner-time, her mother said: 'Go and see if them pies be come again.'

'No, not one on 'em,' said the daughter.

'Well, come again or no, I'll have one for my dinner,' says the mother.

'But you can't,' says the girl, 'for I've ate 'em.'

At that the mother was very sad, and she took her spinning to the door, and as she spun she sang:

'My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day!
My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day!'

And who should come riding along but the King himself.

'What's that you're a singing of?' says he.

The mother didn't like to give away her daughter, so she sang:

'My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day!
My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day!'

'Well,' says the King, 'that's a powerful quick worker, and if you like I'll marry her. And for eleven months of the year she shall have all the food she likes to eat, and all the clothes she likes to wear, and all the company she likes to keep; but on the twelfth month she shall spin me five skeins every day, or off goes her head.'

As he said, so it was; but full and gay and merry as she was for eleven months, the girl sometimes wondered about the twelfth.

On the last day of the eleventh month the king took her into a little bare room, with a spinning-wheel and a table and a stool, and a great pile of flax, and he says: 'Now my dear, you'll

¹ Originally from *Suffolk Notes and Queries*, in the *Ipswich Journal*. Reprinted by E. Clodd in *The Folk-Lore Journal*, Vol. VII, pp. 138-43. Later he wrote a book on the subject. Mt.500.

spin me five skeins before tomorrow night, or off goes your head.' And away he went. The girl had been so gatless that she had never learnt to spin, so there was nothing for it but to sit and cry. Presently there came a tap-tap at the window, and in came a little black thing, with a long tail.

'What are you crying for, my girl?' it says; and after this and that she told it.

'I'll spin the skeins for you,' it said, 'and every day you shall have three guesses at my name, and if you don't guess it by the end of the month, you're mine for ever.'

Well, it was that or to lose her head, so the girl consented; and off it went with the flax. Every day it brought back the skeins, and every day she had three guesses at its name, but she never seemed to get any nearer. As the month wore on the king grew kinder and the impet looked wickedder, and the girl grew sadder. The last day but one came, and the king brought in a stool when he came to fetch the skeins.

'Well, my dear,' he said, 'I see I won't have to cut your head off after all, so I've come to have supper with you.'

So they sat down together, and every now and then the king would burst out laughing. At last she says: 'What is it?'

'Well,' says he, 'I was out hunting today and I got to an old chalk-pit I didn't know. And I heard a kind of humming noise. So I got off my hobby, and went softly over, and there was the curiousest little black thing, spinning away for dear life. And as he spun he sang:

"Nimmy nimmy not,
My name's Tom Tit Tot."

At that the girl burst out laughing too, for she knew she had the name at last. Next day the impet came grinning back with the flax, and it says: 'Well, what's my name?'

'Is that Solomon?' says the girl.

'No, that's not Solomon.'

'Is that Zebedee?'

'No,' it says. 'Only one more guess and you're mine for ever.' Then says the girl, laughing:

'Nimmy, nimmy not,
Thy name's Tom Tit Tot.'

And at that it gave a shriek and vanished out of the window, and the girl never saw it again.

6. HABITROT¹

There was once a girl so idle that she would never learn to spin. Her mother scolded her and punished her in vain. At length she gave her seven heads of lint, and promised her a beating she would not forget unless she spun them up in three days. The girl was frightened, and for a whole day she worked hard, but made no headway. On the second day she left the work in despair, and went out into the fields. Seated by the stream on a self-bored stone she saw a woman spinning, twisting her spindle like lightning. She had a lip so long that it hung down over her chin. The girl went up to her with a friendly greeting and asked her what made her so long lippit.

'Spinning thread, my hinnie,' said the old woman.

'I sud be spinning too,' said the girl, and told her all the story.

'Fetch me your lint,' said the old wife, 'and I'll spin it for you.'

The girl ran for the lint, and no sooner had the old wife received it than she disappeared. The girl sat down by the stone to wait her return, and fell asleep. When she woke it was twilight, and a light and the sound of voices came from the self-bored stone. She put her eye to the hole, and saw a great company of spinners, all with their lips twisted to a strange deformity, and her friend was walking among them, directing their work. It was her voice the girl had heard saying: 'Little kens the wee lassie at the brae heid that my name is Habitrot.'

As the girl watched, Habitrot walked up to one who sat apart reeling yarn, and said: 'Hurry wi' yir yarn, Scantlie Mab, my wee lassie's wanting it to give tae her mither.'

Pleased at the news, the girl made for home, and as she reached the door Habitrot gave her the yarn, and in reply to her thanks, only said: 'Tell nane wha spinned it.' Overjoyed the girl went into the house. It was dark, and her mother was asleep; but hanging up to dry in the chimney were seven black puddings she had just made. The girl had been fasting all day, so she took the

¹ G. Douglas, *Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales*, p. 109. Mt.501.

puddings down, and fired and ate them, all seven. In the morning her mother came first downstairs, and found the seven skeins laid neatly out, and the seven puddings gone. Frantic with surprise, she ran to the door, crying:

'Ma dochter's span se'en, se'en, se'en,
Ma dochter's eaten se'en, se'en, se'en,
And a' afore daylight.'

The laird was riding by, and enquired the meaning of her song. She led him into the house, and showed him the shining skeins and the empty pan. The pretty girl was there too, and the laird, who desired a notable wife, asked her to marry him. So far all was well; but the girl was afraid that he would expect her to live up to her reputation; so, soon after her marriage, she ran down to the self-bored stone, and asked Habitrot's advice.

'Bring your bonnie man here, my dawtie,' said the fairy, 'and I'se warrant he'll no ask ye tae spin again.'

And so it befell. When the laird saw the muckle-mou'd company, and learned the cause of their deformity, he forbade his pretty bride to touch a spinning-wheel; and she was very ready to obey him.

7. THE BARRA WIDOW'S SON¹

There was once a poor widow in Barra, who had an only son called Iain. When he was still a small boy a skipper adopted him, and brought him up for his own; and when he was grown the ship's owner saw him, made him his heir, and sent him over the sea in one of his seven ships. He went with a load of coals to Turkey. He went onto the land, and saw two men beating the corpse of a dead man with iron flails.

'What are you doing to that corpse?'

'It was a Christian; we had eight marks against him, and since he did not pay us while he was alive we will take it out of him now.'

'I will pay you the eight marks if you will give me the body.'

They took the marks, and he had the body buried. He went

¹ Campbell, *Tales of the Western Highlands*, Vol. II, pp. 120-32. Mt.506, Motifs (E.341.1), (R.111), (K.1931.6), (M.241.1).

further in the land, and he saw a red fire, and a woman stripped before it.

'What are you doing here?'

'This is a Christian woman that was caught on the ocean, and for eight years the Great Turk has asked her to marry him, and she has put him off. So he has ordered that she shall be burned in a great fire.'

'I will give you a lot of silver and gold if you will give her to me, and tell him that she is burned.'

They looked at the gold, and they gave him the woman, and he took her on board his ship and clothed her.

'Now,' she said, 'go to yonder changehouse, and there they will give you a load of gold for one of coal till your boat is trimmed; but when it is trimmed make off, for at night they will come down and kill you, and take back the gold.'

He did as she said, and they sailed back to England with a cargo of gold. He got a lodging for the woman, and she said to him:

'Go next to Spain, and when you get there put on this suit I have for you, and ride to church; and take this book and this pipe, and wear this ring on your finger. And you will see three gold chairs, and the King and Queen will sit on two, and you sit on the third, and read out of this book, and play on the pipe when it comes to singing.'

He did as she said, and all the service time the King and Queen looked at him and wept, and when the service was over they asked him to the Palace, and made a great feast for him. And the Queen said: 'Where did you get that pipe and that book and ring? and who sewed the clothes that are upon you?'

'I got them from a woman I got in the land of Turkey, and they had set her before a fire to burn her.'

'That was my own daughter,' said the Queen. 'There was a great general here, and he asked our daughter to marry him, but she would not; and to give him time to forget her she went for a sail, and her ship was captured by the Turk. If you know where she is we will give you a ship to fetch her home, and you shall marry her.'

'I will fetch her in my own ship,' said Iain. 'And if it should be her own wish to marry me I should be glad.'

So he set out in his ship for England, but the General paid

a boy to hide him on the ship. And Iain set sail with the Spanish Princess; but halfway back they stopped at an island, and Iain went on shore to hunt. Then the General came out of hiding, and paid the crew a great sum of money to sail away and leave Iain behind. When the Princess saw Iain was lost she went mad for grief; and when she got back to Spain they had to tie her with cords. But on the island Iain found little to eat, and his hair and beard grew long, and he was starved to a skeleton. Then one night he heard a voice call: 'Art thou there, Iain Albanich?' At first he was afraid, and then he went down to the shore, and there was a boat, and a man in it.

'What will you give to take you off this place?' he said.

'It is nothing I have left to give,' said Iain.

'Would you give me half your children and half your land if you had them?'

'I would that.'

Then the man took Iain into his boat and rowed him to Spain; and when they got there Iain shaved himself and put on new clothes, and played his pipe outside the Palace. And when he had played it four times the Princess broke her ropes and came to him, and she was as sane as any woman in the land.

Then Iain married her, and the General was torn between horses. When they had been married five years and had four children, and Iain had half the kingdom, a man came to him in the night, and it was the man who had rowed him in the boat.

'Are you ready to keep your promise?' he said.

'I am,' said Iain.

'Keep your children and your land. I am the man whose body you bought in Turkey years ago. Goodbye, and my blessing to you.'

He went then, and Iain never saw him again.

8. THE KING OF IRELAND'S SON AND THE WELL OF THE WESTERN WORLD¹

There was once a King of Ireland's son who went hunting in the snow, and he killed a raven. And as the raven's blood poured

¹ Douglas Hyde, *Beside the Fire*, pp. 19-47. Mt.507A. Motifs (T.11.6), (H.1381.3.1.2), (F.601), (F.661.5), (F.641), (F.681), (F.622), (F.601.1), (E.341), (T.172), (H.322.1), (T.118), (M.241.1).

out in the snow he put himself under a geasa that he would not stop two nights in one place till he had found a woman whose hair was as black as raven's feathers, and her skin was as white as snow, and her cheeks as red as blood. There was no such woman in the Western World; but he heard there was one in the Eastern World; so he set out to seek her. The first day of his journey he met a funeral, and he set it on its way for good will. But he had not walked two steps before a man came and laid a suit upon the corpse for five pounds. The dead man's people were too poor to pay it, but the body belonged to the creditors until the debt was paid. Then the King's son paid the debt, and loosed the dead man, and the funeral went on its way. But before they had got to the churchyard another creditor laid a debt on it, and this too the King's son paid. And now he had only ten pounds left in the world, and he went on his way. He did not go far before he met a short green man, who offered himself as his servant.

'What would your wages be?' said the King's son.

'The first kiss of your wife after you have wedded her,' said the green man, and the King's son agreed to that. They went on together; and that day they met five strange men, and the King's son hired them all, for the short green man said they would be serviceable to him. The first could hit a blackbird in the Eastern World, and he himself in the Western. The second could hear the grass growing. The third was so swift that he had to keep one leg over his shoulder to keep in sight at all. The fourth could make a mill turn with the breath of one of his nostrils; and if he blew with two he would have dashed it to the ground. The fifth was so hard that he could break stones with his thigh. The King's son hired them all; and they went on together, until they came to a desolate place with one castle in it, and that was a giant's. So the short green man went on alone to the giant's house; and he swelled to such a size that he put fear on the giant, and he promised to hide the giant till his master was gone; and he should get what he asked for it. They spent the night there, and in the morning the short green man got the giant's cap of darkness from him. The next night they came to the giant's brother; and they did the same to him; only they got the slippers of swiftness from him; and the third night they spent with a giant again, and that time they got an old rusty

sword from him, that would bite through anything until it got to the earth beyond. And so they came to the raven-haired woman of the East; and there were three-score spikes round her castle, set with the heads of the men who had come to woo her; but the King's son was ready to make the attempt. So she gave him her scissors, and she said: 'Keep my scissors till morning, or you will lose your head.'

But there was a pin of slumber in his pillow; and while he slept the woman stole the scissors away, and gave them to the King of Poison to keep. But the small green man was watching in the cap of darkness, with the slippers of swiftness on; and he fetched back the scissors. And the next night she gave him her comb; and she stole it away, and gave it to the King of Poison, and the short green man stole it back. The third night she said: 'You must give me this back, and the head that it combed last as well.' And she stole it again, and took it to the King of Poison, and told him to guard it with his life. But the short green man took the rusty sword, and the scissors and the cap, and smote off the King of Poison's head and brought it back. But she had another task for him; and that was to send a runner to the Well of the Western World, and fetch back three bottles of healing from it; and if her runner came back first the King's son was to lose his head. So he sent out the swift runner, and she sent out an old hag of a witch; and when the old hag was halfway she met the runner coming back. And she said: 'Why is this hurry on you? They are married now. Sit down awhile and rest.' And she shoved a horse's skull under his head; and the pin of sleep was in it, and he fell asleep, and she took the bottles from him.

Then the listening man said: 'There is but one foot coming back, and that's the old hag's.'

So the gunman looked, and, far away on the edge of the Eastern World, the runner was fast asleep. The green man said: 'Take your gun, and shoot the skull from under him'; and he did that; and the runner awoke, and found his bottles were empty, and ran back to fill them again. And the old hag was coming near. So the blower opened one nostril, and blew her back, and she came on again; then he opened both nostrils, and blew her away to the Western World, and the runner came back with the bottles. Then the raven-haired woman was forced

to let the King's son wed her; but the way to her was sown with needles, as thick as grass. But the hard man rolled over them, and they were ground to dust, and the Prince walked the way easily. When they were married the green man had the first kiss. She was all full of serpents, and he drew them out of her; but the venom of them would have killed the King's son.

Then the short green man said: 'I am the dead man, whom you ransomed from his creditors, and these five men are my servants, whom I brought to do you good; and we will leave you now.' They went away then; and the King's son was happy with his wife, now the venom was drawn out of her.

9. TATTERCOATS¹

There was once an old lord who lived in a castle by the sea. He had one grandchild, but he hated her, and had vowed never to look on her face, because his only daughter had died when she was born. So the lord sat weeping in his upper chamber, looking over the sea, and his beard and hair grew down, and twisted round the legs of his chair; and his little grandchild grew up hungry and ragged, mocked by the servants, who called her Tattercoats. Only two people were kind to her, her old nurse, who brought her scraps of food, and a little gooseboy, who played dances for her on his pipe, so sweetly that all her hardships were forgotten while he played.

One day the king of the country sent out invitations to a great ball at which his son was to come of age and to choose his bride. One came to the old lord, who was so pleased that he called for shears, and had himself cut free from his chair, and put on what the moths had left of his best clothes, and rode to the court. The nurse begged him to take Tattercoats too, but he refused angrily, and she went weeping to tell Tattercoats of her failure. Tattercoats cried too, but the gooseboy cheered her, and suggested that they should go together to the town to see the grand people going into the palace. He played on his pipe, and Tattercoats danced along the road, with the geese following two and two behind. Halfway to town a stranger overtook them, and reining up his horse, asked if he might walk with them. They walked together, and were good company on the road. After a time the

¹ Jacobs, *More English Fairy Tales*, pp. 61-70. A variant of Mt.510.

gooseboy began to play softly, and the stranger looked at Tattercoats' lovely face, and asked her to marry him. But she laughed, and shook her head, and said that a grand lord would be ashamed to marry a poor girl like her. So he told her to come to the Palace at midnight, and at the same time that the Prince chose his bride, he would acknowledge her before them all. She consented to that, and he spurred his horse and rode away. That night, while everyone waited to hear the Prince's choice, Tattercoats and the gooseboy, with all the geese behind them, entered the Palace. Then the Prince stepped down from the throne and claimed her for his bride. Before anyone could protest the gooseboy put his pipe to his lips, and as he played Tattercoats' rags dropped off her, and she stood in shining clothes, with a crown on her head, and behind her, where the geese had been, stood a double row of pages in white and gold. Then all the court cried that the Prince had chosen wisely. As for the old lord, when he heard that Tattercoats was his grandchild, he left the court in anger, and returned to his castle, where he sits weeping to this day.

10. MR. FOX¹

There was once a pretty girl called Lady Mary, who lived with her two brothers, and was courted far and wide. But the man she fancied most was Mr. Fox, a handsome, dashing man, but a stranger to those parts. He would often tell Lady Mary about his fine house, but she had never seen it; and one day, when he was away on business about their betrothal, she determined to go and see it for herself. She took a by-way, and tied up her horse to a little wicket gate, and walked up to the house. It was a fine, strong place, and over the doorway was carved: 'Be Bold, Be Bold.' Lady Mary went into a handsome hall, and over the great staircase was carved, 'Be Bold, Be Bold, but not Too Bold.' Lady Mary went up the staircase and along a passage, which narrowed to a heavy stone door, and over it was carved:

'Be Bold, Be Bold, but not Too Bold,
Lest that your Heart's Blood should Run Cold.'

¹ Contributed by Bakewell to Malone's *Variorum Shakespeare*. Retold in Jacobs' *English Fairy Tales*, p. 148. Mt.955.

She stooped down and peeped in at the keyhole, and there was a great room, and seated round the table were the bodies of a great many young women in their bridal clothes. As she looked she heard a clattering in the courtyard, and she turned and ran, by the only way open, towards the staircase. When she reached the bottom Mr. Fox was at the door, and she had only time to hide behind a great barrel that stood under the staircase, before he came into the house, dragging a beautiful girl behind him. As he pulled her up the stairs she caught hold of the banisters, and he whipped out his sword and cut off her hand, which fell straight into Lady Mary's lap. No sooner was he out of sight than Lady Mary leapt up and ran from the house; but she took the hand with her.

Next day at the great betrothal feast Lady Mary proposed that they should all tell stories round the table. When it came to her turn she said: 'I know no new stories, but I will tell a strange dream I had last night.' And she began to tell how she had visited Mr. Fox's house. And when she got to the carving over the door she said:

'But it is not so, nor it was not so,
And God forbid it should be so.'

And so she said at each pause until the end; when Mr. Fox, who had grown paler as the tale went on, took up the refrain. Then she answered him:

'But it is so, and it was so,
And here the hand I have to show!'

And she drew forth the hand and pointed it at him. At that the guests leapt to their feet; and they chopped Mr. Fox into small pieces.

11. TOPS AND BOTTOMS¹

Once there was a boggy that laid claim to a farmer's field. The farmer did not think it fair; but after a long argument they decided that, though the farmer should do the work, they should divide the produce between them. So the first year in spring the farmer said: 'Which will you have, tops or bottoms?'

'Bottoms,' said the boggy.

¹ Sternberg, *Dialect and Folk-Lore of Northamptonshire*, p. 140. Mt.1030.

So the farmer planted wheat; all the boggy got was stubble and roots. Next year he said he would have tops, and the farmer planted turnips; so he was no better off than before. He began to think he was getting the worst of it; so the next year he said: 'You'll plant wheat, and we'll have a mowing match, and him who wins shall have it for keeps.' 'Agreed,' said the farmer, and they divided the field up into two equal halves. A little before the corn ripened, however, the farmer went to the smith and ordered some hundreds of thin iron rods, which he stuck all over the boggy's half of the field. The corn ripened, and the two set off mowing from opposite sides of the field. The farmer got on like a house on fire, but the poor boggy kept muttering to himself, 'Darnation hard docks, 'nation hard docks!' and his scythe grew so blunt that it would hardly cut butter. After about an hour he called to the farmer, 'When do we wiffle-waffle, mate?' for in a match all the reapers whet their scythes together.

'Waffle?' said the farmer. 'Oh, about noon, may be.'

'Noon!' said the boggy. 'Then I've lost,' and off he went, and troubled the farmer no more.

12. THE KING OF THE CATS¹

Many years ago two young men were hunting in a lodge in the Highlands, and one day one of them went out alone. He returned late and exhausted, but said nothing till supper was over, and they were sitting at the hearth together, with the old black cat between them, blinking at the fire. Then he said: 'I had a curious adventure today. A fog came down after I had turned homewards, and for a time I lost my way completely. Presently I saw a light, and I made towards it; but I came, not on a house, but on a large oak tree. I climbed up it to look for the light, and found that it came from beneath me, in the hollow of the tree. I seemed to be looking down into a church, where a funeral was taking place. But they were no human mourners.' He broke off, and looked down at the old cat, who was sitting up and listening to them, as if it understood every word they said. 'Yes,' he went on, 'the mourners and coffin-bearers and all were cats, and on the pall were marked a crown and a sceptre.'

¹ Hartland, *English Fairy and Folk Tales*, pp. 126-7. Motif (B.342).

He got no further, for the old cat started up, crying: 'By Jove! Old Peter's dead, and I'm King of the Cats!' Then he rushed up the chimney and was seen no more.

13. THE FOUR-LEAFED CLOVER¹

At one of the farms at St. Buriens there was a cow who was always in the pink of condition. She gave fine milk, but never more than a couple of gallons; then she would give a gentle low, and hold it back. One evening when the dairymaid was milking her in the field, this happened; and the girl gathered a thick wad of grass to soften the pail on her head, and turned to go home. She glanced back at the cow, and saw her surrounded by tiny people, who were swarming all over her and milking her into tiny pipkins. The cow evidently took great pleasure in their company. The girl hurried home to her mistress and told her what she had seen. The mistress would not believe her until they had picked her wad to pieces; and there, in the middle of it, they found a four-leafed clover.

Unfortunately the mistress grudged the good milk to the fairies; so she boiled a piece of stockfish in strong brine and rubbed the cow's udders with it, well knowing that the fairies would be disgusted with the smell. They never came near the cow again; but the woman was no better for her cunning; for the poor creature pined for her fairy friends, and was soon no better than skin and bones.

14. TRUNK-WITHOUT-A-HEAD²

There was once a widow in County Galway, who had two sons, Dermod and Donal. Dermod sent Donal to the market to sell corn; and he sold it at a good price, but on the way home he gambled it all away, and came home empty-handed. Dermod was angry, but forgave him at once. So the next day Dermod put another load on the cart, and sent him again. But Donal gambled the money away again, and the horse and cart as well. This time Dermod was so angry that he turned Donal out of the

¹ Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, p. 107. Motif (D.1323.14).

² Douglas Hyde, *Beside the Fire*, pp. 154-62. Motifs (E.259), (E.231.1), (H.1411).

house, to find his living as best he might. It was a rough night, and Donal fell in with a poor man who told him they might both get food and lodging in a grand house near, for the price of watching in the cellar through the night. They got a good welcome, and were locked into the cellar, with plenty of food and a good fire, and wine in the inner cellar for the drawing. Donal went down to the cellar, and was just drawing a drink when a voice said: 'That barrel's mine.'

He looked up, and there sat a little man without a head, astride of the barrel. 'If it's yours,' said Donal, 'I'll go to the next.' But whichever he went to, there was the headless trunk astride of it, and claiming it for his. 'Well,' says Donal, 'I'll have a drink, yours or not.'

So he drew a jug and went up. When they had finished the jug it was the poor man's turn to go down, and he came up in a terrible state. 'There's a demon in the cellar,' he said.

'He'll do you no harm,' said Donal. But the poor man wouldn't go, and in the end Donal went down himself.

They drank till they were sleepy, and went to bed; but they'd no time to go to sleep when three men came in with a great noise, and began to play at ball.

'It's not fair two to play against one,' said Donal, and he jumped out of bed without a stitch on, and joined in the game.

At that they burst out laughing and went. They'd hardly gone before a piper came in and began to play. The poor man was lying sweating with fear, but Donal jumped out of bed and began to dance. At that the piper, too, laughed, and went. The next to come in were four men, with a coffin, which they banged down on the floor. 'Is that meant for us, do you think?' said Donal, and he looked inside. There was a dead man in it, and Donal said: 'That's cold quarters you have; why don't you warm yourself at the fire?'

No sooner said than out came the dead man, and sat himself down to warm. 'Well, I'm going back to bed,' said Donal. 'And there's plenty room for three.'

The dead man accepted the invitation, and scrambled in beside him. But when he got into bed he began to bang about, until the poor man was half dead with fear and bruises; and he gave a great scramble and climbed out of the window; and Donal and the dead man were left, hitting each other about.

'It's an ungrateful fellow you are,' said Donal at length. 'Here I've warmed you at the fire and shared my bed with you, and you've no more manners than to attack me.'

'You're a bold fellow,' said the dead man, 'and it's well for you, or you'd be dead by this time, as many have been before you. But you tell the master here that I'm his own father, who was killed by the butler for his gold, but he never got it; and I'll show you where it lies.'

So he and Donal lifted a flag in the cellar, and there were three bags of gold, one to go to Donal and one to the master, and one to the poor. And he told Donal to have the butler arrested. 'And I'll follow you into court for evidence,' he said. 'And then you can marry my granddaughter, and I can rest in peace.'

In the morning Donal went to the master of the house, and they found the gold; and the butler was arrested and taken to court. There was little enough evidence against him, and he was thinking he could brazen it out, when he looked up and saw Head-Without-Trunk behind Donal. 'Oh, it's all true,' he said. 'I killed him, and his head is under the hearthstone in his own room.'

The butler was condemned; and they took the head out and buried it, and Donal married the master's daughter, and repaid his brother the money he had lost, and brought his mother home to live with them. And the headless trunk never troubled them again.

15. THE SMITH AND THE FAIRIES¹

There was once a smith near Crossbrig who had a fine and promising son of fourteen years old. Of a sudden a change came over the boy, and he lay in his bed, silent, yellow and pining, but with a huge appetite. The smith sought the advice of a knowledgeable man near, who told him that in all probability the People of Peace had changed the boy, and left a 'sibreagh' in his place. But to avoid any possibility of mistakes he told the smith what he must do. So one morning, when the smith was redding up the house, he took eighteen empty egg-

¹ Campbell, *Tales of the Western Highlands*, Vol. II, pp. 57-60. Motifs (F.211), (F.165.2), (F.321.1), (F.321.1.1.1), (F.321.4), (F.383.4), (F.384.3), (F.389).

shells, and carried them, one by one, to the well, and ranged them in front of the fire, instead of the buckets he usually filled in the morning. As he carried in the last pair the thing on the bed raised itself, and cried, with a crack of laughter: 'I have seen the first acorn grow into an oak, but I never saw water carried in an eggshell before!'

At that the smith piled up the fire with so black a look that the changeling said, 'What's that for?'

'You'll soon see,' said the smith, and he flung it upon the blaze. With a scutter and yell it flew up the smoke-hole, but his son did not appear in its place. So the smith sought further counsel; and on a certain night he went to the fairy knowe with a dirk, and a bible, and a cock hidden under his plaid. The hill was raised on its pillars, and the light shone out of it. The smith stuck his dirk in the doorway, and went boldly in among the dancers. In a far corner some captive mortals were toiling at a forge, and his son was among them. The fairy people came angrily around him, but they could not touch him because of the Holy Word. He went up to his son, and drew him away.

'Shut hill!' they cried, and every pillar shut down, except that which was guarded by cold iron. The angry fairies gathered round them; but at the sound of their clamour the drowsy cock wakened, and struggled up to the smith's shoulder and crowed. The fairy people scattered in dismay, the smith and his son ran out of the hill, the dirk was shot after them, and the hill closed down. For a whole year the smith got no joy of his son; but one day, as he was struggling with a difficult piece of work, a voice behind him said: 'That's not the way. Let me do it.' The boy took the work from him, and did it with magic ease. From that time the smithy was known as the best in the countryside, and the smith and his son prospered

16. KATE CRACKERNUTS¹

Once upon a time there was a king and queen, and they each had a daughter called Kate. But the King's Kate was far bonnier then the Queen's Kate, and her stepmother was jealous of her beauty and determined to spoil it. So she went to the henwife, her wicked crony, and took counsel with her.

¹ *Folk-Lore*, September 1890. Motif (F.211).

'Send the bonny burd to me one morning fasting,' said the henwife, 'and I'll spoil her beauty for her.'

So next day the Queen sent the King's Kate down to the henwife to fetch a basket of eggs for their breakfast. It happened that Kate was hungry, and as she passed the kitchen she snatched up a bannock and munched it on her way. She came to the henwife's and asked for the eggs. 'Go in ben and lift the lid of the pot while I get them,' said the henwife. The King's Kate lifted the lid, and a great steam rose up, but she was none the worse for that.

'Go home to your minnie,' said the henwife, 'and tell her to keep her larder door better snibbed.'

Next day the Queen saw Kate as far as the door; but on the way to the henwife's she spoke to some reapers in the field, and they gave her some ears of corn which she ate as she went. Again she returned scatheless, and the henwife said: 'Tell your minnie the pot winna boil if the fire's away.'

The next day the Queen went with her to the henwife's; and when she lifted the lid of the pot a sheep's head rose out of it, and fastened on her shoulders instead of her own pretty head. The Queen was delighted, but the Queen's Kate was very angry. She wrapped her sister's head in a linen cloth, and took her by the hand, and they went out together to seek their fortunes. They walked until they got to the next kingdom, and the Queen's Kate went to the Palace and got work as a kitchen maid, and leave to keep her sick sister in the attic. The eldest son of the King was very ill. No one knew what ailed him, and all who watched by his bed at night disappeared. When the Queen's Kate heard this she offered to watch for a peck of silver. All was quiet till midnight; and then the Prince rose and dressed like one in a daze, went out and mounted on his horse. Kate followed him, and jumped up behind him. They rode through a close wood of hazels, and Kate picked the nuts as she passed. Soon they came to a fairy mound, and the Prince said: 'Let the Prince in with horse and hound,' and Kate said: 'And his fair lady him behind.' And a door opened in the hillside and let them in. Kate slipped off and hid behind the open door, but the Prince went in and danced till he fainted with weakness. When dawn came he mounted his horse, and Kate climbed up behind him. Next night she offered to watch again for a peck of gold,

and followed the Prince as before. That night a little fairy boy was playing about among the dancers, astride of a silver wand. One of the dancers said to him: 'Tak tent o' that wand, for one stroke of it would give back the King's Kate her ain heid again.'

When the Queen's Kate heard that she began to roll the nuts out, one by one, from behind the door, till the fairy child laid down the wand and went after them. Then she snatched it, and carried it back with her when she rode back behind the Prince. When day came and she could leave the Prince, she ran up to her attic and touched the King's Kate with the wand, and her own looks came back to her, bonnier than ever. The third night she watched; but this night she must marry the Prince for her reward. She followed the Prince again, and this time the fairy child was playing with a little dead bird.

'Now mind,' said one of the dancers, 'not to lose that birdie; for three tastes of it, and the Prince would be as well as ever he was.' When Kate heard that she rolled out the nuts faster than before; and the fairy boy laid down the bird and went after them. As soon as they got home Kate plucked the bird and set it down to the fire to roast. At the first smell of it the Prince sat up in bed and said: 'I could eat that birdie.'

At the third mouthful he was as well as he had ever been; and he married Kate Crackernuts, and his brother married the King's Kate, and they never drank from a dry cuppie.

17. THE FAIRY FUNERAL¹

One night an old man called Richard was returning late with a load of fish from St. Ives when he heard the bell of Lelant Church tolling out, with a heavy, muffled sound, and saw a light from the windows. He drew near and peered in. The church was brightly lighted, and a crowd of little people were moving along the central aisle, with a bier carried between six of them. The body on it was uncovered; it was as small as the tiniest doll, and of waxen beauty. The mourners were carrying flowering myrtle in their hands, and wearing wreaths of small roses. A little grave had been dug near the altar. The body was lowered into it, and the fairies threw their flowers after, crying aloud: 'Our queen is dead!' When one of the little grave-diggers threw

¹ Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, p. 102. Motif (F.268.1).

in a shovelful of earth, so dismal a cry arose that Richard echoed it. At once the lights went out, and the fairies rushed past him like a swarm of bees, piercing him with sharp points. Richard fled in terror, and thought himself lucky to have escaped with his life.

18. THE BAOBHAN SITH¹

Four men were hunting in the wilds of Ross-shire, and took refuge for the night in a deserted shieling. To keep themselves warm they began to dance. Three of them danced, and one supplied the mouth music. As they danced one of them wished that their sweethearts were with them. At once four beautiful girls came into the building, in green clothes, with long golden hair. Three of them danced, and one sat by the singer. Presently the singer noticed drops of blood falling from his friends. He started up, and his partner flew at him. He escaped from her, and took refuge among the horses, where he was safe until daybreak. In the morning he went back to the shieling, and found the bloodless bodies of his companions, sucked to death by the dreadful baobhan sith.

19. THE TACKSMAN'S OX²

The Tacksman of Auchriachan near Glenlivet well knew the danger of the fairies stealing the foyson from his grain or cattle; and always took care to protect them by charms which he had learnt from his grandmother. One night, however, his goats had gone astray, and he followed them high up into the hills until he was quite lost. Presently he saw a strange stone building in front of him, and, as light came from it, he knocked at the door. It was opened by a woman whose face he knew well—he had been at her funeral a few months earlier. She begged him to fly at once, for this was a fairy's dwelling, and no living mortal was safe from them. He persuaded her to hide him for friendship's sake, lest he should meet them as he went. Presently the fairies came in, very hungry, and asking where they should get supper. An old man amongst them, Thomas Rhymer they called him, advised them to fetch Auchriachan's ox.

¹ Mackenzie, *Scottish Folk-Lore and Folk Life*, p. 236. Motif (F.302.3.4.2) variant.

² Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, p. 390. Motifs (F.211), (F.365).

'The old miser is out,' he said, 'following our friends, the goats, and his son has forgotten to put the night spell over the cattle; besides, his wife has just finished baking some bannocks, and she forgot to cross them; they will do fine for our supper.'

A dozen of them rushed out at the word, and soon the angry tacksman saw the carcase of his favourite ox carried in, and as fine a batch of bannocks as his wife ever baked. While the fairies were feasting his friend hurried him out, and put him on the road for home. When he got into the house the ox and the bannocks looked good enough to mortal eye, but his son and wife confessed to having forgotten their usual precautions. The tacksman felled the ox: and threw it and the bannocks down the slope, where they lay untouched by bird or beast till they shrivelled up; for all the good had gone out of them to the fairy feast.

20. THE DANGER AVERTED¹

The time between birth and christening is one of great danger from the fairies. A Selkirkshire mother was lying in bed, with her little, newly-born son by her side, when she heard a great noise and chattering in the room. Remembering that any garment of the father's was said to be a safeguard to the child, she hastily snatched her husband's waistcoat which was lying near, and flung it over the baby. At that there was a scream, and the fairies cried out: 'Auld Luckie has cheated us o' oor bairnie!' A minute later there was a thud in the chimney-corner, and, looking out, she saw a waxen image of her child lying there, stuck full of pins. She told her husband as soon as he came in, and he threw the dummy on the fire. It did not burn, but flew up the chimney, and the house rang with fairy laughter.

21. THE LAIRD OF CO'²

One morning a little wee boy appeared at the gate of Colzean Castle with a small wooden can in his hand, and begged the Laird of Co' for some ale for his mother, who was ill. The lad was a stranger to the Laird, but he sent him to the butler,

¹ Henderson, *Folklore of the Northern Counties*, pp. 14-15. Motifs (F.321), (F.321.2).

² Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, pp. 332-3. Motif (F.330).

with orders to have the can filled. There was a cask half full, but it was emptied into the small can without filling it. The butler sent out to the Laird for orders, and the Laird replied that since he had promised to fill the can it must be filled, if it emptied every barrel in his cellar. The butler broached a second cask; and at the first drop the strange can was filled, and the wee boy went off with it to his mother. Some time later the Laird was in the wars in Flanders, and was taken prisoner and condemned to die. The night before his execution the doors of his prison flew open, and a voice said:

'Laird o' Co'
Rise and go.'

The wee lad stood in the doorway. He took the Laird on his shoulders, and in a few minutes set him down outside Colzean Castle, saying as he went:

'Ae guid turn deserves anither,
Tak ye that for being sae kind to my auld mither.'

22. THE TWO PLOUGHMEN¹

Two lads were ploughing a field in the middle of which stood a fairy thorn. When they got to it one lad fetched a circle round it so as not to desecrate the fairy territory. When they had finished the furrow the lads were surprised to find a small table standing there, covered with a green cloth, and with an excellent meal upon it of bread, cheese and wine. The first lad said, 'Fair fa' the hands whilk gie,' and sat down and ate heartily. The second whipped up his horses and would have nothing to do with the fairy food. But the one who partook was lucky ever after.

(Keightley quotes versions of this anecdote from Ireland and Switzerland.)

23. PUDDLEFOOT²

In Altmor Burn near Cloichfoldich a Brownie used to live in former times. He came into the house at night, and cleaned any dirty dishes that had been left lying about, but if the dishes had

¹ Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, quoting Cromeek, p. 352. Motif (F.330).

² A story lately current in Perthshire. Motifs (F.346), (F.381.1).

been put away he took them and flung them on the floor. He was pleased to have milk left for him, and always left something in exchange. Because of his way of splashing in the burn, the crofters called him *Puddlefoot* behind his back, but no one dared to speak to him: until one night a man came drink-valiant back from the market, and heard him splashing in the burn. 'Hoo's yersel', Puddlefoot?' he called. The Brownie hated the name.

'Oh dear, oh dear!' it said, 'I've got a name! It's Puddlefoot they call me!' And he was never seen again from that day to this.

24. I WEAT, YOU WEAT¹

A Hampshire farmer was puzzled to find that, however neatly he arranged his corn overnight, it was always in disorder in the morning. At last he decided to hide in the barn and watch. All was still until midnight; and then the place was suddenly lit up, and a crowd of fairies as small and as numerous as a swarm of bees poured in through the keyhole, and began to play among his grain. They were so pretty to watch that he admired the disorder for a time; but presently they began to carry his grain away, straw by straw, through the keyhole. Even that he endured, until one of them said to another in a tiny voice, 'I weat, you weat!' At that the farmer roared out, 'The devil sweat ye! Let me get among ye!' The fairies fled away at the sound, so frightened that they never troubled him again.

25. GITTO BACH AND THE FAIRY GIFTS²

There was once a good little Welsh boy called Gitto, who wandered in the hills keeping his father's sheep. He often brought back with him little round pieces of paper, like crown pieces, which he said were given him by the children he played with in the hills. One day he did not come back. Two years later his mother opened the door one morning, and there he stood on the threshold, with a bundle under his arm. He told his mother that it contained the rich clothes given him by the children on the mountain. They opened the bundle, and saw the clothes, but as they examined them they turned to paper.

¹ Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, pp. 305-6. Motif (F.365).

² Sikes, *British Goblins*, pp. 120-1. Motifs (F.370), (F.343.5) variant.

It was supposed that if he had not told of his gifts they would have kept their value. Crofton Croker has a tale of a man who paid his rent in fairy money, which turned into gingerbread in the agent's strong box.

26. CHERRY OF ZENNOR¹

There was once a poor girl called Cherry who set out from Zennor one morning to seek her fortune. She was hardly out of sight of home when her heart failed her, and she sat down by the cross-roads on the Lady Downs to cry. In the midst of her tears she raised her eyes, and there was a handsome, dapper gentleman beside her. He asked her the way to Towednack, as he was going there to hire a servant girl; but when he heard that Cherry was looking for a place he engaged her on the spot, and they set out on a long walk towards his home. They went across a clear stream, over which he lifted her, and down a dark narrow lane, down and down until they came to a high wall, and passed through a gate into the finest garden Cherry had ever seen, full of flowers and fruit at once. A little boy ran out to meet them, followed by a cross old woman, whom Cherry's master called Aunt Prudence. She was to show Cherry the ways of the house, and then to go. The place was beautiful; but some of her duties were strange. Every morning she had to wash her little charge's eyes at a spring in the garden, and anoint them with ointment; but she was to be careful never to put it on her own eyes. She sometimes fancied the child saw things she did not, and thought it must be because of the ointment. After Aunt Prudence went she was so happy that the year passed like a week, but she was always curious about the ointment. One day after she had anointed the child's eyes she furtively rubbed one of her own. It burnt like fire, and she ran to the well to wash it. Looking through the water, she saw a number of tiny little people dancing at the bottom, and her master with them, as small as the rest, and very friendly with the ladies. Everywhere she looked the garden was alive with fairies. Presently her master joined her, and they went to weed the garden together. At the end of the row her master kissed her, according to his custom.

¹ Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, pp. 102-6. Motifs (F.372), (F.235.4.1).

Generally Cherry liked it, but today she burst into tears, and said: 'Go and kiss your little midget at the bottom of the spring.'

At that her master looked very grave. 'You've been meddling with the ointment,' he said. 'I'm sorry for it, but we must part.'

He took her to the garden gate. Cherry went weeping out, and found herself, she did not know how, on the Lady Downs. For the rest of her life she pined for her fairy master, and wandered about the Downs, looking for the road to the beautiful garden.

27. THE KIND PIXY¹

A poor young woman once married a thresher who turned out to be a hopeless drunkard. Day after day he was too drunk to work; and at length she dressed herself in man's clothes, and went to work in his place. Soon she found twice as much corn threshed in the mornings as she had left done at evening. At length she determined to watch and find out who was helping her; so at nightfall she hid in a corner of the barn. As soon as it was dark a tiny, naked pixy crept into the barn and began threshing. As he worked he sang:

'Little Pixy, fair and slim,
Without a rag to cover him.'

The woman was so touched that she made a tiny shirt, and hung it next night in the barn. When he saw it the pixy capered with joy and put it on. Then he danced about singing:

'Pixy fine and Pixy gay,
Pixy now must run away.'

Then he ran out of the barn, and never threshed there again.

28. THE POOKA OF KILDARE²

There was once a big house in Kildare left empty of all but the servants while the master was in town. A great racket began to be made at night in the kitchen, which scared all the servants, until by accident, they found the explanation. A little kitchen

¹ Mrs. Bray, *Borders of the Tamar and Tavy*. Motifs (F.346), (F.381.3).

² Kennedy's *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts*. Motifs (F.346), (F.381.3).

boy chanced to fall asleep on the hearth after the others were gone to bed. He was awakened by a great clatter, and in walked a big hairy ass, which sat down and warmed itself by the fire. Presently it set to work and boiled up water, and cleaned the whole place, and then walked out into the night. After that the servants left the Pooka to do the work; and all went well with them, till one bold lad sat up to have a talk with the Pooka. The Pooka was friendly enough and said it was the ghost of an idle servant of the house, who was condemned to clean it for half the night, and to stand outside in the cold for the other half. The boy asked if they could do anything for him, and he said he would like nothing so much as a quilted coat to keep the cold off him. This was made; and three nights later the boy buttoned him into it. The gift marked the end of his punishment, and he left the servants to do their own work after that.

29. THE CAULD LAD OF HILTON¹

The Cauld Lad of Hilton was said to be the ghost of a stable boy, killed by one of the lords of Hilton in a fit of passion. He worked like a Brownie, tidying everything that was left untidy, but flinging everything about, if the place was left in order. He used to be heard singing:

'Wae's me, wae's me,
The acorn's not yet
Fallen from the tree,
That's to grow the wood,
That's to make the cradle,
That's to rock the bairn,
That's to grow to a man,
That's to lay me.'

He was wrong, however, for the servants laid him, like any other Brownie, by the simple expedient of leaving him a cloak and a hood. He put them on, and sang:

'Here's a cloak and here's a hood,
The Cauld Lad o' Hilton'll dae nae mair good.'

With that he vanished from mortal knowledge.

¹ Henderson, *Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties*, pp. 266-7. Motif (F.381.3).

30. THE BORROWING FAIRIES¹

The Worcester fairies are small and hard-working, ready to help their neighbours and accept help from them. They say that in the old days any woman who broke her peel, or baking shovel, had only to leave it at the Fairies' Cave at Osebury Rock, and it would be mended again. These fairies have no fear even of cold iron; for once a fairy came up to a man ploughing and said:

'O, lend a hammer and a nail,
Which we want to mend our pail.'

and was much delighted by the loan. The Highland fairies used often to borrow meal in the same way.

31. THE WOMAN OF PEACE AND THE KETTLE²

There was once a herd and his wife who lived near the fairy Bruth on the Island of Samntraigh. A Woman of Peace would often come borrowing the wife's kettle. As she lent it she always said:

'A smith is able to make
Cold iron hot with coal.
The due of a kettle is bones,
And to bring back the kettle whole.'

When she said that the Woman of Peace always brought the kettle back with plenty of bones to make soup. One day the wife had to go to the mainland; so she taught her husband the spell, and he promised to say it. But when the Woman of Peace came he was frightened, and ran into the house. So the Woman of Peace took the kettle, but she brought back neither kettle nor bones. So when the wife returned she set off to the Bruth to fetch her kettle back. The knoll was open when she got to it, and the kettle was on the fire; so she darted in and seized it, and it was full of meat. As she went out an old carl called out from the room within:

'Silent wife, silent wife,
That came on us from the Land of Chase,
Thou man on the surface of the Bruth,
Loose the Black and slip the Fierce.'

¹ Jabez Allies, *Antiquities and Folklore of Worcestershire*, p. 419. Motif (F.391).

² Campbell, *Tales of the Western Highlands*, Vol. II, pp. 52-54. Motif (F.391).

She ran all the faster for that, but soon she heard the dogs of Peace baying behind her. She threw a good handful of meat out to them, and it halted them for a while, but they soon came on, and bit by bit she emptied the pot. At last she turned it out onto the ground, and as they paused at it the human dogs came barking out and drove them back. So she got safe back with her pot; but the Woman of Peace never came borrowing again.

32. THE HORNED WOMEN¹

A rich woman was seated late one night carding and spinning, after all the household were asleep, when a knock came at the door. She opened it, and a woman stood on the threshold with a horn growing from her brow. 'I am the Witch of One Horn,' she said, and sat down and began to card in great haste. 'The women tarry long,' she said; and at the word there was another knock, and the Witch of Two Horns stood in the door. She strode over to the hearth and began to spin; and the woman opened the door again and again, till there were twelve horned women working round her fire, and their like was not to be found in the world for ugliness. At last one said: 'Rise and bake us a cake.' She went to draw fresh water from the well, and they said to her: 'Carry it in a sieve.' She took down the sieve and went to the well; but as soon as she drew the water it dripped out again. At length a voice said to her: 'Bind it with moss and clam it with clay.' When she did this the sieve held water, and she turned to the house again. As she went the same voice said: 'When you come to the north angle of the house cry aloud three times, and say: "The mountain of the Fenian women and the sky over it is all on fire".' She did so, and there arose a great cry among the Horned Women, and they poured out to save their goods. Then the voice told the woman what she must do, and she set to work with great haste. She spilled the foot-water out of the house, and she put a heavy wooden bar over the door, and she broke up the meal cake she found baking on the fire, made with blood drawn from each one of the household, and she put a bit of it between the lips of each of her sleeping children, and she locked the web the women had woven into the chest. She had but just finished when they came back.

¹ Lady Wilde, *Ancient Legends of Ireland*, Vol. I, p. 18. Motif (F.405.8).

'Open, open!' they screamed. 'Open, feet-water.'

'I cannot,' said the feet-water, for I am scattered abroad, and my path is towards the lough.'

'Open, open, wood and tree and beam,' they cried.

'I cannot open, for I am fixed athwart the door.'

'Open, open, cake mingled with blood.'

'I cannot open, for I am broken to pieces, and my blood is on the lips of the children.'

Then the witches sped away with cries and cursing, and never troubled the place again.

It is obvious that the element wanting in this story is the woman's wish for help, which occurs in the fragmentary Highland version.

33. HORSE AND HATTOCK¹

The Laird of Duffus was walking out in his fields one day, when a cloud of dust whirled past him, and from the midst of it he heard a shrill cry of 'Horse and hattock'. Being a bold man, he repeated the cry, and immediately found himself whirled away in the air with a troop of fairies to the King of France's cellar. There they caroused all night so merrily that the Laird fell asleep and was left behind. The royal butler found him next day, still fast asleep, with a cup of curious workmanship in his hand. He was taken before the King, and told him all that had happened. The King pardoned him, and he returned home with the fairy cup, which was kept in his family for several generations.

34. SOUL CAGES²

Jack Dogherty lived on a lonely rock on the coast of County Clare. His father and his grandfather had lived there before him, and it was said that his grandfather had had a great friendship with the merrows that lived in the sea near. This gave Jack a great curiosity to see a merrow, and he often saw them in the distance; but it was long before he met one face to face. At length, when he put into a cave to shelter from the storm, he

met one of the strange creatures. He had green hair and teeth, a nose like a pig's snout, and red, fiery eyes. His arms were so short and scaly as to be little more than fins, and under one of them he carried a cocked hat. Ugly though he was, he was friendly enough; he saluted Jack by name, and told him he had known his father and grandfather before him. In the end he asked Jack to meet him at the bottom of the sea, to taste the grand cellar he had there; and appointed a day and place to meet him.

Punctual to the time Jack was there, and the merrow as well, with two cocked hats in his hand. One he gave to Jack, and one he put on his own head, and he bade Jack keep a good grip of his tail, and down they dived. Down and down they went, till they came right down to dry land, with the sea arching above them like sky. The merrow had a snug enough house, and a grand cellar that had come down to him from the wrecks above. They drank away merrily, and then the merrow, whose name was Coomara, took Jack to see his treasures. The most curious thing amongst them was a row of wicker baskets, something like lobster pots.

'What are those?' said Jack.

'Those are my soul cages,' said Coomara. 'Every time it's stormy up above I put a few about; and when the souls come down they feel chilly and lonesome, and creep into the cages for shelter, and I carry them in here and give them a fine dry, warm home.'

This seemed to take all the taste for revelry out of Jack, and after one stirrup cup he got a back from the merrow, stuck on the cocked hat back to front, and was shot up through the sea the way he had come. Then he threw the cocked hat back into the water, as Coomara had told him, and went home thinking about the poor imprisoned souls. At length it came to him that he must slip down some time when Coomara was from home, and let out the souls. So he persuaded his wife to go off on a pilgrimage, and asked Coomara to come up and have a drink with him.

The first time old Coomara drank him under the table, and went off whilst Jack was still asleep, but the second time it came to Jack that he had a barrel of the real potheen, and, long as Coomara had lived, he'd never tasted that. So he asked him again, and he took good care that Coomara had two glasses for

¹ Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Vol. II, p. 367. Motif (F.411.1) variant.

² Crofton Coker, *Fairy Legends of Ireland*, pp. 194-215. Motifs (F.420.1.4.2), (F.420.1.4.8.), (F.420.2.1.1), (F.420.5.2.3).

his one, until he had him fast asleep and snoring. Then Jack slipped the hat away from him, and was down to Coomara's rock, and into the sea in a minute. It wasn't long till he reached Coomara's house, and by good luck the place was empty and quiet. Jack ran in, and turned up each of the cages. He saw nothing, but a kind of murmuring whistle shot past his ear; and he went back quite content with the work he'd done, and found old Coomara just waking. Fortunately Coomara noticed no difference, and he and Jack continued great friends, and many a soul Jack would rescue from the lobster pots after a storm. At length one day Jack went to Coomara's rock and whistled, and got no answer. What had happened to him he never learnt, but he never saw his old friend Coomara again.

35. THE OLD MAN OF CURY¹

An old fisherman of Cury was walking near Kynance Cove at low tide, when he saw a girl sitting on a rock near a deep pool, deserted by the retreating sea. As he came up she slipped into the pool; and when he ran up to rescue her he found that it was not a girl but a mermaid, who had been cut off from her home by a long stretch of sand. She entreated him with tears to carry her to the water, for she had left her husband asleep, and he was both jealous and ferocious. The old man took her on his back, and as he trudged over the sand she promised him any reward he chose. 'I've no need of money,' he said, 'but I should like the power to help others. Teach me how to break spells and to discover thefts and to cure illness.'

'That I will,' she said, 'but you must come to that rock at high tide and moonshine, and I will teach you.'

She took the comb from her hair, and told him to comb the sea with it when he wanted to speak to her. Then she slipped from his back, kissed her hand to him, and dived out of sight. But whenever he stroked the sea she came to him, and taught him many things. Sometimes he carried her on his back to see the strange land people, but he never accepted her invitation to visit her under the waves. The mermaid's comb and some part of the old man's skill stayed in his family for several generations.

¹ Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, pp. 152-4. Motifs (F.420.3.1), (F.420.5.1.7.3), (F.420.4.4).

35.A. MERMAIDS AND MUGWORT¹

The funeral of a girl who had died of consumption was passing along the road by the Firth of Clyde above Port Glasgow when a mermaid raised herself from the water, and said slowly and distinctly:

'If they wad drink nettles in March,
And eat Muggins in May,
Sae mony braw maidens
Wadna gang tae clay.'

A Galloway mermaid was even more helpful. A young lover was lamenting the approaching death of his beautiful sweetheart when he heard a voice of great sweetness singing from the sea:

'Wad ye let the bonnie may dee i' your hand,
And the mugwort flowering i' the land?'

He hastened home, picked a quantity of southernwood, and gave the juice to his true-love, who recovered, and lived to thank the mermaid.

36. THE FASHIONABLE FAIRIES²

An old woman of Somerset was much troubled by the 'Vairies', and had always to make crosses on her cakes, because otherwise the fairies danced on them, and pock-marked them with their high heels, for they always dressed in the height of fashion.

37. SKILLYWIDDEN³

One day a man who was cutting furze on Trendreen Hill, near Zennor, saw a little fairy boy asleep at the root of a furze bush. He was about a foot long, and the man slipped him easily into his furze-cutter's cuff, and took him home without waking him. He seemed to take his captivity quietly enough, and played about with the children, who made a great pet of him. That week the neighbours came to help cart the furze, and the old people, not wanting to share the good fortune they expected to gain

¹ Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 381. Motif (F.420.5.1.8).

² Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, pp. 304-5. Numbers 36 to 43 are Unclassified Fairy Anecdotes.

³ Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England*, pp. 450-1.

from the fairy, shut him and the children in the great barn. The neighbours stayed to dinner, and whilst it was going on the fairy persuaded the children to go out with him to play on the hill. They had been playing about for a while when they saw a little man and woman searching everywhere. The little woman was wringing her hands, and crying: 'Oh my dear and tender Skillywidden, wherever canst ah be gone to!'

'Here I am, Mammy,' cried the little fairy, and in a moment all three had disappeared.

38. COLEMAN GRAY¹

A farmer one day found a tiny creature, like a little boy, sitting perished with cold and hunger in one of his fields. He took it home, and fed and warmed it, and though it did not speak, it soon became lively and playful. When it had been with them about four days a voice was heard calling, 'Coleman Gray! Coleman Gray!'

The little creature called out, 'Here I am, Daddy!' and sped out of the door. It is said that the farmer prospered well for his kindness to the little fairy.

39. THE BROWNIE AND THE JUNKET²

There was a farm in Peeblesshire whose mistress left her maids short of food. One day two of the maids stole a junket, and carried it up to their room, where they prepared to take it sip and sip about. The Brownie seated himself invisibly between them, and as each raised the bowl to her lips, he took a sip. The bowl went down so quickly that each maid thought that the other had been taking more than her share. They were breaking out into argument about it when the Brownie cried aloud:

'Ha! ha! ha!
Brownie has't a!'

40. FERGUS MACLEDA AND THE WEE FOLK³

Iubdan, the King of Faylinn (the land of the small fairies) was

¹ Hunt, pp. 95-96.

² Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 327.

³ O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, pp. 269-85.

one day boasting at a banquet of the might of his armies, and above all of his strong man, Glower, who could hew through a thistle stalk at a stroke. The King's bard, Eisirt, imprudently remarked that in the Land of Ulster there were men so great that one of them could destroy all King Iubdan's army. The King imprisoned Eisirt for this, and only released him on condition that he should bring back proof of his statement. Accordingly one day a tiny bard arrived at the gate of Fergus's Dun, and, after telling his story, obtained permission to take back the King's dwarf as a proof of his accuracy. The dwarf was a giant to the little people, and King Iubdan was satisfied. But Eisirt put him under a *gease* to travel to Ulster himself, and taste King Fergus' porridge. The King went reluctantly, accompanied by Bebo, his wife. They arrived safely and unobserved in the Palace, but the King slipped into the porridge bowl, and stuck fast in the sticky mess, so that next morning he was taken prisoner. Fergus entertained his prisoners kindly, but refused to let them go. A great host of the Faylinn came against him, but he would only let the King go in exchange for his most precious treasure. The one he chose was the shoes that went by land and water; and in the end they brought misfortune on him.

(A companion story of Fionn's adventures in the *Kingdom of Big Men* (Campbell's *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition*) suggests that some form of both legends may have been known to Swift.)

41. THE WOMAN OF PEACE AND THE BIBLE READER¹

One Sunday evening an old man was reading his Bible in the open air near the Ross-shire coast. A beautiful little lady dressed in green came up to him, and asked if there was any hope given in holy Scripture for such as she. The old man answered her kindly, but confessed that there was no mention in the Book of Salvation for any but the sinful sons of Adam. At this the fairy gave a cry of despair, and plunged over the cliff into the sea.

42. THE FAIRY MARKET

Miss Ruth Tongue of Somerset has collected traditions of the Fairy Market on Black Down between 1905 and 1930. For the

¹ Campbell, *Tales of the Western Highlands*, Vol. II, p. 75.

most part the spectators kept well away and there was no story. But there was one anecdote she pieced together from three sources of a farmer who shopped at that market with no ill effect.

There were a Varmer over-right our place did zee the Vairies to their Market and come whoame zafe tew. Mind, he didn' never vorget tew leave hearth clean 'n a pail of well water vor'n at night, 'n a girt dish o' scalt cream tew. My granny did say her'd get'n ready vor'n many's the time. Zo when her [the farmer] rode up tew stall, zee, all among the Vair, 'n axed mannerly vor a zider-mug ahanging up the Vairies answers 'n zo purty as if they was to Tanton Market. With that Varmer lugs out his money bags 'n pays, 'n what do 'ee believe! They gived 'n a heap of dead leaves vor his change, quite serous like. Varmer he took 'n mannerly 'n serous tew; then he wishes 'n 'Good night, arl,' 'n he ride whoame. He d' put zider mug on table 'n spread they dead leaves round un careful, then he d' zay,—'Come morn they won't none o' they be yur, but twere worth it tew zee the liddle dears' market.'

Come morn when Varmer went tew get his dew-bit avore ploughing what dew her zee on table but a vine silver mug, 'n lumps of gold all around 'n.

43. THE OLD WOMAN AND THE HEDLEY KOW¹

There was once an old woman who lived sparely enough by running errands and doing odd jobs for the neighbours. But poor as she was she was always merry and contented.

One evening, as she was trotting home after a long day's work, her eye was caught by an old pot among the weeds by the roadside. She peered into it to see if it was sound, and found it full of gold pieces.

'Well!' she said. 'This wouldn't happen to anybody but me. Gold now! Why, I shall be as rich as a queen, and I can buy anything I fancy.'

So she tied the corner of her shawl to the handle of the pot and began to drag it home. It seemed to get heavier and heavier, and at last she looked round and found that instead of a pot of gold there was a great bar of silver dragging behind her.

'My eyes must be playing me tricks!' she said. 'Still it's a

change for the better. I'd never have been at ease with gold. Silver's far safer. Well, well, I have all the luck to be certain.'

And on she trotted, as happy as before. Still the silver got heavier and heavier, and at last she stopped to rest and look at it again. It was not silver at all, but a great lump of iron.

'That's queer now,' she said. 'I could have sworn it was silver. But iron's better. I'd have been at my wits' end how to sell silver, but the blacksmith will give me a good pile of pennies for the iron, and I shall be the better of them for many a long day.'

So she chuckled, and hurried homewards.

When she got to her own gate she bent down to untie the shawl, and she saw that it was wrapped round a great smooth stone.

'Well I never!' she said. 'How could they guess a stone was the very thing I wanted to prop open my door. I'll take it in now.'

It was dusk by this time, but light enough for her to see the stone as she bent over it. Quiet and innocent it lay, and then all of a sudden it seemed to shoot up on great, long legs, a neck and a head shot out, and away went the Hedley Kow, like a great, lean horse, flourishing his hoofs and whisking his tail and whickering with joy. The old woman stared after him.

'Well!' she said at length. 'To think of me seeing the Hedley Kow all to myself, and making so free with him and all! Oh, I do feel that grand!'

And she went into the house chuckling at her good fortune. So there was one person whom the Hedley Kow never daunted nor disheartened, for all his tricks.

¹ Jacob, *More English Fairy Tales*, p. 50.

Appendix III

SOME OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF FAIRIES

1. VARYING ACCOUNTS OF MACBETH'S WITCHES

*The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*¹

A nycht he thought in his dremynge
That sittande he was beside the kyng,
At a seit in hunting sua,
And in a lesche had grewhundis twa.
Him thocht, till he wes sa sittand,
He saw thre women by gangand,
And thai thre women than thocht he
Thre werd sister's like to be.
The first he herd say gangand by:
'Lo, zonder the thayne of Crumbaghty!'
The tother sister said agane:
'Of Murray zonder I se the (thayne)'.
The thrid said: 'Zonder I see the King.'
All this herd he in his dremyng.
Sone efter that, in his zouth heid,
Off thai thayndomes the thayne wes maid;
Then thocht he nixt for to be King,
Fra Duncanis dais had tane ending.²

Holinshed's *Chronicle*.²

It fortun'd as Makbeth & Banquho journeyed towarde Fores, where the king as then lay, they went sporting by the way together without other companie, save only themselves, passing

¹ Book VI, c. 18, ll. 1895-1912, Vol. IV.

² Raphael Holinshed, *The Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Ireland* (London, 1577). Vol. I, *The Historie of Scotlande*, pp. 243-4.

SOME OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF FAIRIES

through the woodes and fieldes, when sodenly in the middes of a launde, there met them iii. women in straunge & ferly apparell, resembling creatures of an elder worlde, whom when they attentively behelde, wondering much at the sight, The first of them spake & sayde: All hayle Mackbeth Thane of Glamis (for he had lately entred into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Synel.) The ii. of them said: Hayle Makbeth Thane of Cawder: but the third sayde: All Hayle Makbeth that hereafter shall be king of Scotland.

Then Banquho, what maner of women (saith he) are you, that seeme so litle favourable unto me, where as to my fellow here, besides highe offices, yee assigne also the kingdome, appointyng foorth nothing for me at all? Yes sayth the firste of them, wee promise greater benefites unto thee, than unto him, for he shall reygne in deede, but with an unluckie ende: neyther shall he leave any issue behinde him to succede in his place, where contrarily thou in deede shalt not reygne at all, but of thee those shall be borne whiche shall governe the Scottishe kingdome by long order of continuall discent. Herewith the foresayde women vanished immediately out of theyr sight. This was reputed at the first but some vayne fantastick illusion by Makbeth and Banquho, in so much that Banquho woulde call Makbeth in jeste kyng of Scotland, and Makbeth againe would call him in sporte likewise, the father of many kings. But afterwards the common opinion was, that these women were eyther the weird sisters, that is as (ye would say) the Goddesses of destinie, or els some Nymphes or Feiries, endewed with knowledge of prophecie by their Nicromanticall science, bicause every thing came to passe as they had spoken.

Heywood's *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels*.¹

And of this sort
(Namely White Nymphas) *Boethius* makes report,
In his Scotch Historie: Two Noblemen,
Mackbeth and *Banco-Stuart*, passing then
Unto the Pallace where King *Duncan* lay;
Riding alone, encountered on the way
(In a darke Grove) three Virgins wondrous faire,
As well in habit as in feature rare.

¹ Thomas Heywood, *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels*, p. 508.

The first of them did curtsie low, her vaile
 Unpinn'd, and with obeisance said, All haile,
Macbeth Thane Glamis. The next said,
 All haile *Caldarius Thane*. The third Maid,
 Not the least honor unto thee I bring,
Macbeth all haile, that shortly must be King.

The local traditions round Dunsinnan were collected in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*.¹

'The story purported, that Macbeth, after his elevation to the throne, had resided for 10 years at Carnbeddie, in the neighbouring parish of St. Martin's which the country people call Carn-beth, or Macbeth's Castle, and where vestiges of his castle are still to be seen. During these times, witchcraft was very prevalent in Scotland, and two of the most famous witches in the Kingdom lived on each hand of Macbeth, one at Collace, the other not far from Dunsinane House, at a place called the Cape. Macbeth, taking a superstitious turn, he applied to them for advice, and by their counsel, he built a lofty castle, upon the top of an adjoining hill, since called Dunsinane.'

In a footnote the writer adds that the moor where the witches met in the parish of St. Martin is still pointed out by the country people, and that a standing stone there is called the witch's stone. Macbeth, he says, is called 'the Giant' by the country people, and the grave where he is said to be buried is called 'The Lang Man's Grave'. The account of Macbeth's death received by Sinclair is different both from the historical account and from Shakespeare's. According to this, when Birnam Wood drew near, Macbeth abandoned his castle in despair, and fled up the opposite hill, pursued by Macduff. But, finding escape impossible, he flung himself from the top of the hill, and was dashed to pieces on the rocks below.

2. A MEDIEVAL FAIRY

*Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*²

Tempore regis Ricardi apud Daghewurthe, in Suthfolke, in domum domini Osberni de Bradewelle, quidam fantasticus spiritus multototies et multo tempore apparuit, loquens cum

¹ Vol. 20, p. 243.

² P. 120. *De quodam fantastico spiritu*.
238

familia praedicti militis, vocem infantis unius anni in sono imitatus, ac se Malekin vocitabat. Matrem vero suam cum fratre in domo vicina manere asserebat, et se frequenter ab eisdem objurgari dicebat, eo quod ab eis discedens cum hominibus loqui praesumeret. Mira et risui digna et agebat et loquebatur, et aliquoties aliorum occultos actus detegens. Ex colloquiis ejus primo uxor militis et tota familia valde territa est, sed postmodum ejus verbis et ridiculosis actibus assuefacti, confidenter ac familiariter cum ea loquebantur, plurima ab ea inquirentes. Loquebatur autem Anglice secundum idioma regionis illius, interdum etiam Latine, et de Scripturis sermocinabatur cum capellano ejusdem militis, sicut ipse nobis veraciter protestatus est. Audiri et sentiri potuit, sed minime videri, nisi semel a quadam puella de thalamo visa est in specie parvissimi infantis, quae induebatur quadam alba tunica, nimium prius a puella rogata et adjurata ut se visibilem ei exhiberet. Quae nullo modo ejus petitioni consentire voluit donec puella per Dominum juraret, quod eam nec tangeret, nec teneret. Confessa est quoque quod nata erat apud Lanaham, et dum mater ejus secum eam deferret in campum, ubi cum aliis messuit, et solam eam reliqueret in parte agri, a quadam alia rapta est et transposita, et jam vii annis cum eadem manserat; et dicebat quod post alios vii annos reverteretur ad pristinam hominum cohabitationem. Capello quodam se et alios uti dicebat, quod se invisibiles reddebat. Cibaria et potus ab assistentibus multoties exigebat, quae super quandam archam reposita amplius non inveniebantur.

3. THE FAIRIES IN THE SCOTTISH WITCH TRIALS

Bessie Dunlop and the Fairies (1576)¹

Sche being inquirit, quhat kynd of man this Thom Reid was? Declarit, he was ane honest wele elderlie man, gray bairdit, and had ane gray coitt with Lumbart slevis of the auld fassoun; ane pair of grey brekis and quhyte schankis, gartanit abone the kne; ane blak bonet on his heid, cloise behind and plane befor with silkin laissis drawin throw the lippis thairof; and ane quhyte wand in his hand.—

ITEM (3), Being interogat, how and in quhat maner of place the said Thome Reid come to hir? Ansuerit, as sche was gangand

¹ Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 51–58.

betuix hir awin hous and the yard of Monkcastell, dryvand hir ky to the pasture, and makand hevyte sair dule with hir self, gretand verrie fast for hir kow that was deid, hir husband and chyld that wer lyand seik in the land ill, and sche new rissine out of gissane. The foirsaid Thom mett hir be the way, healsit hir, and said, 'Gude day, Bessie, quhy makis thow sa grit dule and sair greting for ony wardlie thing?' Sche ansuerit, 'Allace! haif I nocht grit caus to make grit dule? ffor our geir is trakit; and my husband is on the point of deid, and ane babie of my awin will nocht leve; and myself at the waik point; haif I nocht gude caus thane to haif ane sair hart?' Bot Thom said, 'Bessie, thow hes crabit God, and askit sum thing you suld nocht haif done; and, thairfoir, I counsell thee to mend to him: for I tell thee thy barne sall die, and the seik kow, or yow cum hame; thy twa scheip sall de to: bot thy husband sall mend, and be als haill and feir as euir he was.' And than was I sumthing blyther, fra he tauld me that my gudeman wald mend. Than Thome Reid went away fra me, in throw the yard of Monkcastell; and I thoct he gait in at ane naroware hoill of the dyke nor ony erdlie man culd haif gane throw; and swa I was sumthing fleit. This was the first tyme that Thom and Bessie forgadderit. . . .

(20) INTERROGAT, Gif sche neur askit the questioun at him, Quhairfoir he com to hir mair (than) to ane uthir bodye? Ansuerit, Remembring hir, quhen sche was lyand in chyld-bed-lair, with ane of hir laiddis, that ane stout woman com in to hir, and sat down on the forme besyde hir, and askit ane drink at hir, and sche gaif hir; quha alsua tauld hir, that that barne wald de, and that hir husband suld mend of his seiknes. The said Bessie ansuerit, that sche rememberit wele thairof; and Thom said, That was the Quene of Elfame his maistres, quha had comandit him to wait upoun hir, and to do hir gude.

(21) INTERROGAT, Gif evir sche had spokin with him at ane loich and wattir-syde? Ansuerit, Neur save anis that sche had gane afield with hir husband to Leith, for hame bringing of mele, and ganging afield to teddir hir naig at Restalrig-loch, quhair their come ane cumpanye of rydaris by, that maid sic ane dynn as heavin and erd had gane togidder; and incontinent, thai rade in to the loich, with mony hiddous rumbill. Bot Thom tauld, It was the gude wichtis that wer rydand in Middil-zerd.

(24) ITEM, the said Bessie declaris, that the Lard of Auchinskeyth is rydand with the ffair-folk, albeit he deit IX zeir syne. . . .

(14) INTERROGAT, Quhow sche kennit that this man was Thome Reid, that deit at Pinkye? Ansuerit, Sche neur knew him quhen he was on lyfe; bot that sche suld nocht dout that it was he bad hir gang to Thom Reid, his sone, now officiare in his place, to the Lard of Blair, and to certain vtheris his kynnismen and freindis thair, quhom he namit; and bade thame restoir certane guidis, and mend vthir offencis that thai had done.

Alisoun Peirsoun and the Fairies (1588)¹

(2) ITEM, for hanting and repairing with the gude nyctbouris, and Quene of Elfame, thir divers zearis bypast, as scho had confest by hir depositiounis, declaring that scho could nocht say reddelie how lang scho wes with thame; and that scho had freindis in that court quhilk wes of hir awin blude, quha had gude acquaintance of the Quene of Elphane, quhilk mycht haif helpit hir: bot scho wes quhyles weill and quhyles ewill, and ane quhyle with thame and ane uthir quhyle away; and that scho wald be in hir bed haill and feir, and wald nocht wit quhair scho wald be or the morne: And that scho saw nocht the Quene thir sewin zeir: And that scho had mony guid freindis in that court, bit wer all away now: And that scho saw nocht the Quene thir sewin zeir: And that scho had mony guid friendis in that court, bot wer all away now: And that scho was sewin zeir ewill handlit in the Court of Elfane and had kynd friendis thair; bot had na will to visseit thame eftir the end; And that itt wes thay guid nyctbouris that haillit hir under God: And that scho wes cuming and gangand to Sanct Androus in hailling of folkis thir saxtene zeiris bypast.

This Alison Peirson is mentioned in a satiric poem against the Archbishop of St. Andrews quoted by Pitcairn in a footnote to p. 163.

Ane carling of the Quene of Phareis, That ewill-win geir to Elphyne careis,
Through all Braid-Albane scho hes bene, On horsbak on Hallow-ewin;
And ay in seiking certayne nyghtis, As scho sayis, with sur sillie wychtis;

¹ Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 161-3.

SOME OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF FAIRIES

And names out nyctbouris sex or sewin, That we belevit had bene
in heavin.

Scho said scho saw thame weill aneugh, And speciallie gude *Auld
Balcleugh*,

The Secretare and sundrie uther; Ane *William Symson*e, hir mother
brother,

Whome fra scho hes resavit a buike, For ony herb scho lykis to
luike:

It will instruct her how to tak it: In saws and sillubs how to mak it.

*From Isobel Gowdie's Confession (1662)*¹

I was in the *Downie-hillis*, and got meat ther from THE
QWEIN OF FEARRIE, mor than I could eat. *The Qwein of
Fearrie* is brawlie clothed in whyt linens, and in whyt and browne
cloathes, &c.; and THE KING OF FEARRIE is a braw man,
weill favoured, and broad faced, &c. Ther wes elf-bullis rowt-
ting and skoylling wp and downe thair, and affrighted me.

From her Second Confession.

As for Elf-arrow-heidis, THE DIVELL shapes them with
his awin hand, (and syne deliveris thame) to Elf-boyes, who
whyttis and dightis them with a sharp thing lyk a paking
neidle; bot (quhan I wes in Elf-land?) I saw them whytting
and dighting them. . . . Thes that dightis thaim ar litle ones,
hollow and boss-baked. They speak gowstie lyk. Quhen THE
DIVELL giwes them to ws, he sayes,

'SHOOT thes in my name,
And they sall not goe heall hame.'

(According to this account the witches ride, like the fairies, on
straws and in whirls of dust.) In her first confession she says:

I haid a little horse, and wold say, 'HORSE AND HATTOCK,
IN THE DIVILLIS NAME!' And than ve vould flie away quhair ve
vould, be ewin as straws wold flie wpon an hieway. We will flie
lyk straws quhan we pleas; wild-straws and corne-straws wilbe
horses to ws, and ve put thaim betwixt our foot, and say, 'HORSE
AND HATTOCK, IN THE DIVELLIS nam!' An quhan any sies
thes straws in a whirlwind, and doe not then sanctifie them
selves, we may shoot them dead at owr pleasour. Any that ar shot

¹ Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, Vol. III, Part II, pp. 602-16.

SOME OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF FAIRIES

be vs, their sowell will goe to Hevin, bot their bodies remains with
ws and will flie as horsis to ws, als small as straws.

It is tantalizing that when we come to fairy revelations in
the trials they are often left out, as if unimportant or, possibly,
unlucky. There is this point to notice, however, that these fairy
revelations were evidently not extorted, as the witchcraft con-
fessions probably were, but were genuinely believed by the
prisoners, or at least judged credible by them.

*John Beaumont's Experiences of the Fairies*¹

As to my own experience, relating to that of the *Second-
Sighted Persons* abovemention'd, I shall here set it down, in
reference to two of the particulars above Written, from Mr.
Aubrey's Account, viz. the Second and Fifth. As, in the second
particular, it's said, that those that have the *Second Sight*, see a
multitude of Men and Women, Day and Night, about them:
So it was with my self for some time, for I saw Hundreds, tho'
I never saw any in the Night time, without a Fire, or Candle-
light, or in the Moonshine, and as the Person mention'd in that
Paragraph, had two particular Spirits there Named, which
constantly attended him, besides others without Names; so it
was with my self, two Spirits constantly attending me, Night and
Day, for above Three Months together; who call'd each other
by their Names, and several Spirits would often call at my
Chamber Door, and ask, whether such Spirits lived there, calling
them by their Names, and they would answer, they did. As for
the other Spirits that attended me, I heard none of their Names
mentioned, only I ask'd one Spirit which came for some Nights
together, and rung a little Bell in my Ear, what his Name was,
who answer'd *Ariel*. We find that one of the Spirits which
attended the *Second Sighted Person*, appeared as a Boy, the other
as a Girl: but the two that constantly attended my self, appear'd
both in Womens Habit, they being of a Brown Complexion,
and about Three Foot in Stature; they had both black, loose
Network Gowns, tyed with a black Sash about their Middles,
and within the Network appear'd a Gown of a Golden Colour,
with somewhat of a Light striking thro' it; their Heads were
not drest with Topknots, but they had white Linnen Caps on,

¹ *A Treatise of Spirits*, pp. 91-3, and 394-6.

with Lace on them, about three Fingers breath, and over it they had a Black loose Network Hood. . . .¹

I declare then, with all the Sincerity of a Christian, that it never so much as entred into my Thoughts to use any practice for raising, or calling Spirits, as some Men have done; and that when they came, it was altogether a surprize to me. At their first coming they did not appear to me, nor come into my Chamber, but kept at my Chamber Windows, and in a Court adjoyning to one of my Chamber Windows, and in a Garden adjoyning to another Window. They called to me, sung, play'd on Musick, rung Bells, sometimes crowed like Cocks, &c. and I have great Reason to believe these to be all good Spirits, for I found nothing in them tending to ill; their drift in coming, so far as I could perceive, being only to compose my Mind, and to bring it to its highest Purity; they used no Threats to me, but the surprize kept always a Terror upon me, and they continued with me about two Months.

Their second coming to me was some Years after, when at first there came Five, as I have set forth in my Fourth Chapter; and presently after there came Hundreds, and I saw some of them Dance in a Ring in the Garden, and Sing, holding Hands round, not facing each other, but their Backs turned to the inner part of the Circle. I found these of a promiscuous Nature, some good, and some bad, as among Men; for some of them would now and then Curse and Swear, and talk loosely, and others would reprehend them for it. Yet none of these ever perswaded me to any ill thing; but all would dissuade me from drinking too freely, and any other irregularity; and if at any time I was upon going to any Neighbouring Town, they would tell me they would go with me, which I found they did, for they would there call at my Curtain, by my Beds side, as they usually did at my House, and talk to me.

Besides these two great Visitations, they have come to me now and then for some Years, and sometimes have stay'd with me a Week, sometimes two or three Days; and all along from their first coming, they have very often suggested things to me in my Dreams, as now and then they do still. At their first coming I heard no name of any of them mentioned, as I did at their second coming. I had a perception of them by four of my

¹ P. 394 seq.

Senses, for I saw them, heard them, and three of them had a dark smoak coming out of their Mouths, which seemed somewhat offensive to the Smell, it being like the smoak of a Lamp; and three of them bid me take them by the Hand, which I did but it yielded to my touch, so that I could not find any sensible resistency in it; neither could I perceive any coldness in them, as it's said some Apparitions have had. I did not ask them many curious Questions, as I find many Men think I should, and, as they say, they would have done; but I always kept me on my guard, and still requir'd them to be gone, and would not enter into such Familiarity with them. Indeed I ask'd them once what Creatures they were, and they told me, they were an Order of Creatures superior to Mankind, and could Influence our Thoughts, and that their Habitation was in the Air; I ask'd them also several things relating to my own concerns in this World, and I found sometimes both in their Answers, and in what they suggested in my Dreams, things very surprizing to me. One of them lay down upon my Bed by me, every Night, for a considerable time, and pretended great kindness to me, and if some others at any time would threaten me, that Spirit told me, they should do me no hurt.

4. LATER ACCOUNTS OF FAIRIES

*An Old Woman of Nithsdale Describes the Fairy Rade*¹

I' the night afore Roodsmass I had trysted wi' a neeber lass, a Scots mile frae hame, to talk anent buying braws i' the fair;—we had nae suttan lang aneath the haw-buss, till we heard the loud laugh o' fowk riding, wi' the jingling o' bridles, and the clanking o' hoofs. We banged up, thinking they wad ryde owre us;—we kent nae but it was drunken fowk riding to the fair, i' the fore night. We glowred roun' and roun', and sune saw it was the *Fairie fowks' Rade*. We cowered down till they passed by. A leam o' light was dancing owre them, mair bonnie than moonshine: they were a wee, wee fowk, wi' green scarfs on, but ane that rade formost, and that ane was a good deal langer than the lave, wi' bonnie lang hair bun' about wi' a strap, whilk glented lyke stars. They rade on braw wee whyte naigs, wi' unco lang

¹ G. H. Cromek, *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, pp. 298–9.

swooping tails, an' manes hung wi' whistles that the win' played on. This, an' their tongues whan they sang, was like the soun' of a far awa Psalm. Marion an' me was in a brade lea fiel', whare they cam by us, a high hedge o' hawtrees keepit them frae gaun through Johnnie Corrie's corn;—but they lap a' owre't like sparrows, an' gallop't into a green knowe beyont it. We gade i' the morning to look at the tredded corn, but the fient a hoof mark was there nor a blade broken.

*The Scottish Fairies in the Eighteenth Century*¹

BENIVENOW is rendered venerable in the superstition of the natives, by the celebrated *Coirre nan Uriskin*, (the cave, or recess of goblins,) situated on the northern side of the mountain, and overhanging the Lake in gloomy grandeur. The *Urisks* were a sort of lubberly supernaturals, who, like the Brownies of England, could be gained over by kind attentions, to perform the drudgery of the farm; and it was believed that many families in the Highlands had one of the order attached to it. They were supposed to be dispersed over the Highlands, each in his own wild recess; but the solemn stated meetings of the order were regularly held in this cave of Benivenow.

(Grahame further describes the Kelpies and the Men of Peace, whom he believes to be a memory of the Druids. He instances their sacred green, which he holds to be the druidical colour. His People of Peace follow the usual fairy traditions; they live in the hills, their appearance of happiness and grandeur is illusory, it is dangerous for mortals to taste their food, which appears delicious, but when the glamour is removed, is seen to be only the refuse of the earth.)

*The Last Fairy Rade*²

On a Sabbath morning, nearly sixty years ago, the inmates of this little hamlet [*near Glend Eathie*] had all gone to church—all except a herdbooy and a little girl, his sister, who were lounging beside one of the cottages; when, just as the shadow of the garden-dial had fallen on the line of noon, they saw a long cavalcade ascending out of the ravine through the wooden hollow. It winded among the knolls and bushes; and, turning

round the northern gable of the cottage, beside which the sole spectators of the scene were stationed, began to ascend the eminence towards the south. The horses were shaggy, diminutive things, speckled dun and gray; the riders stunted, misgrown, ugly creatures, attired in antique jerkins of plaid, long gray cloaks, and little red caps, from under which their wild uncombed locks shot out over their cheeks and foreheads. The boy and his sister stood gazing in utter dismay and astonishment, as rider after rider, each one more uncouth and dwarfish than the one that had preceded it, passed the cottage, and disappeared among the brushwood, which at that period covered the hill, until at length the entire rout, except the last rider, who lingered a few yards behind the others, had gone by. 'What are ye, little mannie? and where are you going?' enquired the boy, his curiosity getting the better of his fears and his prudence.

'Not of the race of Adam,' said the creature, turning for a moment in the saddle: 'The People of Peace shall never more be seen in Scotland.'

¹ Grahame, *Sketches Descriptive of Perthshire*, p. 19.

² Hugh Miller, *Old Red Sandstone*, pp. 214–15, note.

Appendix IV

SOME SPELLS AND CHARMS AND THE LETTER OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL MAGICIAN

SPELLS AND CHARMS, CHIEFLY FROM MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

The Fairies. Fairy Spells contained in Bodleian MS. Ashmole 1406

An excellent way to gett a Fayrie, but for my selfe I call margarett Barrance but this will obtaine any one that is not allready bound.

First gett a broad square christall or Venus glasse in length and breadth 3 inches, then lay that glasse or christall in the bloud of a white henne 3 wednesdayes or 3 fridayer: then take it out and wash it with holy aqua and fumigate it: then take 3 hazle stickes or wands of an yeare groth, pill them fayre and white, and make soe longe as you write the spiritts name, or fayries name, which you call 3 times, on every sticke being made flatt one side, then bury them under some hill whereas you suppose fayries haunt, the wednesday before you call her, and the friday followinge take them uppe and call hir at 8 or 3 or 10 of the clocke which be good plannetts and howres for that turne: but when you call, be in cleane Life and turne thy face towards the east, and when you have her bind her to that stone or Glasse.

An Ungt. to annoynt under the Eyelids and upon the Eylidds evninge and morninge, but especially when you call, or finde your sight not perfect. [That is, an ointment to give sight of the

SOME SPELLS AND CHARMS

fairies] pt. [precipitate?] sallet oyle and put it into a Viall glasse but first wash it with rose water, and marygold flower water, the flowers be gathered towards the east, wash it til the oyle come white, then put it into the glasse, ut supra. and thou put thereto the budds of holyhocke, the flowers of mary gold; the flowers or toppes of wild time the budds of younge hazle, and the time must be gathered neare the side of a hill where fayries use to go oft, and the grasse of a fayrie throne, there, all these putt into the oyle, into the glasse, and sett it to dissolve 3 dayes in the sonne, and thou keep it for thy use; ut supra.

To Call a Fairy

I. E. A. call the. Elaby: Gathen: in the name of the. father. of the. sonne. and of the holy. ghost. And. I Adiure. the. Elaby. Gathen: Conjure. and. Straightly: charge. and Command. thee. by. Tetragrammaton: Emanuell. messias. sether. panton. cratons. Alpha et Omega. and by. all. other. high. and. reverent. names. of all-mighty. god. both Euffable. and. in. Effuable. and by. all. the. vertues. of the holy.ghost. by the dyetic grace. and. foreknowledge. of. the. holy-ghost. I. Adjure. and commande. thee. Elaby. by.all.the.powers. and. grace. and. vertues. of. all. the. holy. meritorious. Virginnes. and. patriarches. And. I. Conjure. thee. Elaby Gathen. by. these. holy. names. of God. Saday. Eloy. Iskyros. Adonay. Sabaoth. that thou appeare presently. meekely. and myldly. in. this. glasse. without. doeing. hurt. or. daunger. unto. me. or any other. livinge. creature. and to this I binde. thee. by. the. whole. power. and. vertue. of. our. Lord. Jesus. Christ. I. Commande. thee. by. the. vertue. of. his. uprisinge. and. by. the. vertue. of. his. flesh. and. body. that he. tooke. of the. blessed. Virginne. Mary. Empresse. of. heaven. and. hell. and, by. the. hole. power. of. god. and. his. holy. names. namely. Adonay. Adonatos. Eloy. Elohim. Suda. Ege. zeth. and. heban: that. is. to. say. Lord. of. vertue. and. king. of. Israell. dwellinge. uppon. the. whole. face. of. the. earth. whose. seate. is. in. heaven and. his. power. in. earth. and. by. him, &. by those glorious. and. powerfull. names. I. binde. thee. to. give. and. doe. thy. true. humble. and. obedient. servise. unto. me. E.A. and never. to depart. without. my. consent. and Lawfull. Authoritie. in.the.name.of. the. Father.and.the. holy.trinitie. And. I Command. thee. Elaby. Gathen. by. all.

Angells. and. Arkangells. and. all. the.holy.company. of. heaven. worshippinge. the omnipotent. god. that. thou. doest. come. and. appeare. presently. to. me. E.A. in. this. christall. or. glasse. meekely. and. myldely. to.my.true and. perfect. sight. and. truly. without. fraud. Dissymulation. or. deceite. resolve. and. satisfye me. in. and. of. all. manner. of. such. questions. and. commands. and. Demandes. as. I. shall. either. Aske. Require. desire. or. demande. of. thee. and. that. thou. Ellaby. Gathen. be. true. and. obedient. unto me. both. now. and. ever.heare-after. at. all. time. and. times. howers. dayes. nightes. mynittes. and. in. and. at. all. places. wheresoever. either. in field. howse. or. in. any. other. place. whatsoever. &. wheresoever. I. shall. call. upon. thee. and. that. thou. Elaby: Gathen: doe. not. start. depart. or. desire. to. goe. or. departe. from. me. neyther. by. arte. or. call. of. any. other. Artist. of. any. degree. or. Learninge. whatsoever. but. that. thou. in. the. humblyest. manner. that. thou. mayest. be. commanded. to. attend. and. give. thy. true. obedience. unto. me. E.A.: and that. even. as. thou. wilt. Answer. it. unto. and. before. the. Lord. of. hoste. at. the. dreadfull. day. of. Judgment. before. whose. glorious. presence. both. thou. and. I. and. all. other. Christian. Creatures. must. and. shall. appeare. to. receive. our. Joyes. in. heaven. or. by. his. doome. to. be. Judged. into. everlastinge. Damnation. even. into. the. deepe. pitt. of. hell. there. to. receive. our. portion. amongst. the. divell. and. his. Angells. to. be. ever. burninge. in. pitch. fier. and. brimstone. and. never. consumed. and. to. this. I. E.A. Swear. thee. Elaby. Gathen. and. binde. thee. by. the. whole. power. of. god. the. Father. god. the. Sonne. & god. the. holy. ghost. 3. persons. and. one. god. in. trinitye. to. be. trew. and. faithfull. unto. me. in. all. Reverente. humillity. Let. it. be. done. in. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. his name. quickly. quickly. quickly. come. come. come. fiat. fiat. fiat. Amen. Amen. Amen. etc.

This call ut supra is to call Elabigathan A. Fayrie.

British Museum MS. Sloane 1727, p. 23

A discharge of the fayres and other sps. or Elphes from any place or ground, where treasure is layd or hide.

First shall the mgn: say in the name of the fa. the so. & the ho. Go. amen. and they say as followeth.—

I conjure you sps. or elphes which be 7 sisters and have these names. Lilia. Restilia, foca, fola, Afryca, Julia, venulia, I conjure youe & charge you by the fa.: the so.: and the ho: Go.: and holy mary the mother of our blessed lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: and by the annunciation nativity and circumcison, and by the baptisme; and by his holy fasting; and by the passion, death and reserection of our blessed lord Jesus Christ and by the Comeing of the holy gost our sacred Comforter: and by all the Apostles Martyres confessors; and also virgins and all the elect of God and of our lord Jesus Christ; that from hensforth neither you nor any other for you have power or rule upon this ground; neither within nor without nor uppon this servant of the living god.: N: neither by day nor night; but the holy trinity be always upon itt & him or her. Amen. Amen:

p. 28. A call to the Queen of the Fairies.

Micol o tu micoll regina pigmeorum deus Abraham: deus Isaac: deus Jacob; tibi benedicat et omnia fausta danet et concedat Modo venias et mihi moremgem veni. Igitur o tu micol in nomine Jesus veni cito ters quatur beati in qui nomine Jesu veniunt veni Igitur O tu micol in nomine Jesu veni cito qui sit omnis honor laus et gloria in omne aeternum. Amen Amen

(On page 37 of the same treatise we are told that the treasures of the earth are florella, Mical, Tytan, Mabb lady to the queene.)

An Irish Invocation to the Fairies¹

When any man hath caught a fall upon the ground, forthwith hee starteth uppe againe on his feete, and turneth himselfe round three times toward his right hand, with his sworde, skein, or knife hee diggeth into the earth, and fetcheth up a turfe, for that, they say, the earth doth yeelde a spirite: and if within some two or three daies he fell sicke, there is sent a woman skilful in that kinde unto the said place, and there she saith on this wise. I call thee P. from the East and West, South and North, from the forests, woods, rivers, meeres, the wilde-wood-fayries, white, redde, blacke, etc. And therewithall bolteth out certaine short praier: then returneth she home unto the sicke party, to try whether it bee the disease called Essane, which they are of opinion is sent by the Fairies: and whispereth a certain odde praier with a *Pater Noster* into his eare, putteth some coles into

¹ Camden, *Britannia*, Ireland, pp. 146-7.

a pot ful of faire water, and so giveth more certaine judgement of the decease, than many of our physicians can.

Spells and Invocations for Other Spirits.

Invocations to Good Angels.¹

A general invitation

O puyssant and right Noble King, (N) and by what name els soever thou art called, or mayst truely and duely be called: To whose peculier government, charge, disposittion, and Kingly Office doth apperteyne, the (N. etc.)

In the Name of the King of Kings, the Lord of Hoasts, the Allmighty GOD, Creator of heaven and earth: and of all things Visible and Invisible: COME, now, and appear to my perfect and Sensible eye Judgment: in a godly, and frendely manner: to my cumfort, and help, for the avancing of the honor and Glory of our Almighty GOD, by my Service: As much as by thy wisdom, and powre, in thy *propre* Kingly office, and government, I may be holpen, and enabled unto: Amen.

COME, ô right Noble King (N) I say, COME. Amen.

Gloria Patri, etc.

(The invocation that follows for Monday is evidently Dee's (p. 185). It is addressed to King Armara, the angel of Monday.)

King Armara. Who in this Heptarchiall Doctrine, at blessed Uriel his hand, didst receyve the golden rod of government, and measuring: and the Chayre of Dignitie, and Doctrine, and didst appeare first to us, adorned With the Triple Diademe, in a long purple robe: who saydst to me, at Mortlak, I Minister the Strength of God, unto the! Likewise thou saydst, These Mysteries hath God lastly and of his great mercies graunted unto thee.

Thow shalt be glutted, yea filled, yea thou shalt swell, and be puffed up, with the perfect knowledg of Gods Mysteries in his mercies.

And saydst, this Art is to the farder Understanding of all sciences that are past, present or yet to come.

And immediately didst say to me, Kings there are, in Nature, Wyth Nature and above Nature: Thow are Dignified. And

¹ In Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 36,674, p. 184.

saidst concerning the use of these Tables, This is but the first step: Neyther shalt thou practise them in Vayne.

And saydst thus, Generally, of Gods mercies and graces, on me decreed and bestowed. Whatsoever thou shalt speak, do, or work, shalbe profitable, and acceptable; And the Ende shall be good: Therefore in the Name etc.

Gloria Patri etc.

A method of bringing a disobedient spirit into subjection.¹

Make a fire of drye cowturds brimstone and such like stincking stuffe, & write the spirits name in virgine parchment, then burne it, saying the curse following. (After a conjuration.)

O most mighty God, and most gracious father and mercifull Lord which by thy just judgement avengedst the serpent in Paradise for alluring man to disobey thy commaundements, vouchsafe I bessech thee to condemne and curse this disobedient N: which doth contemne and disobey thy holy and blessed name. Amen.

O thou most puissant Prince Radamanthus which doest punish in thy prison of perpetuall perplexity the disobedient devills of hell, and also the greisly ghosts of men dyinge in dreadfull despaire, I conjure bind and charge thee by Lucifer, Belsabub, Sathanas, Jancanill and by their power, and by the homage thou owest unto them, and also I charge thee by the triple crowne of Cerberus his head. by Stix and Phlegiton, by your fellow and private devill Baranter that you doe torment and punish this disobedient N. untill you make him come corporally to my sight, and obey my will and commaundements in whatsoever I shall charge or command him to doe. fiat. fi. fi. Amen.

O thou most disobedient spirit N: I condemne thee by the vertue and power of the three most dreadful and mighty names of God Agla + On + Tetragrammaton + into the hands of these princes Lucifer, Satanas, Belsabub, Janconill to be tormented in the bottomlesse pit of hell for thy stubbornes, wilfullnes, disobedience, and rebellion: And furthermore as Xst Jesus cast out devills by the power of his divine godhead, by that power of Xst Jesus I cast thee into the tormenting pit of fire and brimstone there to be tormented untill the later day of iudgement, except thou be obedient to fulfill my will and com-

¹ MS. as supra, pp. 78 ff.

mandement in all things I have or shall aske or demaund of thee, without any deceit, falshood or delay. In nomine patris + filii + & Spiriti Sancti + Amen. fiat. fi. fi.

This is evidence of the part which the pagan Hades still played in the current conception of hell. One is struck in the poets with the mixture of heathen and Christian symbols, but that might be no more than poetic symbolism. Here we have the same belief displayed in a frankly utilitarian piece of writing. That the pagan gods were taken almost as seriously as the pagan Hades, by the magicians, is shown by a prayer to Saturn quoted by Jean Seznec, in *La Survivance des Dieux Antiques*, p. 53. The gods owed their survival chiefly to astrology.

O maître dont le nom est sublime et la puissance grande, maître suprême, ô maître Saturne, toi, le Froid, le Stérile, le Morne et le Pernicieux: toi dont la vie est sincère et la parole vraie, toi, le Sage et le Solitaire, l'Impénétrable; toi qui tiens tes promesses; toi qui es faible et las, toi qui as plus de souci que personne, toi qui ne connais ni plaisir ni joie; rusé vieillard, qui sais tous les artifices, toi qui es trompeur, sage et sensé, qui apportes la prospérité ou la ruine, et qui rends les hommes heureux ou malheureux! Je t'en conjure, ô Père Supreme, par ta grand bienveillance et ta généreuse bonté, fais pour moi ceci et cela. . . .

*A method of obtaining help from some unspecified spirit, probably a devil.*¹

If thou wouldst have whatsoever thou desirest: first thou must gett a Lapwing and lett him blood in a glasse, and close it that noe ayre enter in, and when you would worke: goe ply, to a woode, and first hold a bright sword in thy hand and say these words (which must be written in an Abortive) with the same blood. and in the entring into the wood begin and say thus Betha suspensus in ethera super ea enpion, emprogudum, pamelion angius Marius Egripus fons floriseme desede balditha saporis ana velarea siras: but these are truer: beltha suspensus Matheaea Superea Implex pamilion ananrius fons floris Trosdogod Baldachia. Sarins Mars. these are the words in negromancy: then arise one thy feett and make a circle four square with the said Sword; and in every corner of the circle

¹ Brit. Mus. MS. Sloane 1727, p. 18.

make Solomon's pentacle, and betweene every pentacle a Crose; and then stand against the east in the midst of thy circle with thy sword in thy hand saying the words aforesaid, 2, 3, 4 times or as often as occasion requireth: and when thou hast saide there shall appeare a knight on a horse with a Gos-hawke on his hand: the which will say what will you aske: why call you me, I am redy to fulfill all your will: but answere nothing att all keeping thyselve short from him: not beholding still the circle till he be past and thou arise upon thy feet and say againe towards the North as a foresaide and Anon shall come one other knight more fayer than the first & more semely then the other with a goshauke on his hand: but answer him not neither behold but as thou didst the other: and he shall vanish away: thou say as aforesaid Beltha etc. turning westward and anon the third knight shall appeare. more beautyfull and fayer than any of the rest riding on a gallant horse with a goshawke one his hand Crowned with a diadem of Gould the which shall say behold I am here weary for Labor all the day: wherefore tell me what thou wouldst: and you may trustily say what you will unto him: and he shall presently Answere thee: asking the if thou wilt have his fellowship: but thou shalt denie him and leave him: and as soon as he shall here that word he shall pass from thee: and soe leave until the next day: and the next day come againe and thou shalt find what thou desirest: *Approved.*

THE UNSUCCESSFUL MAGICIAN

The letter of William Stapleton to Cardinal Wolsey comes from *Norfolk Archaeology or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to the Antiquities of the County of Norfolk*.¹

To The Lord Legate's Noble Grace.

Whereas your noble Grace hath given me in commandment that I should inform your Grace of all such things as hath been done and committed by me, William Stapleton, Clerk, since the time of my coming from the Order of St. Bennett's in the County of Norfolk, that is to say: First, I do ascertain your noble Grace that I, the said Sir William Stapleton, was a monk of St. Bennett's as aforesaid the XIXth year of the reign of King Henry

¹ Vol. I (Norwich 1847), pp. 57 seq.

the Eighth; and being in the said Monastery, one Denys of Hofton did bring me a book called *Thesaurus Spirituum*, and, after that, another called *Secreta Secretorum*, a little ring, a plate, a circle, and also a sword for the art of digging; the which books and instruments I did keep for the space of half a year before I did come thence. And I and one John Kerver did give to the said Denys two nobles in pledge for the same; and he said he had them of the Vicar of Watton, and left the said two nobles in gage for them. Then for because I had been often punished for not rising to mattins and doing my duty in the church, I prayed my lord to give me license that I might sue out my dispensation, and so he was contented. Howbeit for because I was poor, he gave me half a year's license for the purchasing thereof or else to return again to my religion; which license had, I went that night to Denys of Hofton, and shewed him my license, and desired him to help me towards the purchasing of my said dispensation, who asked of me how I did like the said books; and I said, well. And then he said, if you be minded to go about anything touching the same, I will bring you to two cunning men that have a placard for treasure-trove, by whose means, if I had any cunning, I might the better help myself. Whereupon he brought me to the said two persons, with whom I agreed to go about the said business, in such wise that then they delivered me two or three books, and other things concerning the said art of digging, & thereupon brought me to a place called Systern (Sidestrand) in the said County, intending to have gone about the said business. And as we went to make search of the ground where we thought the said treasure should lie, the Lady Tyrry, lady of the said ground, having knowledge thereof, sent for us, and so examined us of our purpose, and thereupon forbade us meddling in her said ground, and so we departed thence and meddled no further. And so I went to Norwich, and there remained by the space of a month; and from thence I went to a town called Felmyingham, and one Godfrey and his boy with me, which Godfrey had a 'shower' called *Anthony Fular*, and the said boy did 'scry' unto him (which said spirit I had after myself); but notwithstanding at such time as we had viewed the said ground and could find nothing there in no manner of wise, we departed to Norwich again, where we met with one unbeknown to me; and he brought us to a man's house in Norwich where he supposed that we

should have found treasure, whereupon we called the spirit of the treasure to appear, but he did not, for I suppose of a truth there was none there; and so from thence I came to one Richard Thony, and him required to help me to get my dispensation. And so he and other his friends, of their goodness, gave me the sum of 46 shillings and 8 pence towards the suit of the same. And so I came to London, whereas I purchased a dispensation out of your Grace's Court for to be an hermit; and so, after that was purchased, I went directly into Norfolk, and there shewed my license. And then they motioned me that I should go about the said science again, and they would help me to my habit; to whom I made answer, that unless my books were better, I would meddle no further. Whereupon they informed me that one Leech had a book, to the which book, as they said, the parson of Lesingham had bound a spirit called *Andrew Malchus*; whereupon I went unto the said Leech, and his brother with me, whom they had sent for before, and at my coming these had communication with the said Leech concerning the same. And upon our communication he let me have all his instruments to the said book, and shewed me that, if I could get the book that the said instruments were made by, he would bring me to him that should speed my business shortly. And then he shewed me that the parson of Lesingham and Sir John of Leiston with others to me unknown had called up of late *Andrew Malchus*, *Oberion*, and *Inchubus*. And when they were all raised, *Oberion* would in no wise speak. And then the parson of Lesingham did demand of *Andrew Malchus*, and so did Sir John Leiston also, why *Oberion* would not speak to them. And *Andrew Malchus* made answer, for because he was bound unto the Lord Cardinal. And that also they did entreat the said parson of Lesingham and the said Sir John of Leiston that they might depart as at that time; and wheresoever it would please them to call them up again, they would gladly do them any service they could; and so they were licensed to depart for that time. The plate which was made for the calling of *Oberion* by them hath rested in the hands of Sir Thomas Moore, knight, since that I was before him. And when I had all the said instruments, I went to Norwich, where I had remained but a season when there came to me a glazier, which, as he said, came from the Lord Leonard Marquess, for to search one that was expert in such business. And thereupon one

Richard Tynney came and instanced me to go to Walsingham with him, where we met with the said Lord Leonard, the which Lord Leonard had communicated with me concerning the said art of digging, and thereupon promised me that if I would take pains in the exercising the said art, that he would sue out a dispensation for me that I should be a secular priest, and so would make me his chaplain. And, for a trial to know what I could do in the said art, he caused his servant to hide a certain money in the garden; and I shewed for the same. And one Jackson 'screyed' unto me, but we could not accomplish our purpose. Notwithstanding, incontinent after, one Sir John Shepe, Sir Robert Porter and I departed to a place beside Creke Abbey, where we supposed treasure should be. And the said Sir John Shepe called the spirit of the treasure, and I showed to him; but all came to no purpose. And so when we did perceive that we could come to no purpose, we returned and came all to London, where I continued unto X weeks before Christmas, at the which time there came a servant unto me of the said Lord Leonard's, and commanded to tarry upon my lord's coming. And after my Lord was come, I remained with him, and so rode down into Leicestershire, and there kept Christmas; but the said Lord Leonard before that time had sued out my capacity for to be a secular priest. And after Christmas, in the beginning of Lent, I went down into Norfolk, and there remained all the Lent season, and unto XIII days after. And then there came one Cook of Calkett Hall, and shewed me that there was much money about his place, and especial in the Bell Hill, and desired me to come thither; and then went I to Richard Tynney, and shewed him what the said Cook had said, whereupon Tynney brought to me one William Rapkyn, which took me the book that the Duke's Grace of Norfolk of late took away from me; which Rapkyn said to me that, forasmuch as I had all the instruments that were made for the said book, and if I could get Sir John of Leiston unto me, that then we should soon speed our purpose, for the said Sir John of Leiston was with the parson of Lesingham when the spirits appeared to the said book; and so I went to Calkett Hall, and took the said book and instruments with me. And, incontinent after, I directed a letter to the said Sir John of Leiston as unacquainted, and him showed in the same that I had the parson of Lesingham's book, and so I

bade the bearer show him; which bearer when he heard me speak of the parson of Lesingham's book, he showed me that he doubted not but that he would bring him with him, and also shewed me that he knew one that was with the parson of Lesingham and the said Sir John of Leiston when they called three spirits, of the which one would not speak, for because he was bound to the Lord Cardinal. And so the said fellow went with the said letter unto him, and he wrote unto me again that he would come, but he came not; wherefore, when I had tarried three or four days, I and the parish priest of Gorleston now being, went about the said business, but of truth we could bring nothing to effect. Whereupon I took my said book and instruments and came to London, and my brother with me, where I remained but a season, when my Lord Leonard caused me to be arrested for because that I departed from him without license; at the which time I had left my instruments at one Sewell's house in Westminster, the which were found out by Richard Sewell his kinsman, and so presented to Sir Thomas Moore, knight, which hath retained them ever since; and, incontinent after, the said Lord Leonard sent for me to prison, and commanded me to be brought before him to Kew; and so I was, where I submitted myself unto him, and desired him to pardon me of my said folly, whereupon he was good Lord unto me, and caused me to be discharged out of prison. Whereupon when I perceived that my instruments were gone and my book lost, as my brother at that time said, I came and made means to one Sir John Radclyff, priest, and parson of Wanstrowe in the west country, that I might be in service with him at his benefice; whereunto he was contented, and so waited on him in Westminster by the space of a month, and thought to have ridden down with him, but he departed suddenly home into the country, and I remained here still. And whereas your noble Grace here of late was informed of certain things by the Duke's Grace of Norfolk as touching to your Grace and him, I faithfully ascertain your noble Grace, as I shall answer to God and avoid your Lordship's high displeasure, that the truth thereof is as hereafter followeth,—that is to say, one Wright, servant to the said Duke, at a certain season shewed me that the Duke's Grace, his master, was sore vexed with a spirit by the enchantment of your Grace; to the which I made answer that

his communication might be left, for it was too high a matter to meddle withal. Whereupon the said Wright went into the Duke's Grace and shewed him things to me unknown, upon the which information of Wright the Duke's Grace caused me to be sent for; and at such time as I was before his Grace, I required his Grace to shew me what his pleasure was, and he said I knew well myself. And I answered, nay. Then he demanded Wright whether he had shewed me anything or nay; and he answered he durst not, for because his Grace gave so strait commandment unto the contrary. And so then I was directed to the said Wright unto the next day, that he should shew me the intention of the Duke's Grace. And so when we were departed from the Duke's Grace, the said Wright said unto me in this wise: 'Sir William, you be well advised that I shewed you awhile ago that I heard say my Lord's Grace here was sore vexed with a spirit by the enchantment of the Lord Legate's Grace: and so it is that I have informed the Duke's Grace of the same, and also hath borne him in hand that you, by reason of the cunning that you have, had and would do him much good therein; wherefore my council and arede shall be this,—the Duke's Grace favoureth you well, and now the time is come that you may exalt yourself and greatly forward your brother and we also; wherefore you must needs feign something, as you can do right well, that you have done his Grace good in the avoiding of the said spirit.' And then came my brother unto me at the request of the said Wright, which in likewise instanced me to the same. And then I made answer to them that I never knew no such thing, nor could not tell what answer I should make; and then they besought me to say and feign something what I thought best; and so I, sore-blinded with covetize, thinking to have promotion and favour of the said Duke, said and feigned to him at such time as he sent for me again and gave me thanks, that I had forged an image of wax to his similitude and the same sanctified; but whether it did him any good for his sickness or nay, I could not tell. Whereupon the said Duke desired me that I should go about to know whether the Lord Cardinal's Grace had a spirit, and I shewed him that I could not skill thereof. And then he asked me whether I ever heard that your Grace had any spirit or nay, and I said I never knew no such thing; but I heard it spoken as before is rehearsed, that Oberyon would not speak at such time

as he was raised by the parson of Lesingham, Sir John Leiston, and other. The which Duke then said that, if I would take pains therein, he would appoint me to a cunning man, named Doctor Wilson. And so the said Doctor Wilson was sent for; and, when the Duke's Grace and he were together, they came and examined me; and when I had knowledged to them all the premises, then the Duke's Grace commanded me that I should write all things, and so I did; and, that done, he commanded me to your noble Grace, without that I heard of any such thing concerning the Duke's Grace but only of the said Wright; and without that ever I made or can skill of any such cause. Whereupon, considering the great folly which hath rested in me, I humbly beseech your Grace to be good and gracious lord unto me, and to take me to your mercy; to the which I wholly refer myself, as I may pray for the preservation of your noble Grace long to endure.

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INDEX

When the names of fairies or other non-material beings consist of more than one element, they are here indexed in the alphabetical order of the first element: e.g., Abbey Lubbers, Jenny Greenteeth, will be found under A and J respectively.

- Abbey Lubbers, 66
 Aberfoyle, 27f
 Adam de la Halle, 9, 116
 Adams, Davenport, 36
 Afanc, 184
 Agrippa, Henry, Cornelius, 107, 173
 Ahriman, 159
 Akiba, Rabbi, 177
 Alberich, 17, 44
 Alchemy, 104
 Allies, Jabez, 59
 Allingham, William, 11
Alonzo the Brave, 137
 Alp, 21
 Amylion, 114
 Ancestor worship, 117
 Andersen, Hans, 11, 130
 Andrew Malchus, 257
 Andrew of Wyntoun, 236ff
 Angels, 163ff: fall of, 175f; guardian, 166; invocations of, 252
 Anselm, 168
 Anthony (of Egypt), St., 171, 172
 Apocrypha, 164ff
 Apothecaries, 158
 Apuleius, 164
 Ariel, 52ff, 179
 Aristophanes, 57
 Armara, 252
 Arsile, 9
 Arthur, King, 153
 Arthurian romances, 16
 Ashmole, Elias, 42, 54, 59, 113
 Asmodey, 165
 Astrology, 104ff
 Aubrey, John, 12, 32, 33f, 42, 60n, 96, 123, 175
 Augustine, St., 166, 169
 Avalon, Isle of, 40
 Babies, unbaptized, 118
 Back-to-back ring, 173
 Baker, R., 168
 Ballads, 12, 14, 18, 39ff, 138
 Banshee, 15, 184
 Baobhan Sith, 130, 184f, 219
 Barguest, 185
 Barra Widow's Son, The, 204ff
 Barrie, James M., 62
 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, 147
 Basilisk, 156f
Bateman's Tragedy, 136
 Baxter, Richard, 145n, 171
 Beaumont, Francis: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, 88, 91, 92, 155
 Beaumont, John, 32f, 137, 172f, 243ff
 Behemoth, 131
 Bells, fairy, 50
 Belphegor, 75
 Beltane, 188
 Benevolence, of fairies, 46
 Benivenow, 246
 Berners, Lord, 114
 Bible Reader and the Fairy Woman, 172, 233
 Billy Blind, 40, 59, 185
 Black Annis, 185
 Black Down, 233

INDEX

- Blind eye, 30
- Blue Men of the Minch, 149, 185f
- Boas, 158
- Bodach, 186
- Boethius, Hector, 52
- Boggarts, 21, 35, 74, 186
- Bogles, 21, 186
- Bogy beast, 40, 80, 178, 186
- Boneless, 21
- Books, fairy, 31
- Borrowing Fairies, The, 226
- Bovet, R., 32, 36ff, 116, 119
- Brag, 16, 44
- Brash, 16, 186
- Bray, Mrs., 24
- Broadsides, 39, 40
- Brollachan, 186, 189
- Browne, Ambrose, 34
- Browne, Sir Thomas, 25, 157, 161, 162
- Browne, William, 56, 62ff, 86, 150ff
- Brownies, 20, 24, 71, 145, 186f
- Brown Man of the Muirs, 20, 187
- Buccas, 187
- Buckingham, Duke of, 105
- Bugaboo, 187
- Bugs, 21
- Bunyan, John, 155
- Burford, 153
- Burton, George, 37
- Burton, Richard, 25f, 67, 149f, 167, 170, 177
- Bwbach (bwbachod), 74, 187
- Byrd, William, 11
- Cailleach Bheur, 87, 187
- Calcar, 21
- Caliban, 53, 179f
- Camden, William, 51, 153, 251
- Campbell, J. F., 33, 142
- Campion, Thomas, 95f
- Cardan, Jerome, 169f
- Carey, Katherine, 88
- Cartwright, William, 91
- Casaubon, Meric, 127, 170, 172
- Cats, King of the, 67, 212f
- Cauld Lad of Hilton, The, 187, 225
- Celtic fairies, 12, 13, 16
- Ceres, 96
- Cervantes, Miguel, 57
- Ce Sith, 188
- Chambers, E. K., 82
- Changelings, 30, 172
- Chapbooks, 39ff
- Chapman, George, 28; *Bussy d'Ambois* plays, 130ff, 160; *The Masque of the Twelve Months*, 86
- Chapman, George, and Shirley, James: *The Ball*, 156n
- Charles I, 105
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, 17, 57, 61, 66, 95, 96, 104
- Cherry of Zennor, 45, 223f
- Child, F. J., 39n
- Childe Roland, 46, 68, 90, 200f
- Chimera, 156
- Chourne, William, 97
- Church Grim, 40
- Churchyard, Thomas, 83f
- Circe, 151
- Clover, Four-Leaved, 213
- Clurricane, 188
- Coachman, headless, 21
- Cobbler of Canterbury, The*, 79
- Cockatrice, *see* Basilisk
- Colchester, 198
- Coleman Gray, 15, 59, 232
- Colzean Castle, 220ff
- Comb: Guinevere's, 153f; Mermaid's, 151
- Comus, *see* Milton
- Cook, 258
- Corbet, Richard, 10, 17, 66, 73, 96f
- Corineus, 21, 153, 154f
- Corpse candles, 145
- Cotton, Charles, 96
- Craigie, W. A., 119n, 172n
- Creede, Thomas, 89
- Cricket, 66
- Crocota, 158
- Croker, Crofton, 223
- Cromek, G. H., 245
- Crystals, 114
- Ctesius, 159
- Culpepper, 105
- Dalyell, John, 88
- Dandy Dogs, Devil's, 55, 188
- Danger Averted, The, 220
- Daoine o' Sidhe, 16, 188
- d'Audiguer: *Histoire des Amours de Lysandre et de Caliste*, 137f
- Day, John, 58, 72
- Dead; fairies and the, 32, 42, 168, 227ff; foreseeing of, 133; spirits and the, 152f
- Dean-Smith, Margaret, 86

INDEX

- Dee, John, 105f, 172
- Dekker, Thomas, 59
- Demons, 172, 173f
- Demon Drummer of Tedworth, 35
- de Morgan, Evelyn, 57f
- Denys of Hofton, 256
- Devils, 42, 53, 103, 119, 163ff; blue, 176
- Devil's Coach Horse, 47
- Diana, 23, 24, 44
- Dickens, Charles, 10
- Dionysius, pseudo-, 166
- Dobie, 74, 145, 188
- Dogs, black, 185
- Donne, John, 179
- Double, 30
- Dracae, 188
- Drach, 21
- Drage, William, 105
- Dragon, 156
- Drags, 23
- Drayton, Michael, 6, 10f, 47, 56f, 66, 152, 154f, 180
- Drip, 59
- Druids, 23, 118, 246
- du Bartas, 157f
- Dunlop, Bessie, 36, 99, 239f
- Dunsinane, 238
- Dwarfs, 21
- Dyer, Thistleton, 129n, 145n
- Elaby Gathen, 42, 59, 249
- Elementals, 53, 172, 174
- Elf King and Queen, 63, 90, 100
- Elf-shots, 30, 189
- Elidor, 42, 46, 173
- Elizabeth I, Queen, 105, 150
- Ellerwomen, 89, 177
- Elves, 21, 23, 188f; Light, 21, 42, 46, 189
- Enoch, Book of, 165, 169
- Etain, 16
- Ever Young, Land of the, 16
- Fairies, four classes of, 13ff
- Fairy Boy of Leith, 37
- Fairy, derivation of name, 21
- Fairy Funeral, The, 118, 218f
- Fairy Rade, 24, 245, 246
- Fashionable Fairies, The, 60, 231
- Fates, the, 9
- Faust Book, 176
- Faylinn, 232f
- Fergus Macleda and the Wee Folk, 232f
- Fetches, 145, 189
- Fianna Finn, 16
- Firedrake, 21
- Fletcher, John, 78, 137, 138: *The Faithful Shepherdess*, 92; *The Lover's Progress*, 137ff
- Fletcher, John, and Shirley, James: *The Night Walker*, 142f
- Flower, Margaret and Philip, 103
- Food, of fairies, 28f
- Forman, Simon, 106
- Fox, Mr., 11, 210f
- Freake, John, 173f, 175
- Frensham, 33, 46
- Friar Rush, 42, 66, 73, 88
- Fuath, 189
- Funeral, the Fairy, 118, 218f
- Gabriel, 175
- Gabriel Ratchets, 145, 189
- Gancanagh, 189
- Ganconer, 20, 189
- Gauntlett, Arthur, 175
- Genius, guardian, 180
- Geoffrey of Monmouth, 152, 154
- Gerould, G. H. 91, 130
- Gervase of Tilbury, 6, 13, 18, 188, 193
- Gesner, Konrad, 147, 149
- Ghosts, 61, 117ff
- Giants, 16, 21, 153ff
- Giraldus Cambrensis, 6, 18, 66, 190, 195
- Gitto Bach, 222f
- Glaistig, 39, 177, 189
- Glanvil, Joseph, 32, 35f, 42, 119
- Goblin, 81, 87
- Godly Warning for Maidens, A*, 136
- Gogmagog, 16, 153, 154f
- Gondomar, 63
- Good, J., 51
- Gorgan, 158
- Gowdie, Isobel, 30n, 39, 100, 242
- Grahame, P., 246
- Grant, 16, 44, 190
- Greatorex, Mr., 36
- Green Knight, Gawayne and the, 16
- Grendel, 190
- Grim the Collier of Croydon*, 73, 75ff
- Grimm, the Brothers, 11, 13, 24, 130, 160
- Gryphon, 146, 157

INDEX

Guinevere, 153
 Guisers, 82
 Gwagedd Annwm, 190
 Gwraig of the Three Blows, 54, 197f

 Habitrot, 46, 63, 190, 203f
 Hackpen, 35
 Hag, 16, 21; Blue, 187
 Hairy Meg, 42, 191
 Haldane, Isabel, 100
 Hallowe'en, 82
 Hardy, Thomas, 120
 Harrison, G. B., 108f
 Hart, Mr., 33f, 58
 Hebrews, 164
 Hecla's Hell-wain, 21
 Hedley Kow, 179, 190
 Hell-wain, 21
 Henkies, 177
 Hermes Trismegistus, 167
 Herne the Hunter, 51, 128
 Herrick, Robert, 6, 10, 47, 56, 59, 65ff, 71
 Heywood, Thomas, 95, 167, 176, 177, 237f
 Highlands, fairies in, 32
 Hills, fairy, 30, 88, 100ff, 118
 Hob, 190
 Hobgoblins, 15, 23, 25, 60, 71ff, 83
 Hob-Hole Hob, 46, 190
 Hobthrush, 190
 Hodgepoke, 84
 Hodges, William, 175
 Hole, Christina, 102n, 154n
 Holinshed, Raphael, 237
 Holland, Philemon, 146
 Hopkins, Matthew, 104
 Horace, 151
 Horned Women, The, 227
 Horse and Hattock, 228
 Horses, fairies', 47
 Hotham, Durant, 100, 170f
 Hull, Eleanor, 77n
 Hulton, Luke, 185
 Hunt, R., 67, 103n, 118
 Hunt, Holy, 159
Huon of Bordeaux, 9, 14, 16, 44, 114
 Hy Brasil, 16
 Hyginus, 151

 Iamblichus, 167
 Incubus (-i), 20, 21, 71, 165, 169, 171
 Isidore of Seville, 147, 160

Italy, 17
 I Weat, You Weat, 222

 Jackson, Thomas, 103f
 James I and VI, 19, 23f, 105
 Jefferies, Anne, 102f
 Jenny Greenteeth, 16, 152, 191
 Jerome, St., 166
 Joan of Arc, 17
 Jonson, Ben, 41, 62: quoted, 71f; *The Alchemist*, 106, 109ff; *Catiline*, 130; *The Divill is an Ass*, 73ff; *Eastward Hoe*, 91; *Entertainment at Althorpe*, 84f; *The Gipsies Metamorphos'd*, 86; *Love Restored*, 85; *The Masque of Queens*, 83; *Oberon the Fairy Prince*, 85, 112; *The Sad Shepherd*, 80, 92; *The Silent Woman*, 2
 Jötunheim, 21
 Junket, Brownie and the, 232

 Kate Crackernuts, 90, 216ff
 Keightley, Thomas, 13, 20, 27, 60, 83
 Kelly, Edward, 106, 172
 Kelpie, 191
 Kerver, John, 256
 Kildare, Pooka of, 224f
 King of the Cats, The, 67, 212f
 King of Ireland's Son and the Well of the Western World, 130, 206ff
 King's Daughter of Colchester, The, 198ff
 Kirk, Robert, 12, 17f, 27ff, 53, 66, 100, 117f, 170
 Kittredge, G. L., 114n
 Knockers, 187
 Kyd, Thomas: *Spanish Tragedy*, 121

 Laird of Co', 220f
 Lamb, Dr., 105
 Lamia, 39, 149
 Lancelot, 40
 Lang, Andrew, 9
 Langdale, Marmaduke, 104
 Lares, 15, 130
 Lateran Council, Fourth, 166, 171
 Latham, White, 13
 Leech, 257
 Legh, Gerard, 157, 160
 Leiston, Sir John, 257ff
 Lelant Church, 67, 118, 218
 Lelurion, 177
 Lesingham, Parson of, 257ff

INDEX

Levitation, 169
 Lillith, 164n
 Lilly, William, 104, 106f, 175
 Liseaux, Isidore, 171
 Lluellyn, Martin, 94f
 Lob, 24, 88, 155
Locrine, 92
 Lubrican, 61
 Lucan, 129
 Lycanthropy, 145n
 Lyly, John, 44, 48

 Mab, Queen, 24, 47, 58, 87
 Macbeth, 238; see also Shakespeare
 Machiavelli, Niccolo, 75
 Macpherson, J. M., 129n
 Madini, 172
 Magic, 113ff, 175
 Maglore, 9
 Mahrte, 21
Malleus Maleficarum, see Sprenger
 Manannon, 16, 40
 Man in the Oak, 20, 21
 Mantichora, 158, 162
 Mapes, Walter, 18
 Mara, 21, 191
 Mare, 21
 Mare's nest, 21, 191
 Margaret Barrance, 59, 248
 Mari Lwyd, 191
 Marini, 161
 Market, fairy, 38, 233f
 Marquess, Lord Leonard, 258ff
 Marron, H. I., 176n
 Marston, John, 86, 121ff, 161
 Masques, 82ff
 Massinger, Philip, 129, 130, 135, 144
 Maug Moulach, 191
 Maury, Alfred, 54
Maydes Metamorphosis, 48ff
 Meg Moulach, 33
 Meleager, 9
 Menippus, 149
 Mephistopheles, 176
 Mermaids, 15f, 86, 146ff, 191; and mugwort, 231
 Merrows, 20, 151, 191f, 228ff
 Merry Dancers, 186
Merry Devill of Edmonton, The, 73, 79f
 Micol, Queen of the Fairies, 175
 Middleton, Thomas, 51, 135
 Midwife, Fairy, 102
 Miller, Hugh, 246f

Milne, A. A., 8
 Milton, John, 4, 73f; *Comus*, 83, 86ff, 89, 152; *L'Allegro*, 87f; *Paradise Lost*, 87, 153, 176, 179, 180f
 Monsters, 153ff
 Montgomery, Alexander, 24
 Mooncalf, 180
 Moore, Thomas, 109f
 More, Henry, 143, 177ff
 More, Sir Thomas, 257, 259
 Morgan la Fée, 16
 Morgue, 9
 Mugwort, Mermaids and, 231
 Mummers' plays, 77
 Murray, Margaret, 13, 17, 79
 Muryans, 14, 87, 192
 Mustard, 23

 Names, fairy, Drayton's, 59
 Names, and things, 3
 Nanny-wiper, 29n
 Nashe, Thomas, 23
Neck and the Flowering Staff, The, 172
 Nemesius, 167
 Nepier, Dr., 175
 Nereids, 146
 Nesbit, E., 8f
 Newcastle, Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of, 68ff
 Nightmare, 20, 21, 191
Nymphidia, see Drayton
 Nimue, 16
 Norfolk, Duke of, 258, 259f
 Norns, 9
 Nuckelavee, 20, 192
 Nutt, Alfred, 40
 Nyder, Jean, 169n

 Oberion, 114, 115, 257, 260
 Oberon, 14, 16f, 40, 41, 44ff, 57f, 85f, 93, 95; see also Oberion
 Oberycom, 114
 Odin, 9
 Ogier the Dane, 9
 Ointment, fairy, 30, 93, 113, 116, 223, 248f
 Olaus Wormius, 161
 Old Lady of the Elder Tree, 192
 Old Man of Cury, 230
 Old Woman and the Hedley Kow, 179, 234f; see also Hedley Kow
 Orfeo, King, 95

INDEX

Origen, 168
 Orrery, Lord, 36
 Osebury Rock, 226
 Overbury, Sir Thomas, 106

 Padfoot, 192
 Palladius, 166
 Paracelsus, 25
Paradise of the Fathers, 166
 Paré, Ambroise, 147, 156, 158, 161
 Patch, 41
 Paul the Simple, 166
 Peace, People of, 192, 246
 Peele, George, 90, 130
 Peg o' Nell, 152, 192
 Peg Fowler, 16, 152, 192
 Peirson, Alison, 100, 241f
 Pennistone, Robin Hood's, 154
 Perrault, 9, 11, 138
 Phillips, Judith, 108
 Phooka, 21, 193
 Picktree Brag, 192
 Pigwiggen, 58, 61, 93
 Pin, 59
 Pinching, 51, 85
 Pins, use in magic, 66
 Pisgies, 118, 192f
 Pitcairn, R., 100
 Pixies, 21, 192f
 Pixy, The Kind, 24, 224
 Pliny, 137, 146, 147, 159, 170
 Ploughmen, The Two, 221
 Plutarch, 126, 180
 Pluto, 60f
 Poison, unicorns and, 159f
 Poltergeists, 19, 31, 35, 95, 137
 Pooka, 193; of Kildare, 224f
 Pope, Alexander, 64
 Pope, Doll, *see* Phillips, Judith
 Porphyrius, 167
 Porter, Sir Robert, 258
 Portunes, 13, 193
 Potter, Beatrix, 24
 Pouk, 44
 Primitive man, 3
 Proclus, 167
 Proserpine, 60f, 95f
 Psellus, Michael, 167, 176, 177
 Ptolemaic theory, 4
 Puck, 45f, 60f, 127
 Puck Hairy, 80
 Puckle, 21
 Puddlefoot, 54, 59, 221f

Puffers, 104
 Pug, 74, 84
 Purcell, Henry, 11
 Purgatory, 125
 Puritanism, 119
 Pwca, 193

 Rabelais, 57
 Radclyff, Sir John, 259
 Rade, 24, 245ff
 Ralph of Coggeshall, 6, 18, 148ff, 152, 238f
 Randolph, Thomas, 64, 93f
 Raphael, 175
 Rapkyn, William, 258
 Rawhead and Bloody Bones, 193
 Redcap, 190, 193
Rest-less Ghost, The, 137
 Rhadamanthus, 113, 120
 Rhinoceros, 158
 River spirits, 152
 Roane, 16, 193f
 Robert de Boron, 16
 Roberts, Alexander, 81, 177
 Robin Goodfellow, 15, 25f, 40f, 47, 59, 71, 75ff, 84, 85, 93
 Robin Hood, 154, 185
 Rogers, 107
 Rolleston, T. W., 13n
 Rowland, Samuel, 72

 Sabrina, 6, 152
 Samhain, 188
 Sammael, 164, 165f
 Sampson, William, 92, 118, 135ff
 Satan, 164, 167, 176
 Satyrs, 20, 71, 85
 Saxo Grammaticus, 129
 Scot, Reginald, 12, 19ff, 26
 Scotland, Witches in, 99ff
 Scott, Sir Walter, 19, 61, 188
 Seal Woman, The, 198
 Seals, 147
Second Maiden's Tragedy, The, 134
 Second sight, 29, 243
 Seely Court, 194
 Se'irin, 164n
 Selden, John, 155
 Seneca, 120
 Servius, 151
 Sewell, Richard, 259
 Sewingshields, 153
 Seznec, Jean, 254

INDEX

Shakespeare, 6, 13, 23, 24, 44ff, 60;
Antony and Cleopatra, 180; *Cymbeline*, 52, 128; *Hamlet*, 51, 122ff, 134, 144, 182; *Henry IV*, 51; *Henry VI Part III*, 151; *Julius Caesar*, 126, 160; *King Lear*, 52, 182; *Macbeth*, 51, 126, 180; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 50f, 128; *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 44ff, 54, 57, 77, 127, 150; *Othello*, 180f; *Richard III*, 126; *Romeo and Juliet*, 47; *Tempest*, 52ff, 161, 179f; *Troilus and Cressida*, 180; *Twelfth Night*, 180; *Winter's Tale*, 52
 Shepard, Odell, 159
 Shepe, Sir John, 258
 Shew stones, 114
 Shirley, James, 112; *see also* Fletcher and Shirley
 Silky, 194
 Sinclair, 238
 Sinistrari, L. M., 171f, 177, 178
 Sirens, 86, 151
 Sisson, C. J., 107
 Siths, 17
 Size, small, of fairies, 45f, 56ff, 69
 Skelbourn, Sarah, 175
 Skillywidden, 15, 231f
 Skriker, 194
 Sleagh Maith, 17
 Smith and the Fairies, The, 128, 215f
 Soul Cages, 228ff
 Specialization, 3
 Spells, 113, 248ff
 Spence, J., 177n
 Spence, Lewis, 14, 153n
 Spenser, Edmund, 6, 62, 159, 160
 Spirits, intermediate, 169ff
 Spoorne, 21
 Sports of the Fairies, The, 68
 Sprenger, J., *Malleus Maleficarum*, 157, 169, 176
 Spriggans, 194
 Spurgeon, C., 181
 Stapleton, William, 114, 255f
 Stephens, James, 13n
 Steward, Simon, 56, 67
 Succubus (-i), 39, 169, 171
 Sunderland, F. H., 105
 Superstitions, 4
 Swan, John, 148, 160
 Swift, Jonathan, 233
 Sylvester, Joshua, 157f
 Sympson, William, 100

 Tacksman's Ox, 117, 219f
 Talmud, 164ff
 Tamlane, 39, 61
Tarlton's News out of Purgatorie, 79, 123ff
 Tattercoats, 11, 209f
 Tauler, John, 167
 Teind, *see* Tithe
 Theocentricity, 3f
 Thomas Aquinas, St., 166
 Thoms, W. J., 98
 Thony, Richard, 257
 Thor, 9
 Thumbeline, 62
Thyestes, 121
 Tib, 59
 Tita, 62
 Titania, 24, 44ff
 Tithe, fairy, 24, 100
 Toadstone, 160
 Tobit, Book of, 165
 Tomalin, 61
 Tom Poker, 21
 Tom Reid, 99
 Tom Thumb, 42, 61, 62
 Tom Tit Tot, 59, 194f, 201ff
 Tom Tumbler, 20, 21
 Tommy Rawhead, 193
 Tongue, Ruth, 233
 Tops and Bottoms, 74, 211f
 Topsell, Edward, 149f, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161
 Treasure, hidden, 145
 Triton, 146, 147
 Troll, 13
 Trooping Fairies, 13ff
 Trows, 189, 194
 Trunk-Without-a-Head, 130, 213
 Trwtyn-Tratyn, 195
 Tryten-a-Trotyn, 59
 Tylwyth Teg, 52, 195
 Tynney, Richard, 258
 Tyrrie, Joan, 102

 Uist, 198
 Unicorn, 158ff
 Urchins, 21
 Uriel, 175
 Urisks, 189, 195, 246

 Vampires, 129, 145
 Vices, in Morality Plays, 41, 73, 74

INDEX

- Walsh, John, 102
- Wap, 59
- Warner, William, 72f, 119, 120
- Washer at the Ford, 184
- Watchers, 165
- Water-horse, 20
- Webster, John, 101f; *The Duchess of Malfi*, 145n; *The White Divel*, 135, 161
- Wentz, Evan, 14n, 118
- Werewolf, 145, 195
- West, John and Alice, 103, 109ff
- Weyer, J., 95, 125f
- White Caroline and Black Caroline, 90f
- White Ladies, 50
- Whuppity Stoorie, 59, 195f
- Wiggin, K. D., 10
- William of Newbridge*, 88
- Willimot, Joan, 103
- Willis, R., 22
- Will o' the Wisp, 41, 73, 88, 93, 196
- Wilson, Dr., 261
- Wily Beguilde*, 71, 73, 76, 77f
- Win, 59
- Wings, fairies', 9f
- Wisdom of Doctor Dodypol, The*, 88ff
- Witch of Edmonton, The*, 135
- Witches, 5, 19, 39, 99ff; trials of, 12, 100, 164, 239ff
- Wolsey, Cardinal, 255
- Woman of Peace and the Bible Reader, 172, 233
- Woman of Peace and the Kettle, 226f
- Wright, 259f
- Yara, 40
- Yardley, May, 125n