



Fig.33 John Everett Millais, *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel*, 1849-50,  
oil on panel, 64.8 × 50.8 cm, Private Collection

CHARLOTTE GERE

## IN FAIRYLAND

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*Charlotte was sadly out of spirits ... she had been gently but firmly informed that no such things as fairies ever really existed. 'Do you mean to say it's all lies?' asked Charlotte bluntly. Miss Smedley deprecated the use of any such unladylike words in any connexion at all. 'These stories had their origin, my dear,' she explained, 'in a mistaken anthropomorphism in the interpretation of nature. But though we are now too well-informed to fall into similar errors, there are still many beautiful lessons to be learned from these myths.'*

(Kenneth Grahame, *The Golden Age*, 1908)

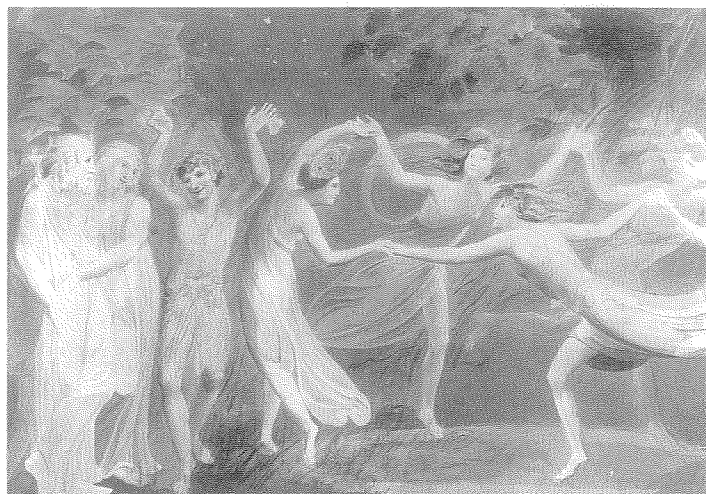
AS MODERN industrial progress engulfed the English countryside, the Victorians embraced belief in fairies as a reaction to the disenchantment of the world; by 1908 when Edwardian optimism had overcome the need for it, Charlotte's governess was able to dismiss it with enviable certainty. Fairy painting is the visual evidence of a spectrum of mid-19th-century preoccupations: nationalism, antiquarianism, exploration, anthropology, the dismantling of religious belief and, crucially, the emergence of spiritualism. Its colourful brilliance reflects the influence of the theatre, and its haunting quality is reminiscent of music, an artistic avenue to be explored by Whistler. Later in the century fairy reality would be threatened by studies in the psychology of visual perception and the development of photography and moving pictures. Disdaining the duties imposed on artists – and so prized by Victorian critics – to edify and draw moral conclusions, fairy painters present a world in great contrast to the conventional idea of the Victorian middle class as pious, complaisant, self-satisfied and assured.

In about 1785 William Blake had the notion of equipping his fairies with diaphanous butterfly wings (fig. 34), probably derived from depictions of winged putti or of Psyche – personification of the soul – in ancient Greek vase-paintings, on Greek and Roman engraved gems and cameos or on the newly revealed wall-paintings at Pompeii. Blake's aerial nymphs are part of the vocabulary of Neo-classicism, to which the early phase of fairy art belongs (fig. 35). The adolescent Psyche figure remained the ideal of fairy femininity, even when surrounded by Gothic grotesques from northern myth. At the outset fairy painters were visionaries. Blake believed in fairies and reported that he had seen a fairy funeral in his back garden. Henry Fuseli

so valued the inspiration of dreams that he went to extraordinary lengths to procure them, for example eating raw meat before he went to sleep. In his paintings of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he invented a fairy world that was to inspire and influence his pupils and successors. His position as Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy from 1790 until his death was sufficient guarantee that his ideas would be pervasive among the second generation of fairy artists, but it is interesting to find J.A. Fitzgerald utilising Fuseli's goblins as late as 1857 in his *Artist's Dream* (cat. 36). The greatest visionary painter of the time, John Martin, was an important influence on the later fairy artists. It does not take much special pleading to include his *Satan on the Burning Lake* (1827, for an illustrated edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*) among the fairy paintings. The ancient belief that fairies were fallen angels fits well with the Oberon-like figures cast upon the shores of the burning lake.

Images that might have inspired the visions of fairyland in the early 19th century were found in shows of natural curiosities and spectacles of history and travel. In about 1800 painted panoramas and dioramas of exotic locations were first shown to an enthusiastic public. The Colosseum in Regent's Park, a rotunda for the display of panoramas and other scenic installations, was designed by Decimus Burton in 1824–7; it was demolished in 1875. Faithful and detailed landscapes and townscapes, romantically lit, some of them designed to move past the audience on rollers or on metal tracks, gave the illusion of travelling abroad. Volcanic eruptions or fires could be simulated and moonlight effects were popular. Such displays provided suitable topographical material for Prospero's enchanted island in *The Tempest* and for other imaginary fairy realms.

Fig.34 William Blake, *Oberon, Titania and Puck with Fairies Dancing*, c.1785, pencil and watercolour, 47.6 x 67.3 cm, Tate Gallery, London



The painted panoramas were the work of theatrical scenery specialists, among them Thomas Grieve and William Telbin, who were responsible for Charles Kean's sensationally illusionistic *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1856 (see cat.10).

Also shown at the Colosseum and at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly were tropical birds and strange beasts, along with freaks and sports of nature, more material for the realisation of fairyland. General Tom Thumb (Charles Stratton), P.T. Barnum's celebrated 25-inch-high midget, drew enormous crowds to the Egyptian Hall. A medal was issued in 1844 to commemorate the sight of his tiny carriage

Fig.35 John Gibson, *Cupid Pursuing Psyche*, marble relief, 60.9 x 91.4 cm, 1844, made for Queen Victoria, Royal Academy, London



with coachman and postillion and four miniature ponies parading the streets of London. Complete with full court dress, worn for three command appearances before Queen Victoria and the royal family at Buckingham Palace, his perfectly proportioned diminutive stature opened a door to fairy reality. When Tom Thumb married a fellow midget Barnum had the clever notion of exhibiting the doll-sized wedding dress and tiara in a New York store. When the giant waterlily *Victoria regia* was successfully cultivated in the glasshouse at Chatsworth, a child (daughter of its architect Sir Joseph Paxton, later creator of the Crystal Palace) was depicted standing on one of the leaves for *The Illustrated London News* (17 November 1849); dwarfed by the vast leaves she looks like a Doyle fairy (fig.37).

The word 'magic' was frequently invoked in connection with these shows, notably in the case of the Colosseum's 'Gallery of Natural Magic', which featured 'the World of Spirits' and 'Phantoms of a Witches' Sabbath' in 1839. Fairy scenes were enacted as *tableaux vivants* (fig.36) and provided for toy theatres (cat.76), and as optical toys, or phantasmagoria, hugely popular home entertainments in which terror was mixed with fascination. Many devices simulated movement – for example the Zoetrope, an early motion-picture machine – and there was no difficulty in suggesting flight. The barrier between illusion and reality was constantly eroded by these devices and the certainties of a rational society were shaken. At the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, Queen Victoria surveyed the vista of fluttering banners and exhibits from the balcony of Paxton's magical Crystal Palace – of which the rib-like structure was inspired by the underside of the great waterlily leaf – and exclaimed that it 'had quite the effect of fairyland', acknowledgement of the part that lights, rainbow reflections from crystal panes and iridescent colours played in the creation of fairy realms.

Fairy mythology fitted well into the Romantic medievalist's concept of uncorrupted, pre-industrial innocence, since its living beliefs and traditions best survived in remote rural communities where the modern world had still made very little impact – in the Scottish Highlands, in Wales, in Ireland, in Devon and Cornwall and in East Anglia. In the 1840s medievalism was presented as an attractive contrast to the degeneracy of modern society, a theme that was to be developed in John Ruskin's writings. Chivalry was important to the Victorian concept of the Middle Ages, and it forms a key element in





Fig.36 Edward H. Corbould, *A Fairy Scene, Rothkappchen*, 1855, showing Queen Victoria's children performing *Little Red Riding Hood*, watercolour, 36.5 x 53 cm, The Royal Collection © Her Majesty The Queen

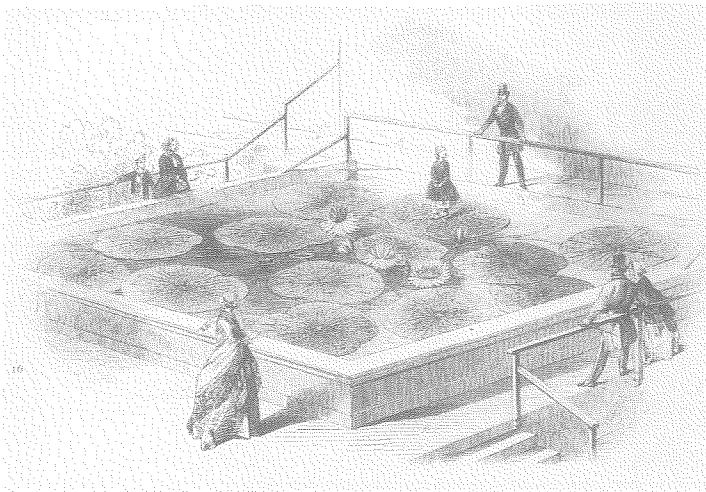


Fig.37 The *Victoria regia* lily in bloom for the first time at Chatsworth, supporting Paxton's daughter, from *The Illustrated London News*, 17 November 1849

fairy literature and art. In *Fors Clavigera* (1870–74), Ruskin claims a large role for chivalry in shaping an ideal society: 'All that hitherto has been achieved of best – all that has been in noble preparation instituted, – is begun in the period, and rooted in the conception, of Chivalry.' Fairy tales involve rescue of the weak by the strong and noble, and fairy mythology is full of acts performed in secrecy to reclaim the fortunes of the poor.

It may have been the chivalric aspect of Maclise's most celebrated fairy painting, *Undine* (1843; fig.38), as much as its fairy side, that attracted Queen Victoria, who purchased it as a present for Prince Albert. Obviously the German origin of the subject – from la Motte Fouqué's romance – would have seemed to the Queen, herself of predominantly

German lineage, appropriate for her German husband, but it also reflects wider cultural alignments that had a significant bearing on fairy imagery. In the 19th century the most influential new literature – the stories collected by the brothers Grimm – came from Germany, not, as had been the case in the 18th century, from France, and so did the most potent new images. Maclise in particular was influenced by the Nazarenes, for example by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld and the Austrian Moritz von Schwind, folk tale enthusiast and – significantly – fairy-tale illustrator. Jules Perrot's ballet *Undine*, performed in London for the first time in 1843, must have been the immediate inspiration for Maclise's painting.

Fig.38 Daniel Maclise, *Scene from Undine*, 1843, oil on panel, 44.4 × 60 cm, The Royal Collection © Her Majesty The Queen

Fairy painting of the 1840s developed in parallel with Pre-Raphaelitism, and both had their origins in contemporary German art. German culture, including the sophisticated study of folklore and ancient cults, was admired by English intellectuals. Goethe remarked to his friend Eckermann, commending Thomas Carlyle's translation of la Motte Fouqué, 'There are clever people over the sea, who know and can appreciate us'.

The Queen and Prince Albert were responsible for the wide popularity of another German import, the Christmas tree. In 1843 their family Christmas was reported in a periodical with an illustration of the decorated tree. Formerly a ceremony known only among the immigrant German merchants in Manchester, the custom of decorating a fir-tree was adopted throughout the country. How this festive icon progressed from a religious symbol





with an angel at its pinnacle to vehicle for the Christmas fairy is another story.

In 1867 Sir Joseph Noël Paton exhibited at the Royal Academy *The Fairy Raid, Carrying off the Changeling, Midsummer eve* (cat.35), in which a bewildered baby is abducted by a teeming crowd of fairy-tale figures. The human child – blonde and fair-skinned as the fairies preferred – suggests the diminutive size of the fairy protagonists, who are further diminished by towering trees and flowers overtopping their heads. At such a relatively late date *The Fairy Raid* was hardly on the cutting edge of modernism – the critic in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Review* wrote of Paton's 'Preraphaelitism', by then distinctly old news – but it encompasses many of the images that reveal the origins of the fairy world in romantic medievalism. For example, the figure in armour on the right dispatching a goblin with his lance, which mimics St George slaying the dragon, reflects contemporary fascination with chivalry; indeed Paton painted purely chivalric subjects or mixtures of chivalry and religion that greatly appealed to a Victorian public. The knight on horseback rescuing an elaborately dressed lady combines with this a knowledge of historic costume from illustrated studies published during the first half of the century.

The standing stones and the forest of ancient trees in the background of *The Fairy Raid* suggest the places of enchantment described in folklore. They also hint at other contemporary interests like the revival of Druidism, just as the title would have reminded Paton's public of the special magic of midsummer eve, frequently celebrated in fairy literature. Whether intentionally or not, the title echoes the Scottish 'Fairy Rade', a parade or 'ride' of fairy figures on horseback, of which sightings were noted in Thomas Keightley's *Fairy Mythology, illustrative of the Romance and Superstition of Various Countries* (1828), which had gathered together a mass of lore to feed the imaginative recreation of fairyland. More specifically the painting illustrates verses describing a fairy 'rade' from Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. Keightley also noted the Orkney tradition of fairies in minute suits of armour, and on the left of the picture Paton has elfish armourers emerging from their underground workshops. A cultured and intellectual man with many antiquarian interests, Paton had amassed a large collection of armour with which he would have delighted to equip his diminutive knights.

Richard Dadd's *Fairy Feller's Master Stroke* (cat.27) is

redolent of folklore, the scene being viewed from the cover of long grass as though by a concealed human. According to ancient lore if fairies detected a human spectator they disappeared. Some of the costumes are exotic, a reminder, perhaps, of Dadd's travels, and of the debt that magical subjects owe to the Orient. Dadd may have been aware of the ancient tradition identifying the Orient as the location of fairyland.

Although there is much evidence to suggest that Keightley's *Fairy Mythology* was a fruitful source for fairy painting, it was not by any means alone. Interwoven with northern traditions were the successive translations from 1811 of *The Arabian Nights*, offering minute detail of an exotic culture. Lady Charlotte Guest was inspired to tackle the first translation of the ancient Welsh sagas in the *Mabinogion* (a huge undertaking published over more than ten years, 1838–49), by her early studies of *The Arabian Nights*. Translations of other early texts, such as Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales), Gervase of Tilbury, Walter Map and Ralph of Coggeshall proliferated in the 1840s and 1850s through the medium of the Camden Society and Bohn's Classical Library. Sir Richard Colt Hoare edited and published a translation of the Latin text of Giraldus as early as 1804, which Keightley seems to have drawn on extensively for his *Fairy Mythology*. These early writings, dating from around 1200 AD, include accounts of a race of tiny men called Portunes (Gervase of Tilbury), visits to fairyland (the priest Elidor's 'eye-witness' account given to Giraldus), fairy brides (the tale of Wild Edric's marriage to a fairy told by Walter Map, who also wrote of King Herla and the Wild Riders as well as of Orfeo and his Queen, Meroudys, or Eurydice), and the Green Children who came out of a wood, related by Ralph of Coggeshall and William of Newbridge; they must have been intensely exciting to a post-Enlightenment public.

The term 'folklore' was first used in 1846, when scholarly activity in this area had grown so widely that it had to be given a name. The Folk-Lore Society was founded in 1878, and its members were – and are – responsible for important academic and scientific contributions to a serious subject. The pursuit of folklore matches and sometimes even parodies the archaeological and anthropological research it resembles. The publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, in taking away the certainty in one set of beliefs, drove some people to look for more recondite imaginings, as in the case

of spiritualism. The sciences that should have shown folklore up as improbable or impossible fantasy sometimes had the effect of making the fairy world seem desirable.

The idea of a primitive pygmy race driven into hiding recurs in the mythology of many countries. It was summarised in Archibald Maclaren's *The Fairy Family, a series of Ballads and Metrical tales illustrating The Fairy Faith of Europe* (1856; cat.64), along with other theories probably gleaned from Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*. The primitive race theory was to resurface in a scholarly guise through a member of the Folk-Lore Society, David MacRitchie, in *The Testimony of Tradition* (1890) and *Fians, Fairies and Picts* (1893).

Sexual undertones are an integral part of myth and legend and this is easily detected in fairy painting. Modern interpretation has produced such an extensive catalogue of sexual acts and innuendo in these works that the question must arise as to whether they were painted for a special audience. In the 18th century Henry Fuseli's erotic treatment of the attendant figures in Shakespearean scenes, intended for private patrons, contrasts with the toned-down decorative figures in the published engravings. The situation with Victorian fairy pictures is less straightforward. Contemporary critics appear not to have noticed the teasing and allusive signs of sexual activity that strike us so glaringly.

Noël Paton's subjects from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, teem with incidents of pursuit and encounter. However, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* (1847; cat.32) and *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania* (1849; cat.33) were designed respectively for the decoration of the New Palace of Westminster and as a diploma work for admission to the Royal Scottish Academy. The thinly veiled sexual treatment seems to have been acceptable to the Victorian establishment. Purging the fairy world of all sexual implications would have diminished its mythic force, as was to happen in the following century, and this may have been implicit but unacknowledged. It has been argued that both painters and public conspired in a kind of cosmic unawareness of the erotic content of these otherworldly couplings, probably because they were set 'elsewhere', safely distant from the real world.

Noël Paton's most louche work, *The Pursuit of Pleasure* (1855; fig.39), was engraved for publication. In it lascivious men pursue Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche, who is parting her abundant hair to reveal her breasts. This

was destined for the sober and respectable Victorian domestic market, to remind the unrighteous of the temptations of worldly pleasure and the retribution that would follow. The print was published by Alexander Hill, printseller-in-ordinary to Queen Victoria, one of Paton's best patrons. Critics assumed an ethical and moral purpose in exhibited pictures, and did not advertise the idea that they might be deliberately titillating. When Samuel Carter Hall published the two paintings by Huskisson he owned (cat.28, 31) in the *Art Union* magazine, it was clearly without any expectation of shocking his public. He was a strong believer in the ennobling qualities of art, and remarked that 'men to whom public galleries are open will be seldom found in public-houses' (*Art Union*, November 1847, p.365).

Simmons's fairy paintings have been singled out for their eroticism, and there is something of the smoking-room about them, but the pale flesh and the flimsy draperies that do little to disguise it now appear about as sensual as the flawless nudes painted by Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema and Lord Leighton. Even if these were regarded as erotic, they were publicly exhibited to great acclaim. Suggestiveness in fairy painting is one of many parallels with Orientalism, the exotic setting exonerating the viewer from voyeurism.

Opium inspiration is another parallel with Orientalism. Jeremy Maas has suggested that Fitzgerald's vision was sustained by the use of narcotics, and tell-tale medicine bottles feature clearly in two of his dream paintings, *The Nightmare* (cat.37) and *The Stuff that Dreams are made of* (cat.38). Opium in the form of laudanum was so widely used that it has been described as 'the aspirin of the 19th century'. It was a stimulant and a narcotic, useful as pain-killer and sedative. Insomnia was the 'curse of the literary and artistic temperament' (as Hall Caine wrote *à propos* Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in his *Reminiscences*, p.226). It was favoured by writers, among them Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas De Quincey – whose *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* had attracted enormous interest when it appeared in 1821 – Wilkie Collins, Edward Bulwer Lytton, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Sir Walter Scott; Oscar Wilde smoked Turkish cigarettes soaked in an opium tincture.

Once when Wilkie Collins had taken opium as a stimulant to enable him to write through the night, he saw 'another Wilkie Collins' sit at the table and try to monopolise the writing pad. This sensation is explicitly illustrated in Rossetti's most disturbing supernatural

subject, *How They Met Themselves* (1861; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), in which a couple in medieval costume are confronted by their doubles, and implicitly in Fitzgerald's *The Artist's Dream* (cat.36), in which he sees himself in a haunted sleep. Rossetti's death was hastened by chloral addiction: 'There is a skeleton in every cupboard,' he said to his friend Hall Caine, pointing to the bottles beside his bed: 'that's mine; it is chloral'.

Opium was not the only narcotic drug readily available on the market. Morphine, cocaine and chloroform all came into use in the 19th century and it was some time before the self-evident dangers attracted effective restrictions. In 1860 an eccentric Victorian naturalist and teacher, Mordecai Cubitt Cooke, published *The Seven Sisters of Sleep*, celebrating the pleasures of tobacco, opium, hashish, betel nut, cocaine, belladonna and the fly agaric or magic mushroom, *Amanita muscari*. Cooke invented a legend of the Queen of Sleep, who has seven sisters, all envious of her throne. The Queen's Minister of Sleep is instructed to endow the seven with power over man's waking hours,

giving him fabulous dreams, visions and ecstasies. In the section on opium there are extensive quotations from De Quincey and, while pointing out the tragic consequences of addiction, Cooke concluded that the pleasures of smoking opium were so rewarding that it was no more wrong than to smoke tobacco. He crystallises the attitude to drug-use prevalent at the very moment of Fitzgerald's most overtly drug-inspired subjects. He had happened on a subject of enormous interest, and the book was very popular, deservedly so since it benefited from his vast scientific and literary knowledge.

However, the days of irresponsible pleasure were numbered, and the 1868 Pharmacy Act limited the sale of opium to professional pharmacists. By the 1880s the dangers of drug abuse were widely appreciated. In 1881 H.H. Kane's *Drugs that Enslave: the Opium, Morphine, Chloral and Hashish Habits*, was published in

Fig.39 After Sir Joseph Noël Paton, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: A Vision of Human Life*, engraving and stipple engraving by Henry Thomas Ryall, 1855





Philadelphia, its title curiously reflecting that of Cooke's earlier book. It is hardly coincidental that this marks the end of an era in fairy painting, with disturbing visions giving way to dreamy woodland scenes.

The literature and other accounts of fairyland that provided notions of scale and details of costume and habitat in fairy painting ultimately were supposedly derived from literal experiences of finding fairyland or sightings of fairies visiting the human world. Antiquaries and rural historians have collected stories of fairy appearances from country people up to the present day. Cecil Torr, who was born in 1857, reported the fairy phenomena in his Devonshire village in *Small Talk at Wreyland*, first published in 1970. Torr was recording not only tales told him by his grandfather, who had lived at Wreyland since 1837, but his own experiences. 'There is said to be a goblin about a quarter of a mile from here .... I have never seen the goblin; but I have good evidence that men have been scared by something at night, and that horses have refused to pass there in the day.' He writes also of the box-edged beds by old houses, known as Pixey Gardens, 'As pixies are twelve inches high, these little paths are pretty much the same to them as Devonshire lanes to human beings. I was taught that one could always tell a pixey from a fairy, as fairies wear clothes and pixies go without ...'.

In the early years of the twentieth century there were fairy manifestations in the family circle of Edith Somerville, co-author of the popular books about the hunting experiences of an Irish resident magistrate. Among tales of men of low stature with arms that hung below their knees – the 'ancient tribe' theory given eye-witness authenticity – and of hearing fairy music, there is a circumstantial account of finding a fairy shoe. In the 1920s Dr Somerville took it on an American tour. Examination under a microscope at Harvard University revealed tiny hand-stitches and that the material was mouseskin. (This is reported in articles first published in *Country Life*, 1973, reprinted in *An Ulster Childhood*, 1987.)

The fairies that caused the greatest stir were seen, so it was claimed, in July 1917 by Elsie Wright, aged fifteen, and her cousin Frances Griffiths, aged eleven, at Cottingley in Yorkshire, and they faked photographs of them to support their story. Their cause was taken up by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, nephew of Richard Doyle and son of Charles, then in the grip of spiritualistic fervour, and he described the

incident in *The Coming of the Fairies* (1921). At the end of her life Elsie admitted that the images were faked, saying it was the only way that their sighting of the fairies would be believed.

The diarist James Lees-Milne, in *Ancestral Voices* (1975) recorded a conversation on the subject which he had with the old Duke of Argyll in 1943. 'At tea the Duke talked of fairies in whom he implicitly believes, as do all people here. He described them as the spirits of a race of men who ages ago lived in earth mounds, which are what they frequent. They are usually little green things that peer at you from behind trees, as squirrels do, and disappear into the earth. The Duke has visited numerous fairy haunts in Argyll.'

The focus on folklore had some curious offshoots, as in the lore and language of flowers and plants. Transmitting messages with flowers was suggested in the 1770s by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in her account of this practice in Turkish harems. By the early 19th century a spurious flower language, derived from Mme de la Tour's *Le Language des Fleurs*, was circulating in bowdlerised form through publications such as Mrs Burke's *Language of Flowers*, published in 1826. These notions were enormously popular, as can be deduced from the greetings cards employing flower imagery with hidden messages.

Ancient beliefs connected with flowers and plants were collected by folklorists. It was said that hawthorn provides the fairies with a hiding place (cat.40), that elder protects witches, and that holly protects against witches. Apparently random customs were explained; for example on his *Rural Rides* William Cobbett (1762–1835) remarked on the holly to be found in Suffolk hedges, without understanding its significance in deterring witches. Orange blossom, traditionally used for the wreaths and bridal bouquets, protects against infertility in marriage. In Dadd's painting *The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke* (cat.27) the rocky hillside is studded with daisies, perhaps a reference to the belief that a decoction of daisy roots could produce diminutive stature. Amelia Jane Murray (1800–1896) connected flower symbolism with fairies in *A Regency Lady's Faery Bower*, which she wrote and illustrated herself, as did Eleanor Vere Boyle in her illustrations to *A Story Without End* by Sara Austin (1868). Flower symbolism taken from Shakespeare, folklore and the language of flowers was employed both by Fitzgerald and Simmons. While Fitzgerald does not flaunt the flower lore in his pictures, it may be that his use of the narcotic

purple convolvulus, signifying 'night' or 'death', is to underline the sinister message of his fairy scenes. Victorian paintings were 'read' by a public well versed in ancient and modern literature, moral precept and flower lore.

The Rev. Hilderic Friend's massive two-volume *Flower Lore* of 1884 may have been behind the Edwardian fascination with flower fairies. Kate Greenaway made an illustrated flower alphabet in 1884 and Walter Crane began his series of 'Flower Books' as early as 1888. The best of the flower fairy artists, for example Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale (cat.71), Cecily Mary Barker (1895-1973), Florence Mary Anderson (active 1914-30) and Ida Rintoul Outhwaite (1888-1960), are inseparable from memories of childhood. Their works were reproduced in colour by the Medici Society and postcard publishers and used in advertising; examples of these are eagerly collected today.

The lore of precious stones and amuletic and magical jewellery is less evident in fairy painting than flower symbolism, although Simmons seems to use it. Markings on the butterfly wings of his fairies resemble opal and agate, and it is surely no coincidence that opals were considered unlucky. Since the Middle Ages crystals had been used in the Highlands to cure sickness in cattle and even humans. 'Elf-shot' flints (Stone Age flint arrow heads) were mounted in silver and worn as amulets. These beliefs originated in the misuse of holy relics that the medieval Church had been at such pains to eradicate, threatening excommunication to witches and sorcerers and damnation for faith in spells and amulets. Elves were particularly condemned as being conjured up by the Devil to lead people astray.

Fairy artefacts and the mysterious 'lucks' that survive in a number of British ancestral homes were another aspect of folklore. Their history is often hard to establish and proof of their magical reputation can barely be traced before the 18th century. The most celebrated is the enamelled glass beaker known as the 'Luck of Edenhall' – in fact of 13th-century Syrian manufacture – which may conceivably have been brought back by a Crusader, reflecting the idea that the Crusaders had discovered fairyland in the Orient. The fortunes of the Musgrave family at Edenhall in Cumberland were said to depend on their ownership of the beaker, and it was only surrendered in 1926. Also of apparently Near-Eastern or Coptic origin, and dating between the 4th and 7th century AD, is the magical Faerie Flag of the Macleod family, still kept at

Dunvegan Castle on the Isle of Skye. Examples of its magic powers in protecting the Macleods are given for two occasions, at the battle of Glendale in 1490 and at the battle of Waternish in 1580. Some fairy artefacts have found their way into museums: the 'Fair Maid of Gatacre', an Elizabethan pendant set with a Roman cameo, as well as the 'Luck of Edenhall' are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; a fairy mirror and fairy trow (sword) in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, and flint arrow heads – 'elf-shot' – in Brighton Museum.

Fairy imagery is also found in the decorative arts and interior decoration. Sir John Soane commissioned paintings of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from Henry Howard for his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The use that Boydell envisaged for his 'Shakespeare Gallery' can be appreciated in a surviving print room at Stratfield Saye in Hampshire. There Fuseli's fairy paintings from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* take their place in the Shakespearean context for which they were designed. In the 1790s the prints were inset into a golden background almost completely covering the walls of the room, where they remain to this day. When the great Duke of Wellington came into possession of the house he was so taken with this effect that he made a second print room for the house with his own hands.

Fairy – or fairy-tale – schemes were a speciality of William Morris. Apart from Morris's own Red House with its Chaucerian decoration of about 1859, the earliest of these was The Hill at Witley in Surrey (started in 1864), rural retreat of the artist Myles Birket Foster, with its panels of hand-painted tiles illustrating Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty. Mary Howitt, translator of Hans Andersen's fairy tales, had similar tiles: 'I have vastly enjoyed Mr Morris's poems,' she wrote in 1869, 'and thus it is a pleasure to me to think of him in his blue blouse and with his earnest face at "The Firm", and to feel that he is a great poet. I am glad that we had the fairy tale tiles for the fireplace from Morris & Co., their connection with the modern Chaucer gives them a new value and interest'. George Howard's house in Palace Green in London, designed by Philip Webb and decorated by Morris, had a morning-room frieze by Burne-Jones illustrating the legend of Cupid and Psyche. Burne-Jones's masterpiece of fairy-tale decoration, the four paintings of the 'Briar Rose' series completed in 1890 for Alexander Henderson, survives at Buscott Park in Berkshire.

The Gothic revival had encouraged the taste for fairytale castles, both new and restored from neglected ruins. Cardiff Castle and Castel Coch belonged to the millionaire Marquis of Bute, and their rehabilitation was the work of William Burges. Cardiff Castle was haunted, which may have added to its attractions. The first part to be completed in the 1870s and 1880s was the turreted Clock Tower, housing the Bachelor's Bedroom and the Winter and Summer Smoking-Rooms. Here religious imagery, history, Norse legend, Greek myth and Arabian Nights interweave in a rich evocation of an enchanted palace. Fitzgerald was a friend of Burges and collaborated in his decorative schemes, and Burges owned at least two of his paintings. The specific nature of the smoking in Burges's own home is apparent from the painted wardrobe with poppy motif in his bedroom, which had an inconspicuous compartment on the side nearest his bed for bottles of opium.

Throughout the last two decades of the 19th century

fairies appeared on Coalbrookdale cast-iron hallstands and garden seats inset with fairy roundels, tiles from Minton & Co. and Wedgwood, and ceramics, textiles and wallpaper designed by Walter Crane. Many fancy-dresses were designed for fairies and fairy princes; the patterns were issued by department stores and the costumes could be ordered from them. The quintessential fairy sculpture, Sir George Frampton's *Peter Pan Memorial* in Kensington Gardens, dates from 1911 (fig.40).

The Glasgow artists, led by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, with his wife and sister-in-law, Margaret and Frances Macdonald, and their colleague, the illustrator Jessie M. King, designed fairies with a spectral quality. Many of them do not have wings and their habitat is no longer realistically drawn. They are part of Continental Symbolism, and belong to the world of myths and legends, not of fairyland. The main thread of fairyland inspiration survived in books and the theatre.



Fig.40 George Frampton, *The Peter Pan Memorial*, bronze, 1908, Kensington Gardens, London