

FOLK-LORE AND LEGENDS: ENGLISH

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649585601

Folk-Lore and Legends: English by Charles John Tibbits

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CHARLES JOHN TIBBITS

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J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

PHILADELPHIA

1891

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE old English Folklore Tales are fast dying out. The simplicity of character necessary for the retaining of old memories and beliefs is being lost, more rapidly in England, perhaps, than in any other part of the world. Our folk are giving up the old myths for new ones. Before remorseless "progress," and the struggle for existence, the poetry of life is being quickly blotted out. In editing this volume I have endeavoured to select some of the best specimens of our Folklore. With regard to the nursery tales, I have taken pains to give them as they are in the earliest editions I could find. I must say, however, that, while I have taken every care to alter only as much as was absolutely necessary in these tales, some excision and slight alteration has at times been required.

C. J. T.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A Dissertation on Fairies,	1
Nelly the Knocker,	39
The Three Fools,	42
Some Merry Tales of the Wise Men of Gotham,	46
The Tulip Fairies,	54
The History of Jack and the Giants,	57
The Fairies' Cup,	84
The White Lady,	86
A Pleasant and Delightful History of Thomas Hickathrift,	89
The Spectre Coach,	117
The Baker's Daughter,	123
The Fairy Children,	126
The History of Jack and the Beanstalk,	129
Johnny Reed's Cat,	150
Lame Molly,	156
The Brown man of the Moors,	159

	PAGE
How the Cobbler cheated the Devil,	161
The Tavistock Witch,	165
The Worm of Lambton,	168
The Old Woman and the Crooked Sixpence,	174
The Yorkshire Boggart,	177
The Duergar,	181
The Barn Elves,	185
Legends of King Arthur,	187
Silky,	192

A DISSERTATION ON FAIRIES.

BY JOSEPH RITSON, ESQ.

THE earliest mention of Fairies is made by Homer, if, that is, his English translator has, in this instance, done him justice :—

“ Where round the bed, whence Achelōus springs,
The wat’ry Fairies dance in mazy rings.”

(*Iliad*, B. xxiv. 617.)

These Nymphs he supposes to frequent or reside in woods, hills, the sea, fountains, grottoes etc., whence they are peculiarly called Naiads, Dryads and Nereids :

“ What sounds are those that gather from the shores,
The voice of nymphs that haunt the sylvan bowers,
The fair-hair’d dryads of the shady wood,
Or azure daughters of the silver flood ?”

(*Odyss.* B. vi. 122.)

The original word, indeed, is *nymphs*, which, it must be confessed, furnishes an accurate idea of the *fays* (*fées* or *fates*) of the ancient French and Italian romances ; wherein they are represented as females of inexpressible beauty, elegance, and every kind of