

**IS IT TRUE? TALES,
CURIOUS
AND WONDERFUL**

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Is It True? Tales, Curious and Wonderful by Dinah Maria Craik

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DINAH MARIA CRAIK

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UNREMARKABLE

THE SIGHT OF THE GOLD FASCINATED HIM.

[Page 128.]

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IS IT TRUE?

TALES, CURIOUS AND WONDERFUL,

COLLECTED BY THE

AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."



NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.
1872.

PREFACE.

“**I**S IT TRUE?” — a question children are sure to ask about any curious or wonderful story; and they may well ask it of some of these tales.

I can only answer, that many people must have believed them to be true, since each is founded on a tradition current in the place where it is supposed to have happened. Probably at the root of all lies a grain of truth, that in course of years has grown up and blossomed into these extraordinary fictions, which of course nobody can be expected to believe. But they are generally amusing, and sometimes pathetic. Besides, there is a clear thread of right and wrong running through them, as it does through most legends which deal with the supernatural world. There (as here, soon or late) virtue is always rewarded and vice punished.

The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding
small;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness
grinds He all.

It is this spirit which consecrates the true untruth, the wise foolishness, of fairy tales, and indeed of all imaginative literature.

Nor, I think, will any sensible child mistake the vast difference between imagination and falsehood; between the weaving of a mere romance ("all pretense, all out of my own head, mamma," as a little girl sometimes says, who tells me the most astonishing stories, but who never told an untruth in her life), and that deliberate inventing or falsifying of facts which we stigmatize and abhor as *lying*.

Therefore, I do not think any child will be the worse for reading these tales. They have been collected out of the folk-lore of various countries, and written, at my suggestion, by various hands. I have written none myself, but I have revised the whole; and with as much pleasure as if I were again a child, and believed in fairies as earnestly as I once did, and as the little person before named does now. But it is only with her imagination; not, to use her own phrase, "really and truly." She quite understands the difference; and never expects to meet a fairy in every-day life, though I dare say she would like it very much—and so would many of my readers—and so should I.

THE EDITOR.

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IS IT TRUE?

THE STORY OF ELIDURE.

LONG, long ago, on a sunny seat beneath a gray monastery wall, an old monk in the summer days used to sit, hour after hour, leaning upon his staff, and gazing before him with dim, dreamy eyes that seemed always to be looking far away beyond the hills for something he could never find. The sunshine filled the little green Welsh valley round him; the village children playing outside the monastery walls hushed their voices sometimes, and stole near with grave and curious faces to look at him through the iron gate; but Elidure scarcely noticed them. An old, old man, he sat alone dreaming over the story of his youth. For a strange and marvelous thing had happened to him then; and, on the rare occasions when he could be persuaded to speak about it, this was the tale he told: