

where he had been born and reared, and which he had scarcely ever quitted; and had ended with an account of the various curiosities of the neighbourhood,—he mentioned a large cave, capable of holding fourteen people, which was on the moor hard by, and was called “the Fairies’ House.”

“What!” said I eagerly, “are there any fairies in this part of Yorkshire?”

John looked at me with a queer twinkle of

the eye. “The folks hereabouts used to think so—at least they did before we had Mechanics’ Institutions and those sort of things to tell us it wasn’t possible. But some of the old people believed in them for a long time. When I was a boy, it was said that if you crept quickly in to the Fairies’ House you might see them there—provided you were early enough in the morning.”

“And did you go? Pray, John, did you



Ernest Griset.

ever see a fairy?” I put the question half-laughing, lest he might suspect I was in earnest.

“Well, ma’am,” replied John with grave politeness, “I can’t say that I ever did. But I have known those that saw them, or at least firmly believed so.”

“What! in the present generation?”

“Very nearly. That is, when I was a lad I knew one old man who declared positively he had seen fairies. He was so strong upon it that nobody ever contradicted him. Besides,

he was a man that you wouldn’t like to contradict for nothing, was William Butterfield.”

“And who was William Butterfield?”

“The bathman at the Wells here, for many many years, and a most respectable man too. He never got drunk—as most people did in those days—and he never told a lie that I ever heard of.”

“But he might have made a mistake, or fancied things?”

“No, he wasn’t given to fancies, nor likely to make mistakes. An uncommon sharp