

Fairy Friends

Folk-Lore And Legends: Scotland

Scottish

Advanced
3 min read

It is a good thing to befriend the fairies, as the following stories show:—

There have been from time immemorial at Hawick, during the two or three last weeks of the year, markets once a week, for the disposal of sheep for slaughter, at which the greater number of people, both in the middle and poorer classes of life, have been accustomed to provide themselves with their marts. A poor man from Jedburgh who was on his way to Hawick for the purpose of attending one of these markets, as he was passing over that side of Rubislaw which is nearest the Teviot, was suddenly alarmed by a frightful and unaccountable noise. The sound, as he supposed, proceeded from an immense number of female voices, but no objects whence it could come were visible. Amidst howling and wailing were mixed shouts of mirth and jollity, but he could gather nothing articulate except the following words—

“O there’s a bairn born, but there’s naething to pit on ’t.”

The occasion of this elfish concert, it seemed, was the birth of a fairy child, at which the fairies, with the exception of two or three who were discomposed at having nothing to cover the little innocent with, were enjoying themselves with that joviality usually characteristic of such an event. The astonished rustic finding himself amongst a host of invisible beings, in a wild moorland place, and far from any human assistance, should assistance be required, full of the greatest consternation, immediately on hearing this expression again and again vociferated, stripped off his plaid, and threw it on the ground. It was instantly snatched up by an invisible hand, and the wailings immediately ceased, but the shouts of mirth were continued with increased

vigour. Being of opinion that what he had done had satisfied his invisible friends, he lost no time in making off, and proceeded on his road to Hawick, musing on his singular adventure. He purchased a sheep, which turned out a remarkably good bargain, and returned to Jedburgh. He had no cause to regret his generosity in bestowing his plaid on the fairies, for every day afterwards his wealth multiplied, and he continued till the day of his death a rich and prosperous man.

About the beginning of harvest, there having been a want of meal for shearers' bread in the farmhouse of Bedrule, a small quantity of barley (being all that was yet ripe) was cut down, and converted into meal. Mrs. Buckham, the farmer's wife, rose early in the morning to bake the bread, and, while she was engaged in baking, a little woman in green costume came in, and, with much politeness, asked for a loan of a capful of meal. Mrs. Buckham thought it prudent to comply with her request. In a short time afterwards the woman in green returned with an equal quantity of meal, which Mrs. Buckham put into the meal-ark. This meal had such a lasting quality, that from it alone the gudewife of Bedrule baked as much bread as served her own family and the reapers throughout the harvest, and when harvest was over it was not exhausted.

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