NELLIE SAW THE FAIRIES

BY KATE VAUGHAN

"They say the fairies dance here on moonlight nights."

"Do they?" I'd give anything to see them. Imagine seeing fairies in the twentieth century!"

And the speaker, a young girl of seventeen, laughed merrily, while her companion, a little younger, looked somewhat piqued, for she was doing the honors of her home to an old school friend, and was yet young enough to love fairy lore and, at all events, to like to believe in their own fairy-haunted pool.

The two girls, as they sat thus chatting on the mossy margin of the pool and laved their white hands in the gurgling water at its source, were all unmindful of a pair of great, wistful brown eyes gazing at them from among the leaves of wild-laurel.

The brown eyes belonged to a little Canadian girl who loved fairy-stories, and had been once told by her nurse, in answer to her eager questions as to where the fairies lived:

"Oh, there are none in this country, they are over in England, I guess—though they say there are heaps of them in Ireland."

And then, when she found she was to be brought to England, although she regretted it was not to Ireland—as they must be so much more common there—she yet felt that she was going to the enchanted land of her books.

But, alas! she had been in England now several weeks, and no sign of fairies yet. In vain had she examined carefully every tuft of primroses, to see if some dainty little fairy did not lie concealed in their cups. Such banks and hedges, and violet-spangled moss, must surely be the home for them!

But it was all in vain. Not even a suspicion of a fairy could she find; and unkindest cut o fall, when she asked her new English nurse where the fairies lived she told her "in books!"

And so she was beginning to fear she would only know them in books, and was reading "Riquet with the Tuft," for the hundredth time, when she overheard the young girls say this pool was fairy-haunted.

How delightful it was to think her parents had just come to this lovely place! Of course this pool must be a favorite spot with the fairies!

The water was so clear it reflected everything, from the fringed ferns that waved round its brink to her own brown eyes as she gazed into its depths.

The young girls had passed on, and now that she was alone she came out from the laurel and lay down at the very edge of it, and dabbled her hand in the enchanted water.

It did not strike her that was rather a dangerous thing to do, for she was busy wondering how she could manage to get down to the pool by moonlight, and wondering, if she begged mother very much, whether she would not allow her to come down to the water just for once. Then she saw something floating toward her.

At first it seemed only a white feather, dropped from a dove's wing, and she watched it idly as it drifted nearer. Then she looked at it more eagerly.

Surely it was a fairy boat, for on it was a tiny little figure, exquisitely dressed in a rose-petal gown, trimmed with blue forget-me-nots.

Her mantle was a snowdrop, all daintily fringed with green, on on her head—which was tiny as her own tiniest doll—was a circlet of dewdrops that flashed and sparkled more brightly tha nany diamonds. Behind her back hung two long, fair braids; and Nellie could not help thinking how very like this fairy queen was to that wee French dol she ha dat home.

But the fairy queen was not alone. A mischievous-looking little sprite, just as small as herself, but who had the most impertinent little face and the wickedest eyes i nthe world was rowing her. He was dressed in green and wore an acorn cap on his head, in which was stuck a sparrow's feather. His cloak, which he wore over one shoulder only, was a malva flower.

Nellie had always expected fairies to be dressed in silks and satins, but on coming to think, it seemed much more likely that they would dress in flowers than that they would go, like common mortals, to buy silks and satins.

But Nellie had not much time to think, for the fairy skiff was quite near her now, and so eager was she to see the beautiful little people that she leaned forward, and alas! alas! fell into the pool.

She was just conscious of a peal of mocking laughter as she rolled over, and then the water closed over her.

Her first thought was terror of the cold shock! her next, what her poor mother would say when she found her little girl was drowned. But the water, after all, was not very cold, and the thought of her mother's grief so very sad, that had the water not prevented her tears flowing, no doubt she would have wept her eyes out.

She felt herself singing, yet it was not at all unpleasant. The water did not fill her eyes and moth and ears as it did when bathing, and began to think how pleasant must be the life of a fish, when she became conscious of the sound of music.

"Perhaps I am dying," she thought, "and it is the music of heaven."

But very soon she again heard laughter, which she felt sure was from the sprite who had seen her fall into the water, and at last she seemed to be at the bottom.

She lay for a moment, wondering why she was so comfortable and why she did not die; then she opened her eyes, and when she had done so, sprang to her feet. There was not water anywhere, only she was in a beautiful place, all mother-of-pearl and-gold; the floor was carpeted with precious stones, the pattern formed or rubies, sapphires and diamonds, so brilliant she had to shade her eyes when she looked at it. Then a golden door slid open, and the queen of the fairies entered, followed by a swarm of other fairies, who were evidently her attendants, and the little imp in green who had laughed at her misfortune. It seemed to Nellie that he was looking michievously at her now.

"Ha!" said the queen, in a silvery voice, "a mortal!"

There was a sound like the rustling of leaves, which Nellie saw was but the noise made by the fairies, who now crowded round her, looking curiously at the little mortal who was among them ,and sometimes touching her garments, which made Nellie very uncomfortable, for she was conscious that she was streaming water from every fold on to that beautiful floor; and they all looked so fresh and clean and beautiful, like so cany flowers.

As the queen looked at her she hardly knew where to put her head, for though so small, the fairy looked every inch a queen, and as with one wave of her tiny hand she commanded her attendants to fall back. Nellie noticed that even the mischievous little man shrank away hastily.

"Children of earth," said the little queen, sternly, "how came you here? Don't you know that the penalty for entering our home is death?"

Now, had Nellie been less afraid it may be that she would have felt inclined to laugh at the notion of these tiny people inflicting death on any one so large as herself, for she had had, ever since she found herself in the fairy palace, an oppressed sense of her own enormous size; everything around her was so tiny that she felt like a great giantess.

The door of the room was so low she would have to stoop to go through it, and the turquoise ceiling was only just above her head. So, when the queen spoke, we may be sure she did not feel inclined to laugh; but she did manage to stammer out that she was very sorry, she had not intended to intrude, and then told how she came to fall into the water while locking at the fairy-boat.

As she spoke, the queen looked at her more kindly, and turning round to the little imp in green, shook her finger at him and said:

"Will-o'-the-wisp, this is some of thy doing."

And then Will-o'-the-wisp went into many contortions, which seemed to Nellie an oil mixture of laughter and fear, for he was evidently enjoying Nellie's discomfort amazingly, yet dare not hsow it for fear of the queen, who, again addressing Nellie, said:

"We see that you did not intrude from idle curiosity, but from what mortals call accident, but which is generally brought about by this perverse spirit," and the queen looked daggers at Will-o'-the-wisp, who twisted himself about in laughable confusion. "Therefore we will not punish you; but as we think you are a nice little mortal!"—here a beautiful fairy tripped up and whispered something in the queen's ear—"and very fond of fairies, Joy tells me, we will pardon your being here, and make you one of us."

Nellie's heart gave a great throb. She had, it is true, wanted to see fairies, but she had never wanted to leave her mother and father and become one of them, and she knew quite enough from what she had read, of fairy folks to be sure she would never be allowed to belong to her mortal family if she became one of them; and then it was hard to die so young!

The queen's eye was upon her; she feared to show her reluctance and choked back her tears; but, oh, how she wised for er moter! And then came another thought: How could she, so big, live in such a tiny place, with such tiny people? She would have to stand still all the time for fear of treading on them. But the fairies were in no trouble about that, for the queen said to two of her atendants:

"Take off those cloths, and dress her as becomes a fairy."

Nellie noticed that all the fairies were dressed in flowers, and she began to wonder what flowers would ever be found large enough to make her clothes. Why, a peony, the very largest flower she knew of, would not be large enough to cover her head. But she was not left long in doubt, for two fairies came to her, and one said:

"Shrink, shrink, thou foolish mortal
Who hast rashly entered our fairy portal;
Shrink till thou'art of fairy statue,
And take on thyself our fairy nature."

And Nellie felt herself growing smaller and smaller. Her head was getting nearer the jeweled floor so rapidly that she looked to see if her feet were not sinking through it. But no, they were not sinking; but, oh, how small they were getting! Her slippers looked like boats, and her foot was now where her heel alone had been! And lo! while she was looking, she found herself smothered in a huge mass of clothes. She struggled, and then they were lifted from her, and she saw at least a hundred fairies staggering under the weight of her own garments, which, so small had she become, completely smothered her, and she was able very comfortably to hide herself in one of her mortal shoes. But no sooner had she reached, or rather, shrunk into, fairy proportions than the other fairy stepped forward and arrayed her in a white azalia skirt, a fringed gentian bodice, and a blue-bell hat; and then the queen, waving her wand, said:

"Fair, forget thy mortal kin,
For the heart of a fairy must burn within
The fairy form; to all else be cold—
To father, and mother, and home of old."

And then a great change came over Nellie. The happy mortal-child had become an unhappy fairy. True, she had forgotten to long to return to her mother, for she no longer remembered her; but there was a terrible pain all through her as if she had lost something, she knew not what; and where her heart was she felt only an empty ache.

Yet all her fellow-fairies were so merry, so full of gambols and tricks! Only she was dull and miserable, and they laughed at her, and Will-o'-the-wisp poked fun at her—and rather rough fun, too, sometimes.

He liked to get behind her when they were having their fairy-dances and trip her up. Then, when they took their meals, he would whip out of her hand the buttercup, full of dew, she was conveying to her lips, or contrive that the blossoms she had were denuded of their honey; and the pood little fairy had a sad time of it, though she had no lessons to do—no tiresome duties. For, though a fairy now, she had left her soul somewhere, and having once had it, could not be happy without, though she did not know the cause of her own misery. Of course, none of the other fairies liked her.

One night the queen said it was moonlight, and they would visit their favorite pool.

Nellie heard her, but her words stirred no remembrance in her heart, nor even when she found herself watching the others dance on the fringed brink of the pool.

Just then Will-o'-the-wisp came near her and flashed a firefly—which he always carried with him at night—right in her eyes.

The glare blinded her, and she toppled over once more into the pool, and she knew no more.

"Nellie! Nellie! my darling, my precious child!"

Somebody was dragging her from the water, she thought. She opened her eyes and saw her mother bending over her, with both arms tightly clasped around her.

"How could my little girl go to sleep in such a dangerous place? Suppose my darling had been drowned? Your clothes are actually wet where they have dipped in the water!"

At first, Nellie clung convulsively to her mother. Oh, how good it was to be a mortal again, instead of a soulless being, without love or hate for anyone! And then she told her mother all about it, at which her mother smiled and said:

"You dreamed it all, Nellie, dear!"

But Nellie shook her head—she knew she hadn't. It all seemed so real.

FARMERETS PROVE TO BE GOOD JUDGES

Left to Right—Mary Anderson, Peel County; Wilma Boucher, Peel County; Evelyn Young, Cheltenham; Alice Bacon, Claremont; Ida Galbraith, Glen Valley, who proved their ability as prize stock judges at the C.N.E.

Publicity Film of South African Railways

Johannesburg, S. Af.—The South African Railways has just completed a 7000-foot film which traverses every portion of South Africa, its scenic beauties, industries and pleasure resorts.

Starting at Cape Town, where views from Table Mountain and of the surf bathing are a feature, the various big towns in South Africa are visited, and in every case views of the town and its special attractions are reproduced. At Oudtshoorn we have ostrich farming pictures and at Kinmberley those of ancient and modern working in the diamond mines. These things are never elaborated so as to confine the spectator to any one subject for more than a couple of minutes. It is this variety which must insure the success of the railways' splendid film.

The beauties of the Hex River and the Drakensburg are shown from the moving train, while the observation car and the dining saloon, with their crowds of tourists, are also in evidence. The Victoria Falls are depicted from many angles, including an airplane perspective. The film ends with a reception of visitors by a native chief which includes war dances and scenes of domestic life in the kraals.

And She's Still Thinking About It

She—"Am I the only girl you've ever loved?"

He—"Of course, you are—and the prettiest, too."

Girls are warned by a writer in a weekly paper against a number of foreign young men who are going about pretending to be Arab chiefs. Actually, of course, they are wolves in sheik's clothing.

The Call

The sun goes down beyond the purple fell,
A wind has blown the lark into a cloud;
One backward look will serve to say farewell
To the dark valley that my fathers ploughed.

The house they built is empty. I must go
Over the twjlit moorland till I find
The breast of eve, where I may learn to know
What thing it is that gives men peace of mind.
The last light trembles in the farther air,
This is the night, the hour I dare not lose.
A hand has beckoned me, I know not where,
A voice has spoken, but I know not whose.

—Edward Davison.

Her Majesty

As she appeared at a recent public function.

The Royal Automobile Club of London says selfishness, impatience, and carelessness cause 90 per cent. of the motor accidents. There would seem to be much to learn about motoring besides how to drive a car.

Speeding the Mails.

The postal authorities directed Major Tudhope to meet the Empress of France last week at Father Point, pick up the mail bags and fly back to Montreal. The first attempt proved a failure, but in the future the department hopes to save fourteen hours' on overseas mail for Toronto.

MISSING EDITOR BORN IN TORONTO

Phil Payne, who is shown above with his wife, well known newspaper man of New York, who was born in Toronto, was a passenger on "Old Glory," travelling with Lloyd Bertaud and James D. Hill. Old Glory and its three occupants are now numbered among the missing. When a small boy Payne moved to Gravenhurst where he started his journalistic career on the Gravenhurst Banner. He visited Gravenhurst last year.

Nobody Won Battle, Declares Mr. Shaw

Famous Writer Joins in the Jutland Controversy

London.—George Bernard Shaw, adding his voice to the long-standing controversy over the Battle of Jutland, believes that nobody won the battle but thinks that Germany came out of the war with enhanced naval prestige.

In a letter to the Evening Standard denying the authenticity of an interview attributed to him by a Vienna journal which the Standard repudiished and in which he was quoted as saying that he "had a suspicion" that Admiral von Scheer won the Battle of Jutland, Mr. Shaw writes:

"Nobody won the battle of Jutland and the 'our side won' of schoolboys in both countries need not be taken into account. What should make us think a little is that we went into the war with great naval prestige and Germany with none, though her military prestige was the terror of Europe. Germany came out of it with a new and very respectable naval prestige, while her military prestige had ceased to exist anywhere."

Flying Fox Pest in Australia

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of Melbourne, Australia, is finding difficulty in devising methods for coping with the large fruit-eating bats, commonly known as "flying foxes," which are a most serious menace to fruit growers in Queensland and New South Wales. There are five species in Australia, the commonest by far being Pteropus poliocephalus. Nocturnal in habit and very gregarious, these animals live in large camps of hundreds of thousands of individuals. They migrate according to season and food supply, but usually return to the same camps in successive seasons. In the day time they cling to the branches of trees in dense numbers; they are restless and alert and a single gunshot will put a whole camp to flight. At night they depart in search of food such as fruit, berries, eucalyptus flowers and honey. They are particularly fond of cultivated fruit, and the damage that they can do in an orchard in one night is appalling. The amount of fruit actually eaten is relatively small; the ground is strewn with fallen material which has been merely nibbled or claw marked.

Many obvious methods of destruction have been tried. Shooting is expensive. Strychnine poison in the orchard is successful to an extent. Poison gasses in the camps are not effective because of the timidity of the bat: it is almost impossible to give a lethal dose before they take wing. Infection with bacillus typhi marium is said to have cleared Samoa of the pest some years ago, but we have failed to verify the report and it is understood that Samoa is still badly infested. A small "flammenwerfer" has been tried but, besides being dangerous and expensive, it is not suitable for general use.

All these and other methods have been more or less successful in killing the creatures, but in every case the scale of possible operations is hopelessly inadequate. Wholesale slaughetr must be achieved if the pest is to be minimized or even merely kept from increasing. Perhaps the most effective attack will be by biological means.

A Good Suggestion

London Daily Mail (Ind. Cons.): An English resident in Paris asks whether it is not possible for the British Legion to organize a ceremonial visit of officers and men to the scenes of their trial and glory in France. It is much to be hoped that such an organized visit may be possible in the immediate future. At the most this country could only send a representative selection of the men who fought, seeing that the total of British troops who from first to last were engaged on French or Belgian sail was 5,399,000, of whom not very far short of 1,000,000 forever rest in the land whic hthey defended.

Air Expectations

London Observer (Ind.): The impossibility of any country being content to mark time in aviation is shown by the number of fresh enterprises which are on tiptoe, so to speak, at the moment of writing. Of these the most important and ambitious are the efforts to cross the Atlantic in a westward direction—which show that even the most formidable of adverse conditions are conceived by the airman and by the constructor as existing only to be overcome. This spirit is as vigorous in Great Britain as anywhere, and what has to be secured by constant vigilance is that public authority shall give it full scope and encouragement.

Should Marry But Once.

"There'll be men who'll be utterly wretched when I marry."

"Then, for humanity's sake, you should marry only once."