
THE LITERARY KINGDOM.

BY M. M. KILPATRICK.

MR. PALMER COX, distinguished as author and artist, and as creator of the immortal "Brownies," is a most delightful man, with a face so frank and genial it would be as good as a letter of credit anywhere. He was born in Grantby, about fifty miles from Montreal, in a community settled by Scotch people, who still speak such broad Scotch that when he returns home on an occasional visit he can hardly understand them. After reaching manhood he drifted away from home, lived for a while in California, and finally settled in New York.

For five years Mr. Cox wrote verses and made illustrations for magazines, always finding his subjects among birds, insects and animals, which he dressed like men and women, and which were made to moralize over the dangers and temptations of life, and to talk and pursue such lines of thought as a person might under such circumstances. Although his work was much sought after, and commanded good prices, he was not satisfied, and he chafed to accomplish that which would be recognized as distinctively his own. He was doing original work in an original way, and yet in an old way which had been followed by Æsop, La Fontaine and others. More than this, he wanted something wherein he would find more scope, as "the conversation of a bear is found to be limited and the idea of a stork talking is stretched at the best." One day the thought of the old legend of the Brownies flashed upon him. Here was a story that had been known for centuries, and heard by hundreds of thousands of people, none of whom had utilized it, or even made a picture of a Brownie. Acting upon impulse, he drew the little, round, fat fellow with the peaked cap, the original Brownie—the father of Brownieland—and then he wrote in verse a story suggested by the picture. As soon as it was published

people began writing from all over the country asking what was a Brownie, why they were called Brownies, and so many other questions, that Mr. Cox had to go back to history and hunt up a pedigree for the little people who were bringing him fame and fortune.

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ACCORDING to the Scotch legend, the Brownies were a little race of gnomes and fairies who were full of harmless pranks and helpful deeds. They were household fairies, and came at night to complete the unfinished tasks of the day. Unlike the Elfin folk, who figure in the fairy stories of all other countries, the Brownies were peculiar in this—they were invisible to mortal eye. Here and there was an old man or woman, gifted with second sight, to whom the Brownies were revealed, and who saw them at their tasks, or received timely warning of some event, but no one else could see them. In all the legends they were described alike as being little men, never women, with enormous physical power and ability at work. They never harmed anything but were always little drudges, doing the heavy work of the household to which they were attached. It was the custom to leave a little cream, or, lacking that, a little malt, as reward for the Brownies, and in households so poor that they had no crock or jar for it, there was a hollowed-out stone in which the good wife left the little supper that was to pay the sprite for finishing the half-knit stocking or the unthreshed grain. When this meal of malt or milk was omitted a few times, it seems that the Brownie took no revenge, but simply bestowed his attentions upon more appreciative households. So long ago as the fourteenth century this belief was as firmly implanted in the hearts of the people as a belief in religion, and may have originated with the Danes, who overran Scotland and the adjacent islands