



# THE FAIRY-TALE TRADITION

by CHRISTINA SCULL



This paper was read at the Tolkien Workshop on 22nd March 1986: the text given here is slightly amended and incorporates suggestions made by Denis Bridoux, Jeremy Morgan and Charles Noad in the discussion which followed the reading of the paper.



The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien includes ( P. 406-7) part of a letter written on January 8th, 1971 to Roger Lancelyn Green, an expert on children's literature, seeking his help; Tolkien had been asked to justify his claim to have invented the word 'hobbit' which was to be included in the Second Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary. He could remember the occasion of its invention, but as at least one person, a correspondent to the Observer in 1938, claimed there was a pre-existing fairy story called The Hobbit, Tolkien could not exclude the possibility that he also had read this story long before and buried childhood memories had suddenly risen to the surface and influenced his choice of name. He had tried without success to find the story. Tolkien goes on to say " I used

( before 1900) to be read from an ' old collection' - tattered and without cover or title-page - of which I can now remember was that ( I think) it was by Bulwer Lytton, and contained one story I was then very fond of called 'Puss Cat Mew'- - - I wonder if you, the most learned of living scholars in this region, can say anything. Esp. for my own satisfaction about Puss Cat Mew - I do not suppose you have found a name precisely hobbit or you would have mentioned it. Oh what a tangled web they weave who try a new word to conceive!"

A note ( P. 453) records that Green informed Tolkien that the author was E.H. Knatchbull-Hugessen and the book was Stories for my Children. It was published by Macmillan & Co. in 1869 and reprinted by them in 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, and 1876 and by Routledge in 1884 and 1904 so it was a popular book of its time. Except for short reference by Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Pritchard in The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature no consideration seems to have been given by any Tolkien scholar to this childhood favourite. On seeing the reference in Letters I was interested, but rather than taking the easy way of looking at it in the British Library, I preferred to wait until I found a copy for myself which I did in the autumn of 1985. When I opened the parcel containing it I glanced at the book quickly, and the second plate made me gasp and realise that here was an important influence on Tolkien in his early formative years. I am not suggesting that he consciously adapted motifs from this book but that they remained in his subconscious. Of course some of the motifs occur in very similar form in other fairy tales and are part of the 'soup'



referred to in *On Fairy Stories*, but this is one source Tolkien definitely knew and it was perhaps the first occasion on which he encountered them. The fact that he remembered so much about the book and the title *Puss Cat Mew* is itself a tribute to the impression it made on him, though he undoubtedly read many similar things for he says in *On Fairy Stories*: "I have been a lover of fairy stories since I learned to read". (Allen & Unwin, reset *Tree and Leaf*, 1975, P.9). I wonder how many readers of this article can remember much about their earliest acquaintance with fairy-stories. Tolkien said the stories were read to him, so the reader was almost certainly his mother, Mabel, and if he is correct in placing the reading before 1900, that means before his eighth birthday in January 1900, and before he went to school in September 1900.

The first story in the book is indeed *Puss Cat Mew* and purports to explain the meaning of the nursery rhyme *Puss-Cat Mew* which, the author says, every child knows. I must confess I had never heard it before, but on consulting several books of nursery rhymes I found that it was always included though the actual wording varied a little. For those as ignorant as myself, I give it here in full:

*Puss-cat Mew jumped over a coal;  
In her best petticoat burnt a great hole;  
Puss-cat Mew shan't have any milk  
'Till her best petticoat's mended with silk."*

One might note that in some of his poetry Tolkien also tried to expand and explain other nursery rhymes such as *Hey Diddle Diddle* and *The Man in the Moon*. *Puss-cat Mew* tells of Joe Brown, a miller's son who travelled in search of adventures and chose to ignore a warning not to enter a wood where ogres and fairies dwelt. Soon after entering the wood he comes to a clearing and on the far side sees "an old dead Oak, with two great branches, with scarce a leaf upon them, spreading out right and left. Almost as soon as he noticed the tree, he perceived, to his intense surprise, that it was visibly agitated, and trembled all over. Gradually, as he stood stock-still with amazement, this trembling rapidly increased, the bark of the tree appeared to become the skin of a living body, the two dead limbs became the gigantic arms of a man, a head popped up from the trunk, and an enormous Ogre stood before the astonished traveller." (*Stories for my Children*, P.4). The ogre, unlike Treebeard was evil, but I think the illustration which accompanies this scene is the best depiction of an Ent that I have seen and Joe Brown would not do too badly for a Hobbit.

In about 1903 Tolkien read *Macbeth* at school and in later years he especially remembered "the bitter disappointment and disgust from schooldays with the shabby use made in Shakespeare of the coming of Great Birnam Wood to High Dunsinane hill: I longed to devise a setting by which the trees might really march to war." (Carpenter's *Biography*, P.27-8). The illustration in this book may well have contributed to his expectation of something more dramatic. Joe is saved from the Ogre by a Tortoiseshell Cat, Puss-cat Mew, who changes him into a Hawthorn-tree at which the Ogre says: "Spiflicate those fairies!" (P.6),

a phrase which seems to me to be echoed in Bilbo's "Confusticate and bebotho these Dwarves!" in *The Hobbit*, (P.19).

Joe is later captured by the Ogres but escapes with the help of Puss-cat Mew who also aids him in leaving the perilous forest, whereupon she turns into a beautiful girl, the daughter of the Queen of the Fairies. she becomes Joe's wife but certain conditions must be fulfilled if she is to remain with him - for three years she must drink a bason of milk daily and every year on her wedding anniversary she must wear her best embroidered petticoat, and if during the time she is wearing it the petticoat should in any way be damaged, Puss-cat Mew will be lost to Joe until it is mended which can only be done by the Fairies in the perilous forest. As might be expected in a fairy-story, despite every care the petticoat gets damaged: a coal rolls from the fire and threatens to set the dress of Joe's mother alight and Puss-cat Mew's petticoat is burnt as she jumps over the coal to rescue Joe's mother.



Joe Brown and the Ogre.

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Puss-cat Mew is changed back into a cat and disappears, and indeed is the prisoner of the Ogres and must marry the chief of them, if he succeeds in catching Joe. Joe goes back to the wood and gives the petticoat to the Fairies to be mended and while this is being done he sets out to rescue his wife. He is met by a Fox who gives him several gifts to aid him in his quest: one is a dagger which even the tough hide of an Ogre cannot turn aside - which foreshadows various elven and dwarf-made blades in Tolkien's works; but more interesting is a left hand glove which when worn makes its bearer invisible. He is soon able to test this last gift, for it is not long before he meets two of the Ogres and one of their Dwarf servants. While invisible he is able to start a quarrel and violent fight

among them with blows and taunts which the recipients think come from one of their companions – rather in the way Gandalf foments dispute among the Trolls in *The Hobbit* – with the result that they injure each other so badly that Joe is able to kill all three. He uses the glove to enter the Ogres' castle unseen, and when he hears the two remaining Dwarf servants say they are going to make their daily visit to taunt Puss-cat Mew, he follows them and discovers her prison. In a similar way in *The Hobbit* the invisible Bilbo hears the guards talking and learns that Thorin is a prisoner in the Elvenking's palace as well as the twelve other Dwarves. Then with very Orc-like behaviour one dwarf kills the other, as he wants all the human heads which are the Dwarves' share of the Ogres' victims and Joe is able to deal with the one remaining Dwarf. Using his glove and knife he incapacitates most of the other Ogres though at one point he is in great danger, because when wearing the glove "as ill luck would have it, a nail in the doorpost caught his glove, which fell from his hand, and as he rushed from the yard the Ogre saw him" (P.60); the 'accident' foreshadows the tricky behaviour of the One Ring which tended to slip from the wearer's finger in moments of crisis – for example, from Isildur, leading to him being killed by Orcs. When the last Ogre is destroyed, and the Fairies have mended the petticoat, Puss-cat Mew is restored to her human shape and this time the conditions are fulfilled and she stays with Joe.

*Puss-cat Mew* is undoubtedly the best story in the book and agrees with Tolkien's statement in *On Fairy Stories* that "most good 'fairy-stories are about the adventures of men in the Perilous Realm or upon its shadowy marches" (*Tree and Leaf*, P.14) rather than about Fairies themselves. Many of the other stories in this book are more beast fables or cautionary tales than fairy stories; all of them tend to have a moral tone; for instance in *Puss-cat Mew* it is the children who have not learned their collect on Sunday who are captured by the Ogres; they also emphasise that one should be contented and accept one's position in life and remember that there are always people who are worse off. There is also a considerable amount of violence such as a detailed account of a fight between a robin and a sparrow. As in *The Hobbit* The narrator makes his presence felt occasionally with comments in the first person, such as when the Ogres had just ordered Joe to be killed "Joe heard (this) with very disagreeable feelings; for no one likes the prospect of being killed like a pig, and afterwards eaten by an Ogre; though it must be allowed that if the former fate happened to any of us, the latter would cause us little pain or trouble" (P.14); also when Puss-cat Mew first changes into a girl he says "I cannot attempt to describe her; but let everybody that reads this story think who is the prettiest person he or she has ever seen and Puss-cat Mew was just like her" (P.37).

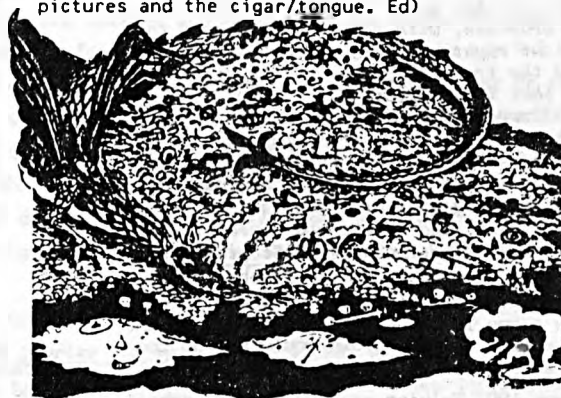
Another story *Ernest*, also has some Tolkien connections. A boy called Ernest goes down a well to recover his ball and meets an enormous Toad who is smoking a large cigar – this is also depicted in an illustration (see Plate). Note again the rather Hobbit-like figure. The encounter in some respects suggests Bilbo's meeting with Gollum who on more than one occasion has been



*Ernest and the Toad.*

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depicted as rather frog-like. In character however, the Toad is much more like Smaug. He calls Ernest a presumptuous fool for daring to come down the well. Ernest "replied with the lowest bow which circumstances enabled him to make – 'Presumptuous, sir, I may possibly be, but it can hardly be the act of a fool which has brought me into the presence of so noble and handsome a Toad as yourself.' 'Not so bad', replied the Toad; 'I see you have been taught manners.'" (P.74). Interestingly in Tolkien's own illustration 'Conversation with Smaug', (Plate 3), the invisible Bilbo is also bowing down deeply to Smaug, who cannot see him and there is no mention of a bow in the text. (Notice also the smoke in both pictures and the cigar/tongue. Ed)



Detail from *Conversation with Smaug.*

Bilbo similarly flatters Smaug. "No thank you, O Smaug the Tremendous!" he replied. "I did not come for presents. I only wished to have a look at you and see if you were really as great as tales say. I did not believe them... Truly songs and tales fall utterly short of the reality, O Smaug the Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities'." In his

reply Smaug also comments on Bilbo's manners: " 'You have nice manners for a thief and a liar' " (*The Hobbit*, Allen & Unwin HB. P.190). Later in the story Ernest meets the Man in the Moon who tells him: "I am the Man in the Moon, and of course I have come down before my time; and as to asking my way to Norwich, it is quite useless, for I find the people there are frightened at my very name just now" (P.86). The original nursery rhyme makes no mention of how the people received the Man in the Moon: -

*The Man in the Moon  
Came down too soon,  
and asked his way to Norwich.  
He went by the South  
And burnt his mouth  
With supping cold plum porridge.*

In Tolkien's retelling of the story, first printed in *A Northern Venture*, 1923 and later in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, the people are not frightened by the Man in the Moon but they treat him with disdain or ignore him.

In *Katie's Adventure* the young heroine becomes Queen of the Horses and is waited upon by servants who have horses' heads "but were otherwise like human beings, all but the hoofs" (P.161). These seem part way to the ponies who were servants in Beorn's Hall. In *The Brown Fairy* a little girl, Eva is taken by the Brown Fairy into her palace in a series of caves; one cave was paved in rubies and emeralds, the sides and domes were studded with pearls and it was lit by fireflies singly and hanging in clusters - "and right through the middle the stream rippled on, murmuring gently in the stillness" (P.195). Another cave was formed entirely of diamonds. These perhaps contributed a little to the caves of Menegroth and the visions of Khazâd-Dûm in its days of glory, but perhaps more to the Glittering Caves of Aglarond, in Helm's Deep, described so vividly by Gimli, who talks of gems and crystals and veins of precious ore glinting in their polished walls, and the dropping of the water in the still pool.

Who was this writer whose work Tolkien remembered over seventy years after hearing it? Edward Knatchbull was born in 1829 and through his mother he was a great-nephew of Jane Austen. His father died in 1849 and in accordance with his will Edward took the additional surname of his paternal grandmother, who had been an heiress, and became Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen. After spending some years at Oxford, at the age of 28 he became a Liberal Member of Parliament and for most of the period 1859-1874 he held various offices under first Palmerston and then Gladstone. In 1880 he was made Baron Brabourne of Brabourne in the county of Kent, but soon after entering the House of Lords he changed parties. He died in 1893. Between 1869 and 1894 he published fourteen books of stories for children, the last posthumously, (another involuntary similarity to Tolkien); some of his books were illustrated by quite well known artists such as Richard Doyle and Gustave Doré. *Stories for my Children* was his first book and was, like *The Hobbit*, written for his own children. It is dedicated to the four children of his first marriage, Edward, Kate, Eva and Cecil - he used their names in some of the stories. He says in his Preface: "Most of the stories were originally told to my children in the pleasant half-hour before the

arrival of their bedtime and the sound of the dressing bell interrupted our evening talk" (P.vii). A somewhat different class of household than that of Tolkien but the atmosphere must have been very similar for Christopher Tolkien, in his letter to Father Christmas in 1937 said about *The Hobbit*: "Daddy wrote it ages ago, and read to John, Michael and me in our Winter 'Reads' after tea in the evening." (Carpenter - Biography P.177).

I have had little success in discovering the illustrators responsible for the two plates relevant to Tolkien. No illustrator is credited in the book itself and Macmillan & Co. have no information in their records. There is no correspondence between Knatchbull-Hugessen and his publisher in the family records which are on loan to the Kent Record Office. Some of the other illustrations in the book are signed and the appearance of two names suggests that several illustrators were involved, which was not uncommon at the time; the signed or monographed illustrations are by J.Jellicoe and A.J.Elwes. The plate of Ernest and the Toad has no identification at all; that of Joe and the Ogre is signed only by the engraver, "J.Cooper sc.". This was James Davis Cooper, 1823-1904, a wood engraver, responsible for several important works in the nineteenth century. Artists whose work he engraved included Charles Keene and Randolph Caldecott. I have examined several books with illustrations engraved by James Cooper and noted that even in books where he is said to have been responsible for the engraving or to have directed the whole, he only signs a few plates. He may therefore have engraved all the plates in this book.



One very transitory influence from this and most other contemporary fairy tale books was the diminutive size of the fairies. I can imagine that in later years Tolkien would have castigated such description of fairies as the following: "a myriad of Fairy forms like those children see in the Christmas pantomime, only smaller and prettier" (P.23); the Forest Fairy was "about seven inches high, of perfect face and form, with a queenly look about her" (P.114), and she drove about the forest in a little wicker carriage drawn by six squirrels or rode on the back of a squirrel or rabbit; the Brown Fairy was "a little lady smaller than the smallest baby that ever was born, but evidently

full grown. She was standing... with her hand upon the neck of a milk-white rabbit from which she had apparently just alighted" (P.189).

Yet it is just this tradition which appeared in Tolkien's first work, the poem *Goblin Feet*, (*Oxford Poetry* 1915). In *The Book of Lost Tales Part One* (P.262) Christopher Tolkien explained that in the earliest entry in that work 'gnome' is an emendation of 'goblin' so it would appear that the beings referred to in this poem are the predecessors not of the Orcs but of the Noldor.

Although there is no direct mention of the Goblins' size it is implied by "the tiny horns of enchanted leprechauns", "the little tinkly sounds", "noiseless little robes" and "happy little feet". Humphrey Carpenter says in the Biography that Tolkien wrote it to please his wife Edith, who said that she liked "spring and flowers and trees, and little elfin people" (P.74). Carpenter also implies that its acceptance by Blackwell for *Oxford Poetry* led Tolkien to hope to get some income for his poetry and was thus one of the factors which encouraged him to marry Edith in 1916. It was quite successful in its time and appeared in several anthologies the first being five years later in 1920 when it was included in *The Book of Oxford Poetry*, edited by Dora Owen and published by Longmans. This is a beautiful luxury volume with 16 coloured plates by Warwick Goble and cost 21 shillings when published. It is a fine anthology beginning with the ballads of *Thomas the Rhymer* and *Tamlane* - and one might note in passing that in these early works there is no suggestion of the inhabitants of Faery being of diminutive size; among the authors whose works are included in the anthology are Shakespeare, Marvell, Milton, Keats, Scott, Tennyson, Yeats and de la Mare. Tolkien was in distinguished company and *Goblin Feet* must have made quite an impression to be included in such a prestige book. At the time Tolkien was

probably pleased and flattered.

The Anthology is of particular interest because one of the plates illustrates *Goblin feet*. According to Humphrey Carpenter, Tolkien began illustrating his own poems as an undergraduate but none of the illustrations have yet been published. *The Book of Fairy Poetry* was published in October 1920 and this is probably the first published illustration of a work by Tolkien. It does not follow Tolkien's poem too closely: it does show the "swinging lamps in little starlit globes" and the creature in the foreground could be a "beetle-thing" or less likely

a "golden honey-fly", and there is certainly an attempt to suggest "dancing goblin feet" but I cannot see any musical horns and Tolkien made no mention of his goblins having animal heads. (I suspect that in this Gable was influenced by Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* - also in the anthology - where animal-headed goblins occur). It is true that one of the heads is that of a "coney-rabbit", which is mentioned in *Goblin Feet*. It is possible that the rabbits used as steeds by the fairies in *Stories for My Children* brought them into *Goblin feet* where their inclusion is surprising but would make more sense if one assumed that some of the Goblins rode on them.

As late as 1971 there was a request for *Goblin Feet* to appear in an anthology and on this occasion Tolkien wrote: "I wish the unhappy little thing, representing all that I came (so soon after) to fervently dislike could be buried forever." (*The Book of Lost Tales, Part One, P.32*).

## goblin feet



I AM off down the road  
Where the fairy lanterns glowed  
And the little pretty flittermice are flying:  
A slender band of grey  
It runs creepily away  
And the hedges and the grasses are a-sighing.  
The air is full of wings,  
And of blundering beetle-things  
That warn you with their whirring and their humming.  
O! I hear the tiny horns  
Of enchanted leprechauns  
And the padding feet of many gnomes a-coming!

O! the lights: O! the gleams: O! the little tinkly sounds:  
O! the rustle of their noiseless little robes:  
O! the echo of their feet—of their little happy feet:  
O! their swinging lamps in little starlit globes.

I must follow in their train  
Down the crooked fairy lane  
Where the coney-rabbits long ago have gone,  
And where silverly they sing  
in a moving moonlit ring  
All a-twinkle with the jewels they have on.  
They are fading round the turn  
Where the glow-worms palely burn  
And the echo of their padding feet is dying!  
O! it's knocking at my heart—  
Let me go! O! let me start!  
For the little magic hours are all a-flying.

O! the warmth! O! the hum! O! the colours in the dark!  
O! the gauzy wings of golden honey-flies!  
O! the music of their feet—of their dancing goblin feet!  
O! the magic! O! the sorrow when it dies.

J.R.R. tolkien

We can trace some of the changes in Tolkien's conception of Fairies/Elves in the early versions of his Mythology which are now appearing, edited by Christopher Tolkien as "*The History of Middle-earth*". If he felt like that about *Goblin Feet* he may well have been horrified to know that these early versions would be published, but I certainly do not regret their publication for we are given a fascinating insight into the evolution of his Mythology, and



one strand of this is the way he moved from the traditional view of fairies to something quite different.

In *The Book of Lost Tales Part One*, the Cottage of Lost Play (written c.1916-17) is described as a tiny dwelling. "There dwelt within, 'twas said, Lindo and Vairë who had built it many years ago, and with them were no few of their folk and friends and children. And at this he wondered more than before, seeing the size of the cottage; but he that opened to him, perceiving his mind, said: 'Small is the dwelling, but smaller still are they that dwell here - for all who enter must be very small indeed, or of their own good wish become as very little folk even as they stand upon the threshold'." (P.14). In *Gilfanon's Tale* when the Elf Nuin sees in the Vale of Sleep the forms of Men who had not yet awakened to live in the Great Lands "all who slumbered there were children, yet was their stature that of the greatest of the Elves" (Part I, P.233). This suggests that adult Men would be at least twice the size of fully grown Elves but almost immediately Tolkien begins to change this, for the above quotation from *Gilfanon's Tale* is followed by a note: "Men were almost of a stature at first with the Elves, the Fairies being far greater and Men smaller than now. As the power of Men has grown the Fairies have dwindled and Men waxed somewhat" (P.235). In the later parts of *The Book of Lost Tales* the Elves were conceived to be of slighter build and stature than Men but not greatly so. It was because Túrin "was a Man and of greater stature than they" that Beleg and Flinding were unable to carry him further and cut his bonds while he was still unconscious and thus occurred Beleg's tragic death; (Part II, P.80). The same is true in *The Lays of Beleriand*, (P.44) where the carrying of Túrin is called a doughty deed for though Men of that time were not as mighty as they became later and the Elves had not yet diminished, yet still the Elves were not taller than Men so "Like a log they lifted his limbs, and and straining staggered with stealth and fear, with bodies bending and bones aching". Another reference of interest is found in *The Book of Lost Tales Part Two* (P.281): "After the departure of Eärendel and the coming of the elves to Tol Eressëa great ages elapse: Men spread and thrive, and the Elves of the Great Lands fade. As Men's stature grows theirs diminishes. Men and Elves were formerly of a size, though Men always larger". He goes on to provide a link between his view of Elves as of almost the same stature as Men and the traditional diminutive view. "After the Battle of Rds the Elves faded with sorrow. They cannot live in air breathed by a number of Men equal to their own or greater; and ever as Men wax and grow more powerful and numerous so the fairies fade and grow small and tenuous, filmy and transparent, but Men larger and more dense and gross. At last Men, or almost all, can no longer see the Fairies." (P.283). This is more or less the relationship of Men and Fairies which occurs in traditional fairy tales and in newly created stories such as those by Knatchbull-Hugessen. Tolkien makes his very point himself: "So fade the Elves and it shall come to be... as Men wax... ever shall they fade more and grow less; and those of the after days shall scoff, saying Who are the fairies?... And some few shall answer: Memories faded dim, a wraith of vanishing loveliness, a rustle of the grass, a glint of dew, some subtle intonation of the wind; and others yet fewer

shall say....'Very small and delicate are the fairies now... Hark O my brothers, they shall say, the little trumpets blow; we hear a sound of instruments unimagined small. Like strands of wind, like mystic half-transparentcies, Gilfanon Lord of Tavrobel rides out tonight amid his folk and hunts the elfin deer beneath the paling sky. A music of forgotten feet, a gleam of leaves, a sudden bending of the grass, and wistful voices murmuring on the bridge and they are gone.'" (Part II, P.288-89). This is where *Goblin Feet* fits into Tolkien's mythology.

However this did not remain Tolkien's view. Christopher Tolkien says: "Ultimately, of course, the Elves shed all associations and qualities that would be now commonly considered 'fairylike', and those who remained in the Great Lands in Ages of the world at this time unconceived were to grow greatly in stature and in power; there was nothing filmy or transparent about the heroic or majestic Eldar of the Third Age of Middle-earth." (Part II, P.327). J.R.R. Tolkien himself in *On Fairy Stories* acknowledged that the idea of the diminutive size of fairies was a leading one in modern use and says: "Of old there were indeed some inhabitants of Faërie that were small (though hardly diminutive), but smallness was not characteristic of that people as a whole. The diminutive being, elf of fairy is (I guess) in England largely a sophisticated product of literary fancy". Even in *The Lord of the Rings* there are some echoes of the earlier view. Galadriel says to Frodo: "Yet if you succeed, then our power is diminished and Lothlórien will fade, and the tides of Time will sweep it away. We must depart into the West, or dwindle to rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget and be forgotten" (F.o.R. A & U HB. P.380). In his latest writings on Middle-earth Tolkien had no doubt about the stature of the Eldar. "The Eldar of the Elder Days were also very tall. Galadriel 'the tallest of all the women of the Eldar of whom tales tell', was said to be man-high, but it is noted 'according to the measure of the Dúnedain and the men of old', indicating a height of about six feet four inches" (*Unfinished Tales*, P.286).

Tolkien was not unique in his time in portraying Fairies or Elves of a stature comparable to Men. They appear so in Lord Dunsany's *The King of Elfland's daughter*, 1924, and in Rutland-Boughton's opera *This Immortal Hour* but he was undoubtedly greatly responsible for the change in the general view of "faerie" in the second half of the Twentieth century. There are still many works in which Fairies/Elves are dainty and diminutive though these are mainly written for children. Indeed, in the past, the diminution in the size of the Fairies may have been a result of the banishment of fairy tales to the nursery; children would feel more at ease with beings in size closer to themselves. It is interesting that having increased the stature of his Elves, Tolkien invented the half-size Hobbits when he came to devise a story for his children. But side by side with the more traditional diminutive view a new one has grown up, mainly influenced by Tolkien's works, in which the inhabitants of 'faerie' have become beings of power, dignity and stature; such works are usually aimed at an adolescent or adult audience. Tolkien has added new ingredients to the 'soup' of which he speaks in *On Fairy Stories* and greatly increased the number of those who are nourished by it; the Fairy Tale

Tradition has been altered and enriched by him and is no longer mainly confined to the nursery audiences.

#### Acknowledgments

I would like to express my thanks to the present Lord Brabourne and his wife, Lady Mountbatten, for the interest they showed in my research and their careful scanning of their own copy of *Stories for My Children*; to Nita Rigden who provided me with a biography of Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen and helped me with advice; to Nigel Yates, Kent County Archivist, who checked the Brabourne papers to see if there was any correspondence with Macmillan & Co.; to Macmillan & Co. who checked their records, and finding no reference to the illustrations agreed that they were probably out of copyright, but in any case gave permission for their reproduction.

The Editor wishes to give special thanks to the Executors' of the late J.R.R. Tolkien for allowing Mallorn to re-publish the poem "*Goblin Feet*" within its pages without a fee, and Mr. Rayner Unwin for allowing us to reprint a detail from the drawing "*Conversation with Smaug*", published in 1937 in "*The Hobbit*". All quotations from the works of J.R.R. Tolkien are reproduced with the permission of their publishers, George Allen & Unwin.



#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I hope you have noticed the address on top of the editorial page. This where you've got to send all your comments on Mallorn, reports, articles, artwork, etc... If your comments are found interesting or relevant they might be quoted in this column, depending on the available space at the time. Quotes taken from your letters will be subjected to the same Copyright as any other material. For further information on this see bottom of page 2. Some send article-length letters of comment and unfortunately there is not enough space for printing these here. However let them be reassured, they will probably find their way in the article section of the Journal.

Please do not forget to read the guidelines on p.2 before sending your letter, for unless I know otherwise, any spelling mistake may find its way herein, and as you may have noticed, my typing mistakes do not need company: they are

numerous enough! To print you I have to be able to read you first.

First of all a letter from Margaret Askew, following her article on the G.W.R., and Andrew Turner's letter in Mallorn 22:

*I have found out that 'Evening Star' has been preserved and is in steam transfer of her now adorns my typewriter at work.*

*Since writing the article I have come across much more 'evidence' of Tolkien's using the G.W.R. as source material, naturally! I was glad to find that the rail-buffs found the article OK on the railways side.*

Next comes a letter from Alex Lewis:

*I enjoyed Charles' review very much. It was well written and considered much that was necessary in that difficult book.*

*However, I would disagree with one point that Charles made when he said that the book is... of more use to the curious... than as something that stands in isolation. Where would you place the unique descriptions of the armed forces of Gondolin, and the gloriously real battle scene, the sense of impending doom, unstoppable because the King had done nothing about the real crisis looming (much as politicians nowadays, one could add!) And the anguish of the King! He cast his crown at the feet of his people. (much as Finrod did in Nargothrond, Ed.) Galdor picked it up, but the King refused it. No blow will I strike more, he said and went up his tower - very much as Denethor did in Minas Tirith - and then died as his tower was thrown by the Dragon. The panic of the folk, the evacuation through the tunnel, the treachery of Meglin. No, I think it is not a book merely for the curious. This is a book by a talented man in his late twenties, early thirties that was never completed, and just as, say, an early unfinished symphony of Beethoven would deservedly arouse great interest, so I think that the Book of Lost Tales Volume II, alongside with its predecessor, which merits several readings to really be appreciated, is a gem of a work.*

I hope you find the same satisfaction with Charles' review of *The Lays of Beleriand*. Do not forget that, by the time you read this, Volume IV, *The Shape of Middle-earth* should be available in all good bookshops.

