

to suppose that they are unsusceptible to the great heights and deeps of the holy passion. It is to make the vulgar confusion between the passion and the expression of it. They are capable of the greatest devotion to the beloved, of the greatest sacrifice of all—the sacrifice of their own nature. These fairy-wives of whom I have been speaking—Miranda King, Mabilla By-the-Wood—when they took upon them our nature, and with it our power of backward-looking and forward-peering, was what they could remember, was what they must dread, no sacrifice? They could have escaped at any moment, mind you, and been free.¹ Resuming their first nature they would have lost regret. But they did not. Love was their master. There are many cases of the kind. With men it is otherwise. I have mentioned Mary Wellwood, the carpenter's wife, twice taken by a fairy and twice recaptured. The last time she was brought back to Ashby-de-la-Zouche she died there. But there is reason for this. A woman marrying a

¹ When a fairy marries a man she gradually loses her fairy-power and her children have none of it or only vestiges—so much as the children of a genius may perhaps exhibit. I am not able to say how long the fairy-wife's ability to resume her own nature lasts. *The Forsaken Merman* occurs to one; but I doubt if Miranda King, at the time, say, of her son's marriage with Mabilla, could have gone back to the sea. Sometimes, as in Mrs. Ventris's case, fairy-wives play truant for a night or for a season. I have reason to believe that not uncommon. The number of fairy-wives in England alone is very considerable—over a quarter of a million, I am told.