



The Fairy Children

Folk-Lore And Legends: English

English

Advanced
4 min read

“Another wonderful thing,” says Ralph of Coggeshall, “happened in Suffolk, at St. Mary’s of the Wolf-pits.

A boy and his sister were found by the inhabitants of that place near the mouth of a pit which is there, who had the form of all their limbs like to those of other men, but they were different in the colour of their skin from all the people of our habitable world, for the whole surface of their skin was tinged of a green colour. No one could understand their speech.

When they were brought as curiosities to the house of a certain knight, Sir Richard de Calne, at Wikes, they wept bitterly. Bread and victuals were set before them, but they would touch none of them, though they were tormented by great hunger, as the girl afterwards acknowledged. At length when some beans, just cut, with their stalks, were brought into the house, they made signs, with great avidity, that they should be given to them. When they were brought they opened the stalks instead of the pods, thinking the beans were in the hollow of them. But not finding them there, they began to weep anew. When those who were present saw this, they opened the pods, and showed them the naked beans. They fed on these with great delight, and for a long time tasted no other food. The boy, however, was always languid and depressed, and he died within a short time.

The girl enjoyed continual good health, and, becoming accustomed to various kinds of food, lost completely that green colour, and gradually recovered the sanguine habit of her entire body. She was afterwards

regenerated by the laver of holy baptism, and lived for many years in the service of that knight, as I have frequently heard from him and his family.

Being frequently asked about the people of her country, she asserted that the inhabitants, and all they had in that country, were of a green colour, and that they saw no sun, but enjoyed a degree of light like what is after sunset. Being asked how she came into this country with the aforesaid boy, she replied, that, as they were following their flocks, they came to a certain cavern, on entering which they heard a delightful sound of bells, ravished by whose sweetness they went on for a long time wandering on through the cavern, until they came to its mouth. When they came out of it, they were struck senseless by the excessive light of the sun, and the unusual temperature of the air, and they thus lay for a long time. Being terrified by the noise of those who came on them, they wished to fly, but they could not find the entrance of the cavern before they were caught.”

This story is also told by William of Newbury, who places it in the reign of King Stephen. He says he long hesitated to believe it, but was at length overcome by the weight of evidence. According to him, the place where the children appeared, was about four or five miles from Bury-St.-Edmund's. They came in harvest-time out of the Wolf-pits. They both lost their green hue, and were baptized, and learned English. The boy, who was the younger, died, but the girl married a man at Lenna, and lived many years. They said their country was called St. Martin's Land, as that saint was chiefly worshipped there; that the people were Christians, and had churches; that the sun did not rise there, but that there was a bright country which could be seen from theirs, being divided from it by a very broad river.

Read more fairy tales on Fairytalez.com