

ANGLESEA FOLK-LORE.

FAIRY TALES AND FOLK-LORE PICKED UP NEAR
HOLYHEAD, SEPT. 1885.

No. 1.—When Mrs. Owen's¹ father was quite a young man, and in business as a farmer, a man in his employ was reported to have constant dealings with the *tylwyth teg*, or fairies. One day this man asked his master to go a journey with him on the following night, promising to take him to a beautiful house where the fairies lived. His master agreed, and after travelling about a mile, they reached the house. They went in, and found a table spread with all kinds of food, presided over by a "little lady", who invited them to eat. The man complied, but his master refused to take anything. After supper, the "little lady" asked them to go for a ride. On going outside, they found themselves in the company of twelve or fifteen *tylwyth teg*, all riding donkeys. The man was also supplied with a donkey, but the steed provided for his master was a big *calf*. They all started off, and on coming to a river which had to be forded, the man said to his master, "Don't speak while you are crossing." But when they were just on the other side his master said, "What a big calf this is!" Whereupon the calf threw him off and ran away, leaving him on the ground. On getting up, he found himself alone, so he started to walk to his house, which he reached the next morning about seven o'clock.

¹ Mrs. Owen, an old woman residing at a village near Holyhead, narrated these stories to the writer.—W. W. C.

His man used to receive quantities of sovereigns from the fairies, and ultimately died a rich man.

No. 2.—When Mrs. Owen's mother was a girl in service, large open fireplaces were used, peat being commonly employed as fuel. The fairies used to come down the chimney at night, and her mother was in the habit of putting two chairs, a candle, basin of water, soap and towel, for the use of the visitors. When the family had gone to bed, the fairies used to bring their children, and wash them *all night*. In the morning it was found that they had washed and ironed the towel, and emptied the basin of water which had been left on the chair. It was now found on the *table*, and half full of sovereigns, which the mistress of the house, who was down first, used to keep to herself.

Nothing of *iron*¹ was ever used by them. They did not like it, and articles made of it had to be kept out of their way.

No. 3 (see No. 2).—One night her mother forgot to put a towel for the fairies. A labourer, who slept in a "half-loft" over the kitchen, heard a squalling, and looking down, saw the fairies looking about everywhere for the towel. So he threw his night-shirt down to them, which they used as a substitute for wiping their children. In the morning he found it ironed out, quite clean and dry for him to put on, and on looking in the sleeve he found it was full of sovereigns.

One night, through accident, *nothing* was put in the kitchen for the fairies, and next day it was found that they had upset the peat-stacks outside the house, presumably out of spite.

¹ If this were the case, why did they *iron* the towel in the above story?—W. W. C.

No. 4.—One evening Mrs. Owen's father was threshing corn in a barn at Llanllibio, when the fairies came in and asked him to go out, and allow them to use his flail. He did so, leaving a lighted candle for them. The fairies then threshed a quantity of corn, which he found ready for him in the morning, as well as a large sum of money.

No. 5.—When Mrs. Owen herself was in service at Llanfeuthlu,¹ she had to milk the cows in the fields every morning. For four or five days in succession she used to find three shillings in the road, placed there for her by the fairies. This money she kept, without telling anyone of her good luck. At last it occurred to her that she might be suspected of theft if this money were found in her possession. So one day she began to tell her mistress the whole story, when the latter interrupted her, saying, "Hush! don't speak about it; don't tell anyone." On going to look for the shillings in the place where she kept them, they had all vanished.

No. 6.—Mrs. Owen's mother was formerly in service at Llynon. One night when she was in bed, a "little man" came to her bedside and asked her to get up at once and dress her baby. Her fellow-servant was fetched out of bed by another little man, who asked her to dress another baby. They went downstairs and washed the two babies by the kitchen fire. In the morning they found "lots of money" on the table. The other servant, some ten or twelve years afterwards, saw one of these same little men in a shop in Caer Gybi. He was abstracting some money from a drawer. The girl exclaimed, "Oh! little master, what are you doing here?" "Which eye can you see me with?" asked the fairy. "With the left." He then went to her and *pulled out* her left eye,

¹ Usually (or at least officially) spelt *Llanfaethlu*.—E. G. B. P.

the right not having the power to see him. She got some ointment (*eli*) and rubbed it on the wound, but never recovered the sight of that eye. The shopkeeper was present, but he could not see the fairy at all.

W. W. COBB, M.A.

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