

The Fairies' Cup

Folk-Lore And Legends: English

English

Advanced
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“In the province of the Deiri (Yorkshire), not far from my birthplace,” says William of Newbury, “a wonderful thing occurred, which I have known from my boyhood. There is a town a few miles distant from the Eastern Sea, near which are those celebrated waters commonly called Gipse.... A peasant of this town went once to see a friend who lived in the next town, and it was late at night when he was coming back, not very sober, when, lo! from the adjoining barrow, which I have often seen, and which is not much over a quarter of a mile from the town, he heard the voices of people singing, and, as it were, joyfully feasting. He wondered who they could be that were breaking in that place, by their merriment, the silence of the dead night, and he wished to examine into the matter more closely. Seeing a door open in the side of the barrow he went up to it and looked in, and there he beheld a large and luminous house, full of people, women as well as men, who were reclining as at a solemn banquet. One of the attendants, seeing him standing at the door, offered him a cup. He took it, but would not drink, and pouring out the contents, kept the vessel. A great tumult arose at the banquet on account of his taking away the cup, and all the guests pursued him, but he escaped by the fleetness of the beast he rode, and got into the town with his booty.

“Finally this vessel of unknown material, of unusual colour, and of extraordinary form, was presented to Henry the Elder, King of the English, as a valuable gift; was then given to the Queen’s brother, David, King of the Scots, and was kept for several years in the treasury of Scotland. A few years ago, as I have heard from good authority, it was given by William, King of the Scots, to Henry the Second, who wished to see it.”

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