

them plainly, only he was quite certain they were all dressed in green, just the same colour as the turnip-leaves.

He crept cautiously forward, and peered through the bars of the gate, hiding himself as much as he could the while. But unfortunately he leant too heavily on the top rail; and though he had fastened the gate himself overnight, and it looked as if it were fastened still, as soon as he touched it it swung open with a great bang, and he fell right flat with his face in the mud.

Then, whirr!—whirr! off went the little men, like innumerable coveys of partridges. When Henry got up, he could not see a single one of them; and strange to say, though he searched up and down the rows of turnips in every direction, he could not find any of their hoes. Such tiny hoes! and yet the turnips were hoed up as well as he could have done them himself. And the little people seemed so busy and so merry; it was a sight which, though it only lasted a minute or two, he declared he never forgot.

Unlike William Butterfield, he went and told it immediately to everybody he knew; and if he had not been such an exceedingly respectable man, all would have been set down at once to a mere drunkard's fancy. As it was, he was very much laughed at: people thought he was not quite right in his head, or that his brains had "gone wool-gathering." But he stuck steadily to his story; and never went hoeing turnips again without a full conviction that, if he got up early enough, he should be sure to see the fairy farm-labourers. And when he never did see them, he still persisted—if the turnips were particularly green or well grown—that the little men, with their little hoes, must have been there in the night.

"And they only did good, and never harm?" I asked. "None of the turnips were missing? for fairies are great thieves, you know."

"Are they?" said John, too civil to laugh, but evidently a good deal amused. "Well, ma'am, I don't tell you any more than I've heard—and I warned you that I only heard it secondhand—not like William Butterfield's story. I suppose all wise and clever people would say that both stories were great nonsense, and that it was impossible there could be such things as fairies."

"Impossible is a large word, John, more than many people have a right to use."

John agreed to this, and unconsciously put into his broad Yorkshire the same sentiment which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Hamlet:

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

"But still," he added, "if fairies are not impossible, I can't say they're very likely. And I never saw them myself, nor knew any one who did see them except William Butterfield. But he was a puzzle, I confess. You see, ma'am, when an honest man, whose word you have no reason to doubt, looks you in the face and tells you he has really seen so and so, it's rather hard to look him in the face back again and tell him he hasn't."

"Very hard," I acknowledged; "nor, perhaps, is it always quite necessary. But, John, to come to the point, what do you yourself think about the matter?"

"The matter of fairies?" repeated John, cautiously, and evidently not liking to commit himself too much either way. But being hard pressed, he took the only course open to a man of his good common sense—clever enough to feel that there may be things beyond him, and honest enough to allow this, while still not giving in to any foolish credulity. "Well," answered John, at length—giving the wisest answer that the wisest man alive can give about many things—"Well, ma'am, all I can say is, I really don't know."

Which is my opinion too on the subject.

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## TWO STORIES.

FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

### I.—THE RAGS.

AT the door of a paper-mill stood heaps of dust and rubbish, piled up into stacks; they had been gathered far and wide, and every rag in them had a tale to tell, and told it too; but we cannot listen to them all. Some of the rags were home-born, others came from foreign lands. Here now was a Danish rag, lying close to a rag from Nor-

way; rank Danish was the one, and rank Norse the other; and there was likely to be some fun between the two, as any experienced Dane or Norseman could tell you.

They understood each other well enough, though the two languages were as different—so the Norwegian said—as French and Hebrew. "We go to the hill-side for ours, and