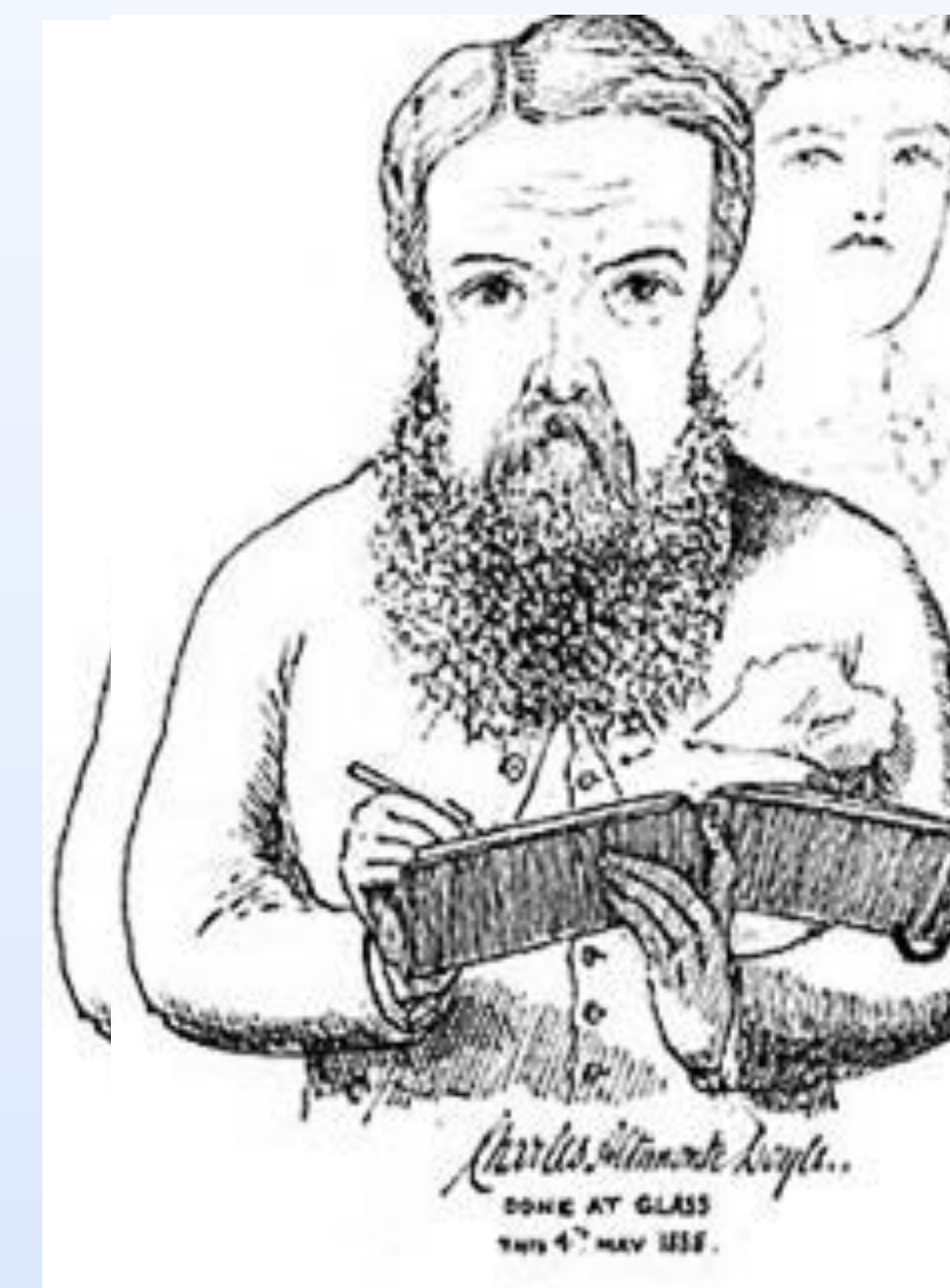


The Demons are in the Details: Charles Altamont Doyle and [The Heroes of Asgard](#) (1857)



Victoria Albert Museum - "[Meditation, Self Portrait](#)"

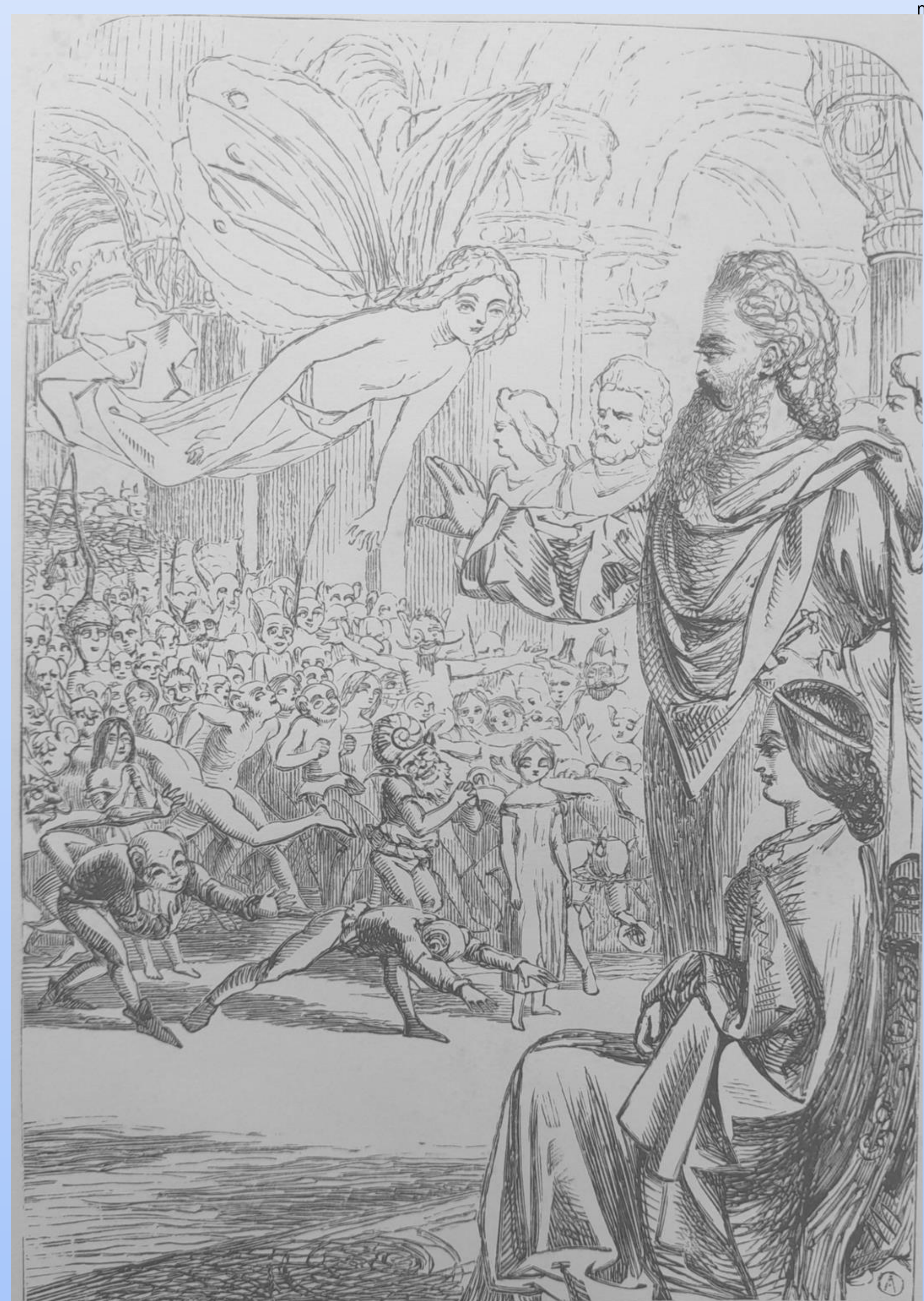


Charles Altamont Doyle (1832-1893)
[National Galleries Scotland](#)

[Abstract](#)

[Interactive
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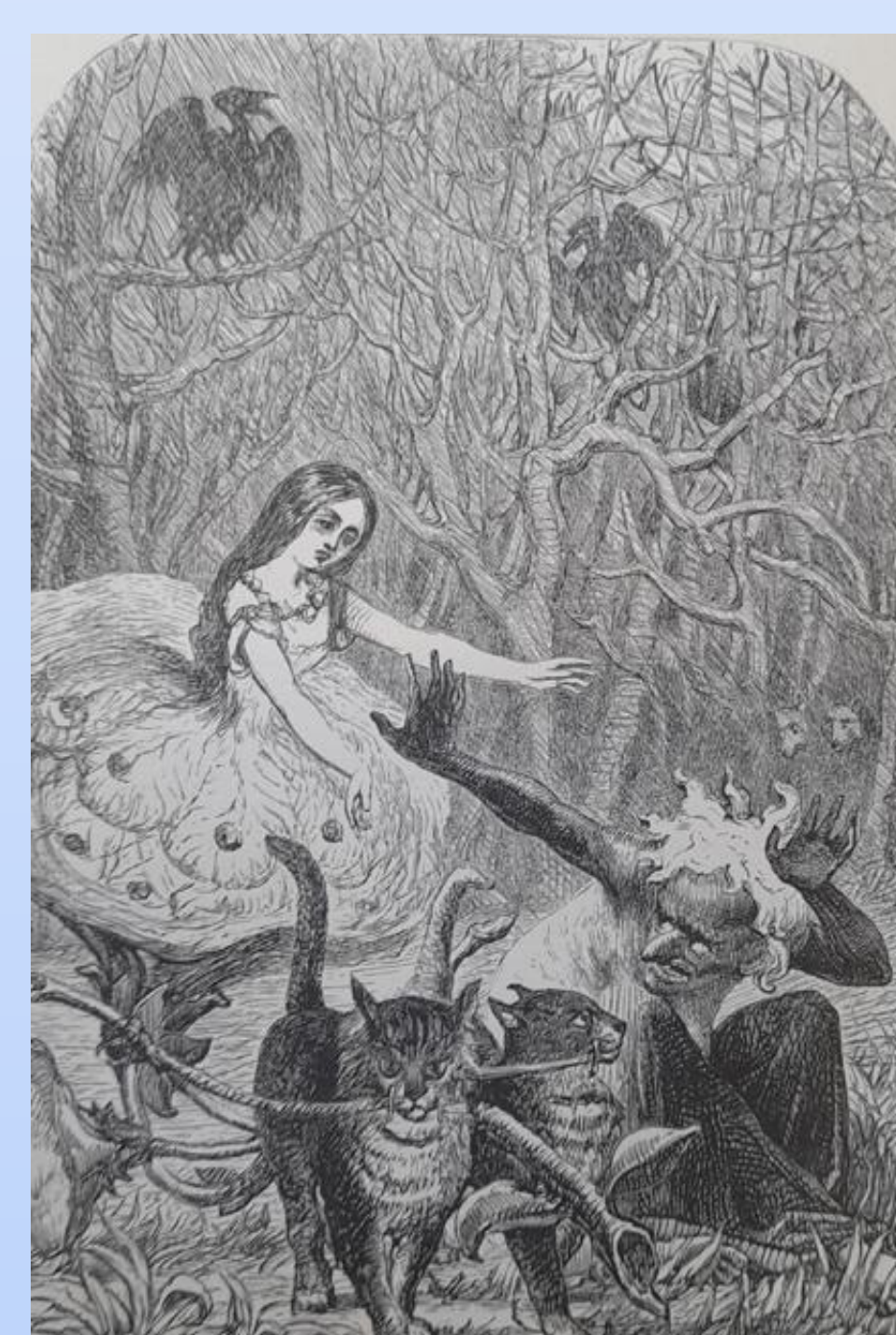
[Sources](#)



HERMOD'S RETURN WITH THE DWARFS - page 31
Photo: Jón Karl Helgason



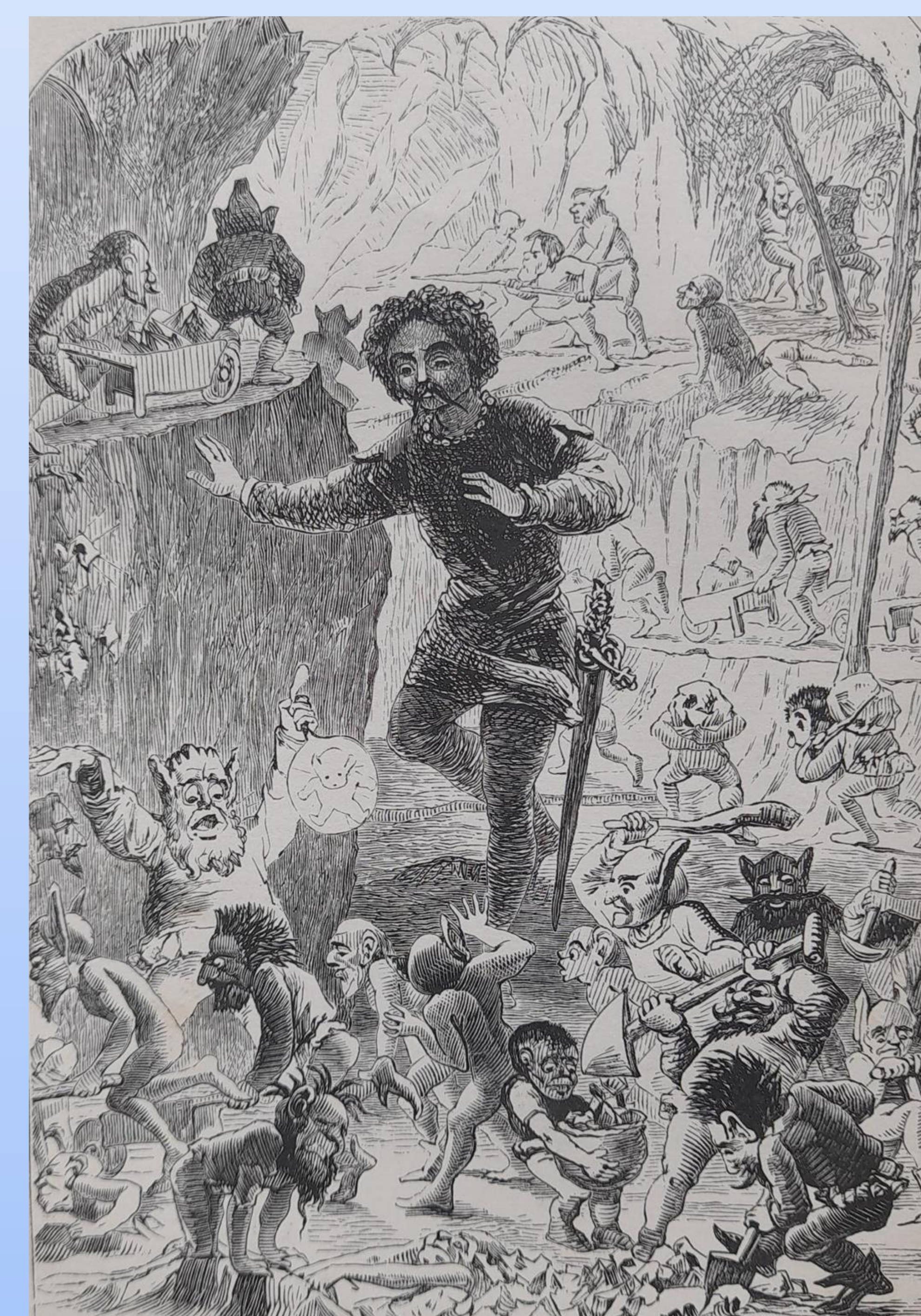
THOR'S ATTACK ON THE GIANT
SKRYMIR - page 74
Photo: Jón Karl Helgason



FREYJA AT THE ENTRANCE OF
THE IRON WOOD - page 150
Photo: Jón Karl Helgason



IDUNA AND THE ELLEWOMEN -
page 194
Photo: Jón Karl Helgason



SKIRNIR AMONG THE DWARFS - page 270
Photo: Jón Karl Helgason

"The fables of the Northern mythology are here reduced to a form adapted to the intelligence of children. They have been cleverly set to an accompaniment of occasional dialogue, lightening and relieving the narrative of giants' wars and of heroic prowess achieved by dwellers in the immortal city. The book is a good specimen of learning made easy by being made pleasant."

Review of *The Heroes of Asgard*, by Annie Keary, and Liza Keary. *The Athenaeum*, 11 Apr. 1857: 470. Web. 27 July 2021.

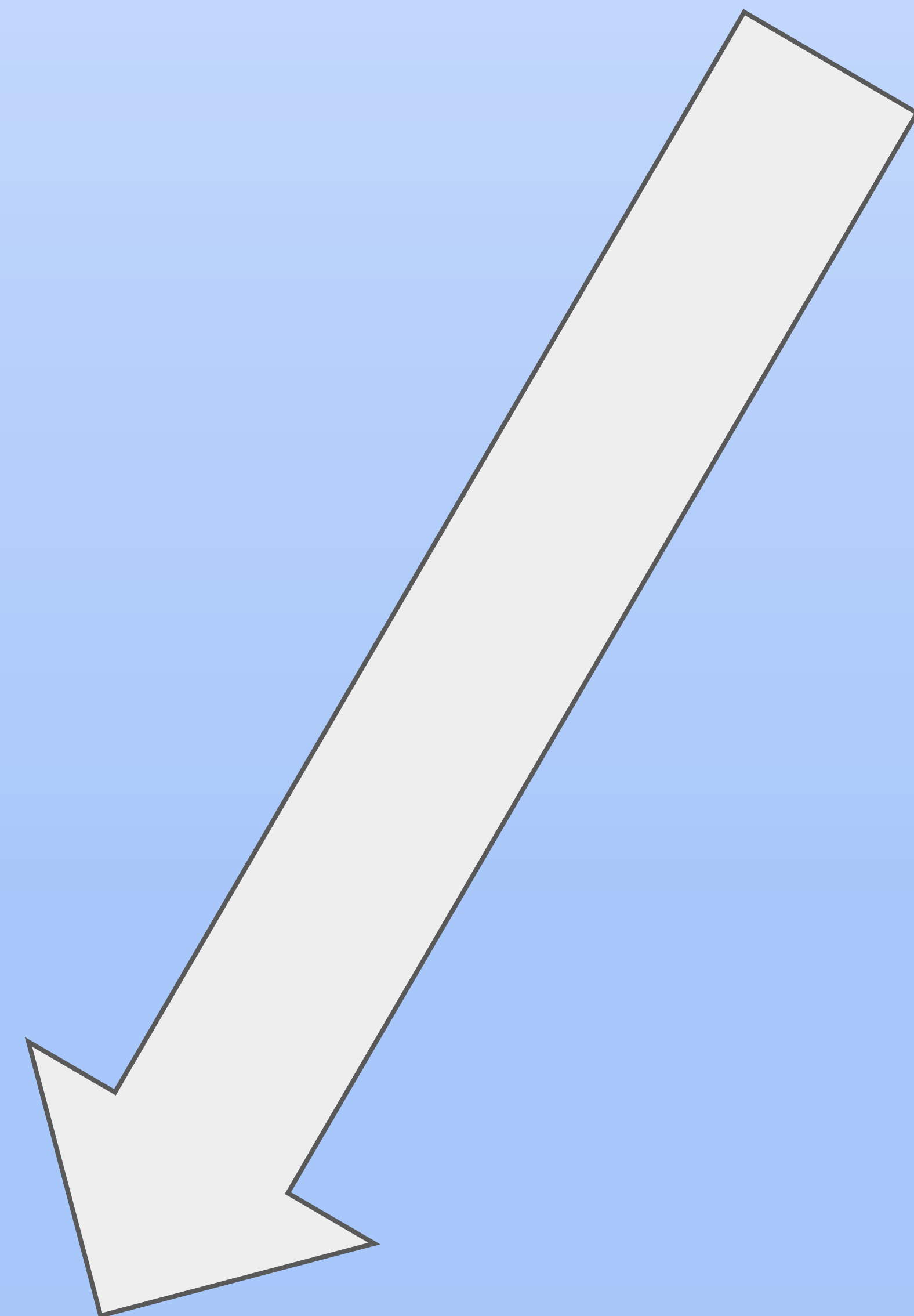
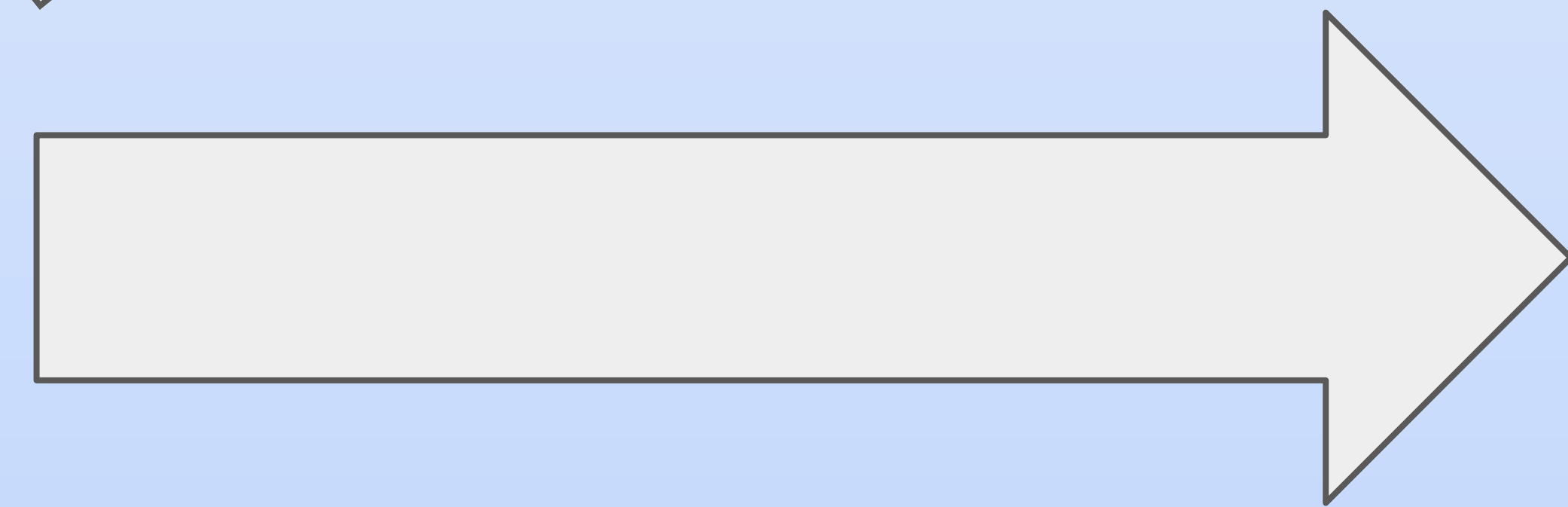
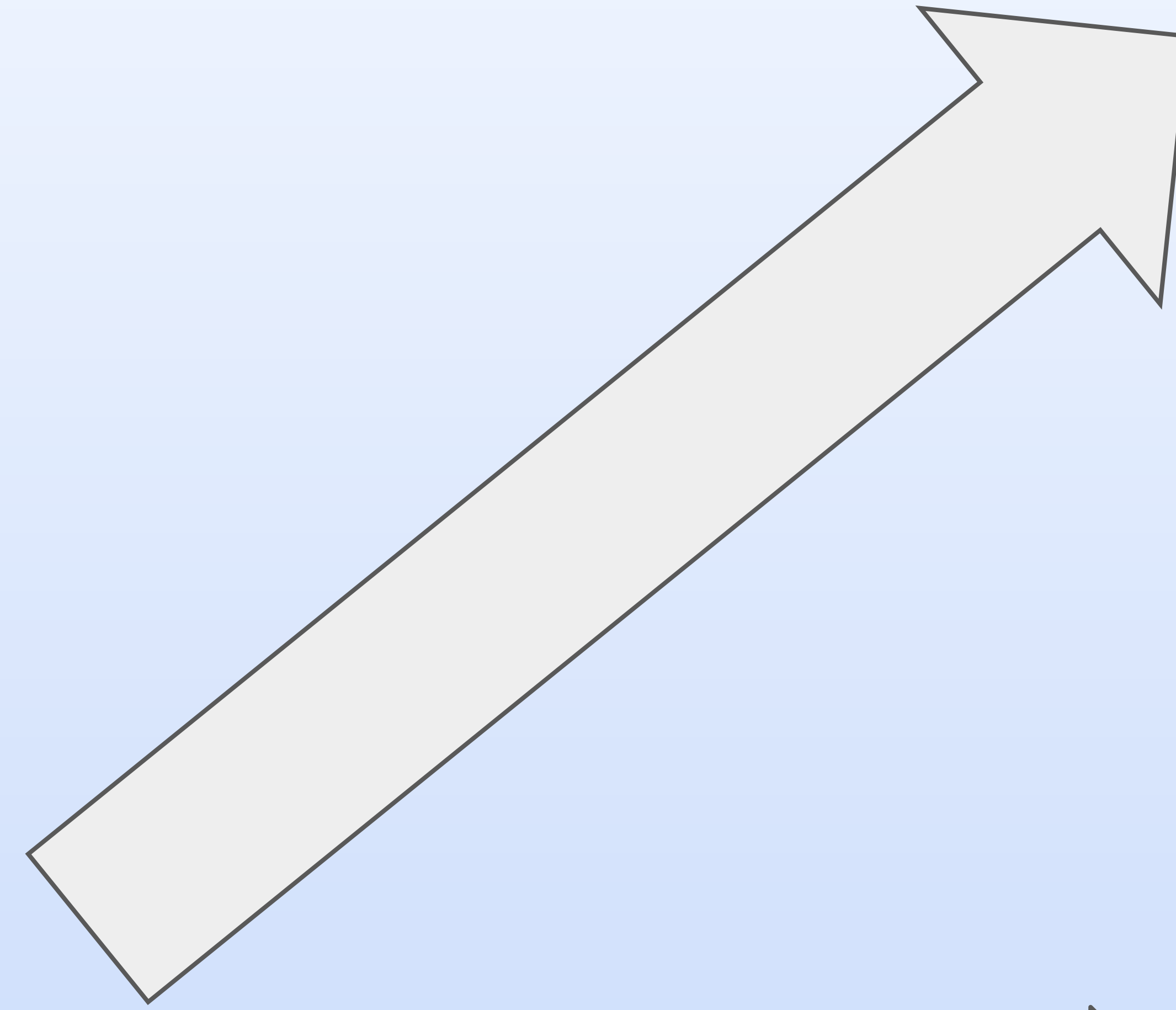
Birth	Civil Servant	Married	<i>The Heroes of Asgard</i>	Retired due to poor health.	Blairerno House, a "home for Intemperate Gentlemen"	Sunnyside, Montrose Royal Lunatic Asylum	Crichton Royal Institution	Death
1832	1849	1855	1857	1876	1881	1885	1892	1893

The Demons are in the Details:

Charles Altamont Doyle
and

[The Heroes of Asgard](#) (1857)

HOT SPOTS FOR NAVIGATION



Click on the
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page for the
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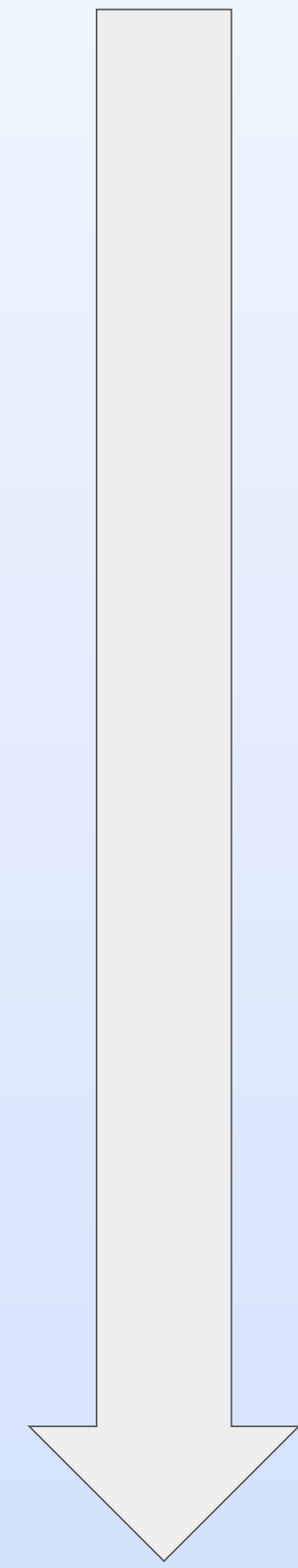
Click on the
middle of
the right
side of each
page for the
[Poster Page](#)

Click on the
bottom
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of each
page for the
[next page](#).

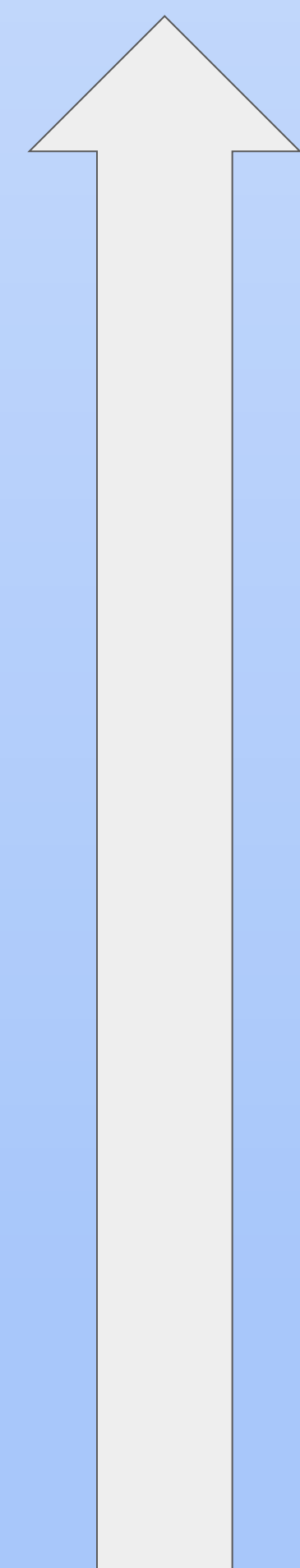
Click on the
left side of
the page for
the
[Interactive
Links List](#)

You can click on all of the illustrations on the [Poster Page](#) as well as the logos and the photo of [Trish Baer](#) (to see the [MyNDIR Team](#)) at the bottom of the Poster Page.

Interactive Links List



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2. Hot Spots for Navigation
3. [Interactive Links List](#)
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5. [The Doyle Diary](#)
Link to slide 11: [Illustrations of Charles and Mary Doyle from The Doyle Diary](#)
6. ["Hermod's Return with the Dwarfs"](#).
7. [Detail](#) from "Hermod's Return with the Dwarfs."
8. ["Thor's Attack on the Giant Skrymir"](#)
9. ["Freyja at the Entrance of the Iron Wood"](#)
10. ["Iduna and the Ellevomen"](#)
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13. [Illustrations of Charles and Mary Doyle](#) from *The Doyle Diary*
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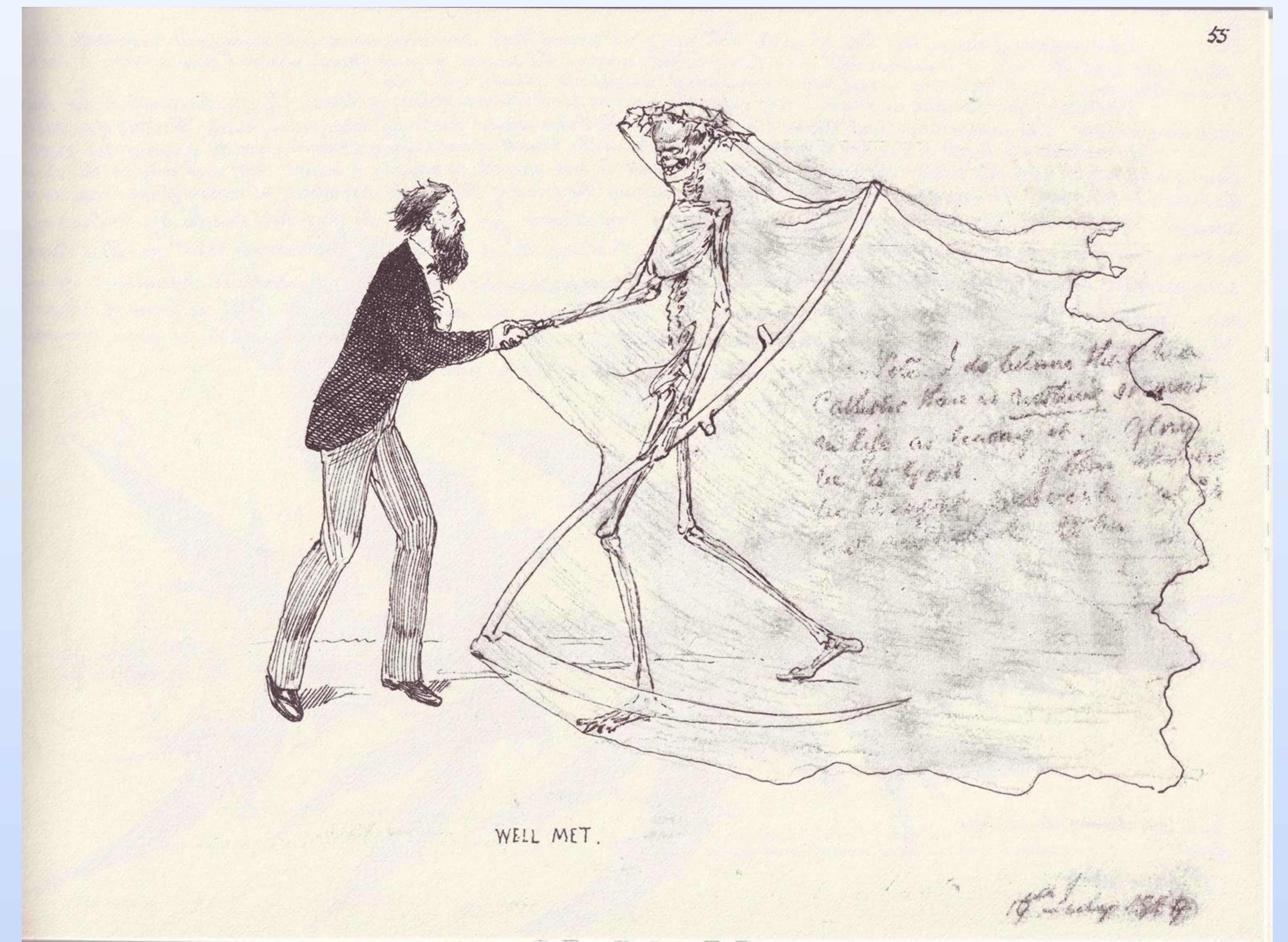
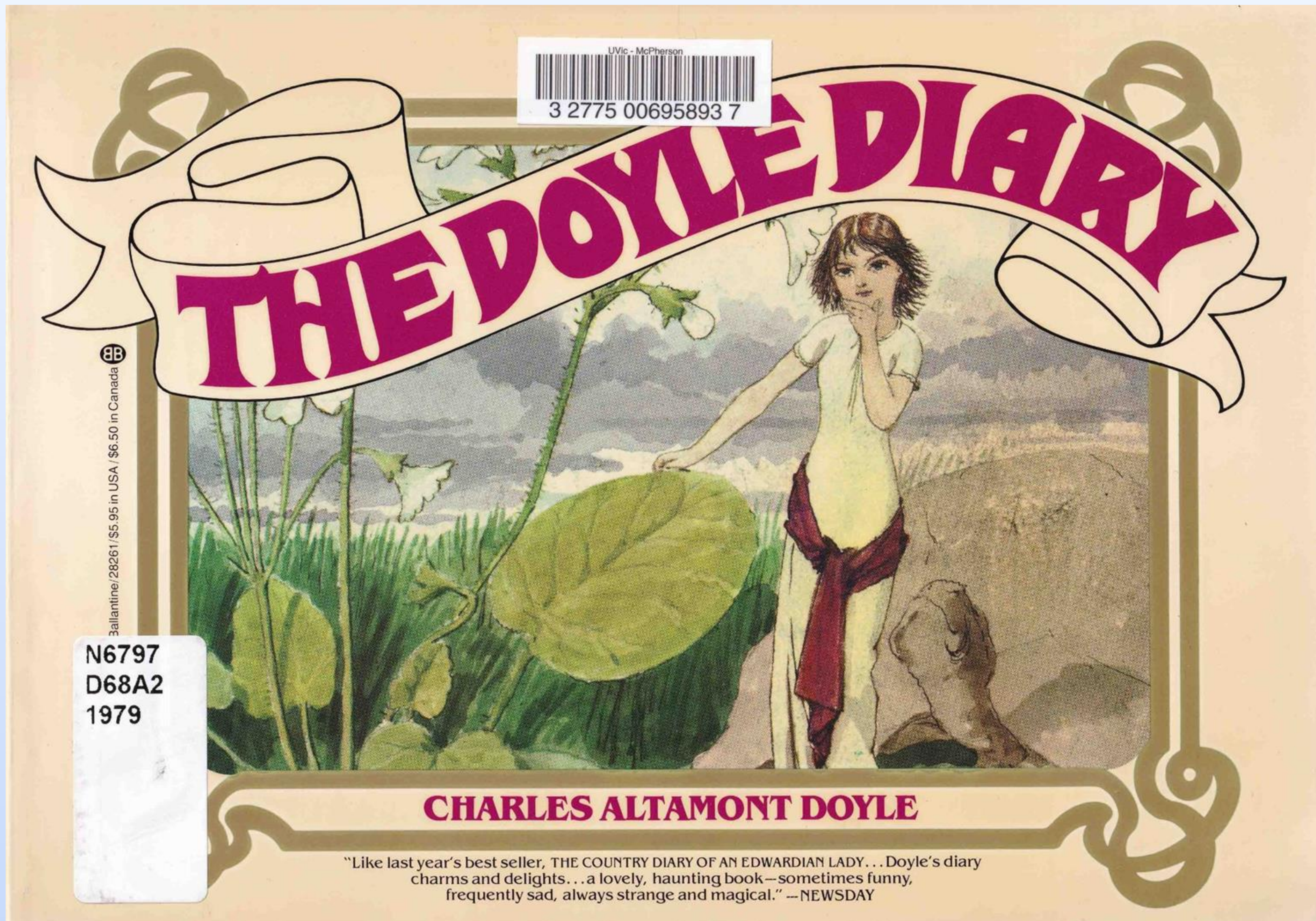
- 1) Royal Albert Museum: "[Meditation Self Portrait](#)"
- 2) National Galleries Scotland: "[Self Portrait](#)"
- 3) The Mythical Creatures Catalogue: "[Ellevomen](#)"
- 4) UVic: [Humanities Computing and Media Centre \(HCMC\)](#)
- 5) [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\)](#)
- 6) [Electronic Textual Cultures Lab \(ETCL\)](#)
- 7) [My Norse Digital Image Repository \(MyNDIR\)](#)
- 8) [Digital Humanities Summer Institute 2022 \(DHSI\)](#)
- 9) Trish Baer and [The MyNDIR Team](#)
- 10) [The Heroes of Asgard and the Giants of Jotunheim; Or, the Week and Its Story.](#)
- 11) "Charles Altamont Doyle." [Wikipedia.](#)

Charles Altamont Doyle: *Meditation, Self Portrait* (watercolour 1885-1893)



[Victoria Albert Museum](#)

“This watercolour comes from one of the sketchbooks used by the artist during his residence in the Royal Montrose Lunatic Asylum in Scotland. The frame was made for the exhibition of the artist's work organised by his son, the writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859 -1930), in London, 1924.”



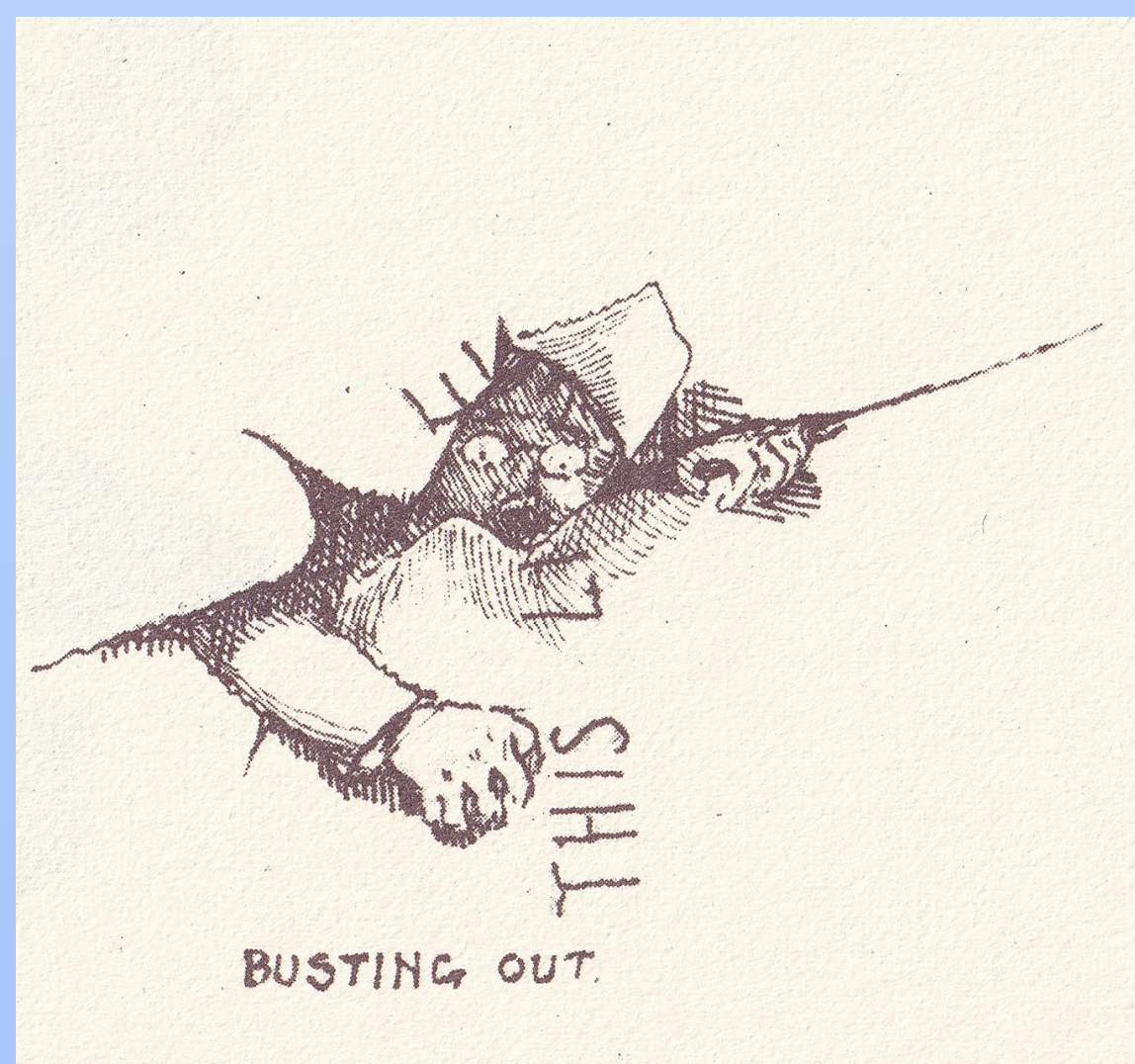
“Well Met” (55)

“The case of Charles Doyle projects an overwhelming poignancy” with its “mixture of forlorn brightness, gentle wonder and anguished desperation.” (Michael Baker 1978 xxix).



Untitled (27)

[Click here for illustrations of Charles and Mary Doyle from *The Doyle Diary*.](#)



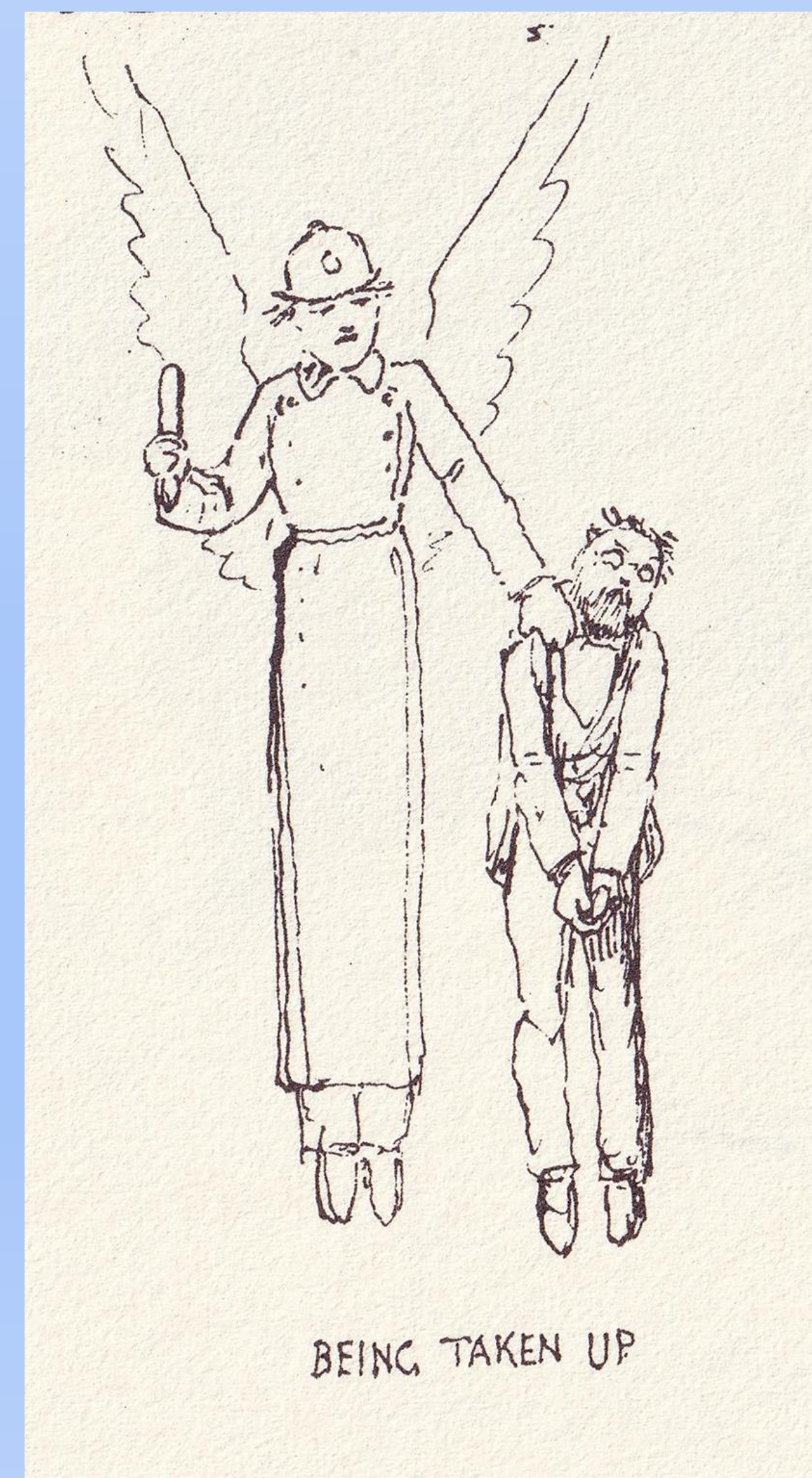
“Busting Out” (72)



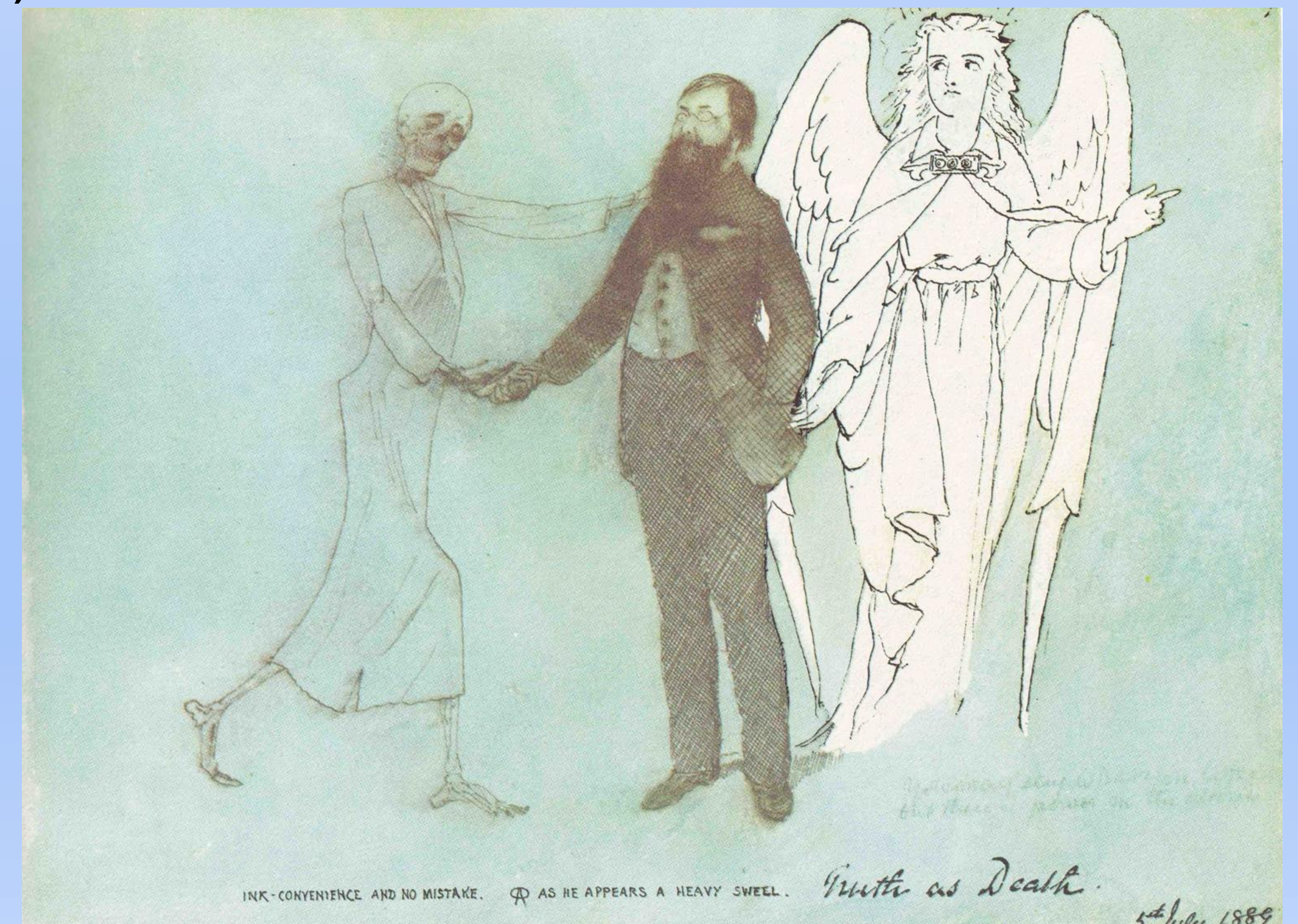
“Succeeded” (72)



“Trying to Get Out of Quod” (72)



“Being Taken Up” (60)



“Truth as Death” (7)

“Hermod’s Return with the Dwarfs”

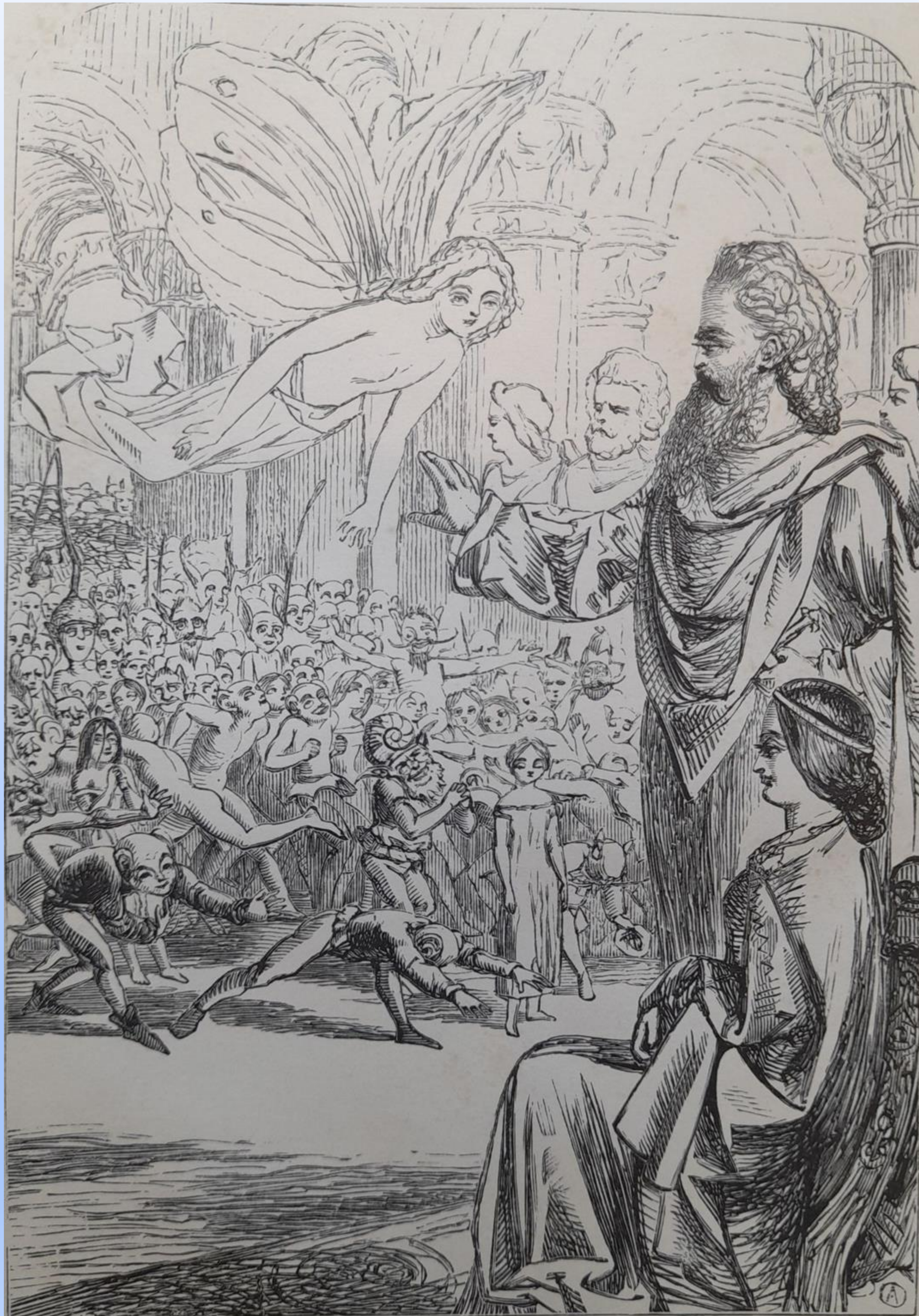


Photo: Jón Karl Helgason



Detail: The god Hermóðr depicted as a winged fairy.

● [Click here for an enlarged view of the crowd scene in the bottom half of the illustration.](#)

This scene is part of the Keary sisters’ retelling, in the *Heroes of Asgard* (1857), of the Mead of Poetry myth from Snorri’s *Edda* (Faulkes 62). In the myth, Óðinn does not send Hermóðr to fetch the dwarfs and does not judge or sentence them. The illustrator, Charles Altamont Doyle, depicts Óðinn and several other male figures with his own face, and other figures recall his illustrations of supernatural creatures in his watercolour “[Meditation, Self Portrait](#)” (Royal Albert Museum). Doyle also depicts Frigg and several other female figures with the face of his wife, Mary. Doyle’s figure of Óðinn appears to be gesturing that the dwarfs should stay back rather than “beckoning them” to come forward as is described in *The Heroes of Asgard* (31)



Photo: Jón Karl Helgason

Detail from “Hermod’s
Return with the Dwarfs” on
page 31.

“Thor’s Attack on the Giant Skrymir”



Photo: Jón Karl Helgason



Detail of Skrymir



Detail of Thor



Detail of Roskva

This scene is part of the Keary sisters’ retelling, in the *Heroes of Asgard* (1857), of the myth concerning Þórr’s Journey to the Court of Útgarðaloki from Snorri’s *Edda* (Faulkes 40). It is an accurate depiction of the scene in which Þórr encounters a giant who says his name is Skrymir. The illustrator, Charles Altamont Doyle, depicts Óðinn and several other male figures with his own face, and depicts Röska with the face of his wife, Mary. Doyle’s depiction of the giant in the form of a mountain is appropriate because giants in Norse mythology are sometimes called “bergrisi”, i.e., hill giants (Cleasby Vigfússon 60).

“Freyja at the Entrance of the Iron Wood”



Details of the Iron Witch's children, i.e., ravenous bird and wolves.



Detail of Freyja

Detail of an Iron Witch

This scene is part of the Keary sisters' retelling, in the *Heroes of Asgard* (1857), of the myth concerning Freyja and the Brísingamen Necklace from Snorri's *Edda* (Faulkes 40). The Kearys added the scene in which Freyja, while searching for her missing husband, enters the wood known as Járnvíðr and encounters the witch who lives there. The Kearys also invent a curse attached to the necklace to explain why Freyja's husband can no longer be with her. The illustrator, Charles Altamont Doyle, depicts Freyja with the face of his wife, Mary.

“Iduna and the Ellewomen”



Detail of an Ellewoman



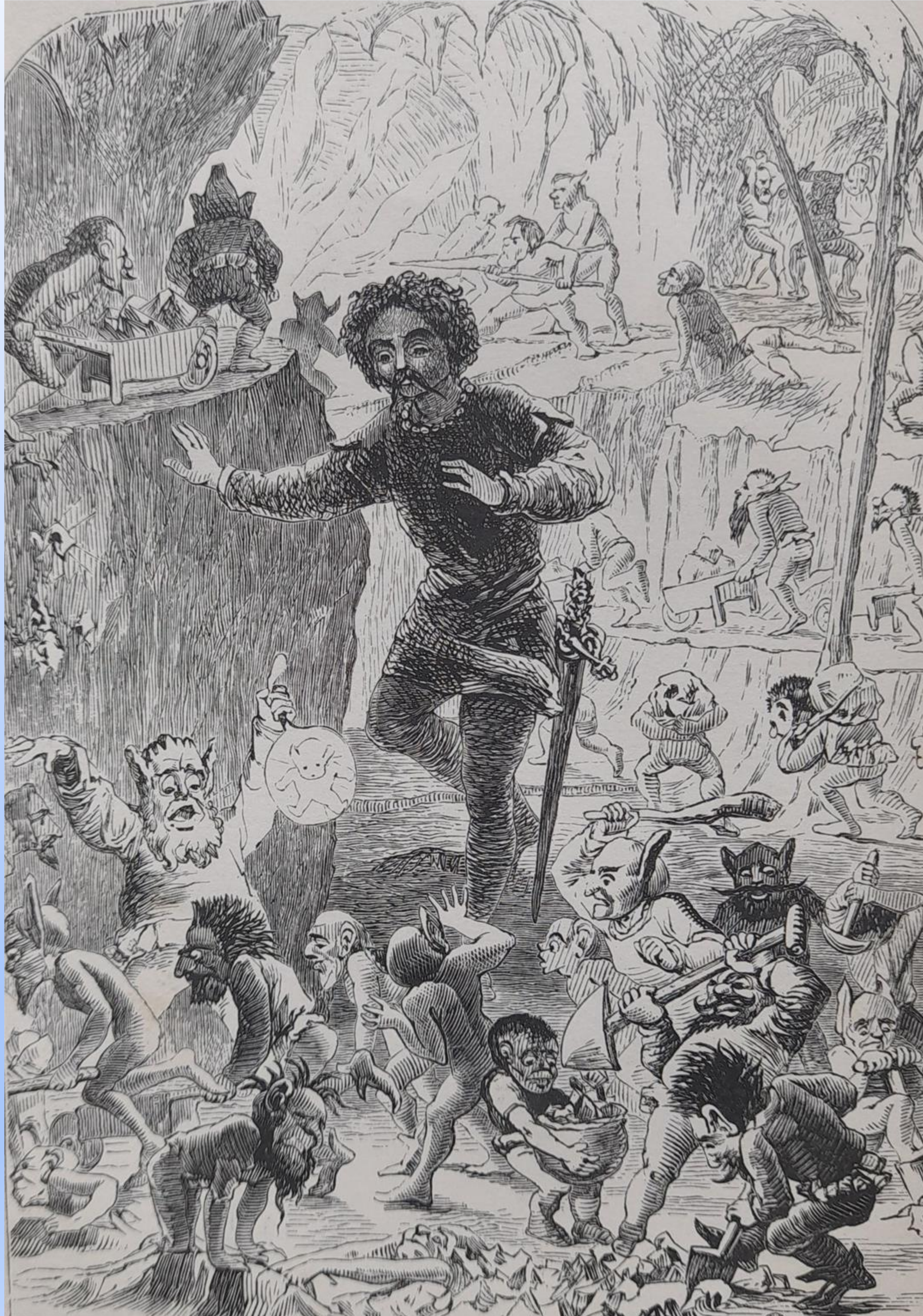
Detail of Ellewomen



Detail of Iduna

This scene is part of the Keary sisters' retelling, in the *Heroes of Asgard* (1857), of the myth concerning The Abduction of Iðunn from Snorri's *Edda* (Faulkes 40). The Kearys inserted the Danish folktale figures known as *Ellekvindr*, i.e., Ellewomen, into the myth. The Ellewomen, or Elf Women, are beautiful but completely hollow inside ([The Mythical Creatures Catalogue](#)). The illustrator, Charles Altamont Doyle, depicts Iðunn and some of the Ellewomen with the face of his wife, Mary.

“Skirnir Among the Dwarfs”



Detail of the dwarfs “throwing fuel upon the great earth’s central fire” (Keary 33).

● [Click here for an enlarged view of the crowd scene in the bottom half of the illustration.](#)

This scene is part of the Keary sisters’ retelling, in the *Heroes of Asgard* (1857), of the myth concerning the Binding of Fenrir from Snorri’s *Edda* (Faulkes 27 -29). The illustrator, Charles Altamont Doyle, depicts some of the male figures with his own face and other figures recall his illustrations of supernatural creatures in his water colour “[Meditation, Self Portrait](#)” (Royal Albert Museum). Doyle also incorporates the Keary sisters’ detail that Óðinn sentenced the dwarfs to throw “fuel upon the great earth’s central fire” as part of their punishment for killing Kvasir (33).



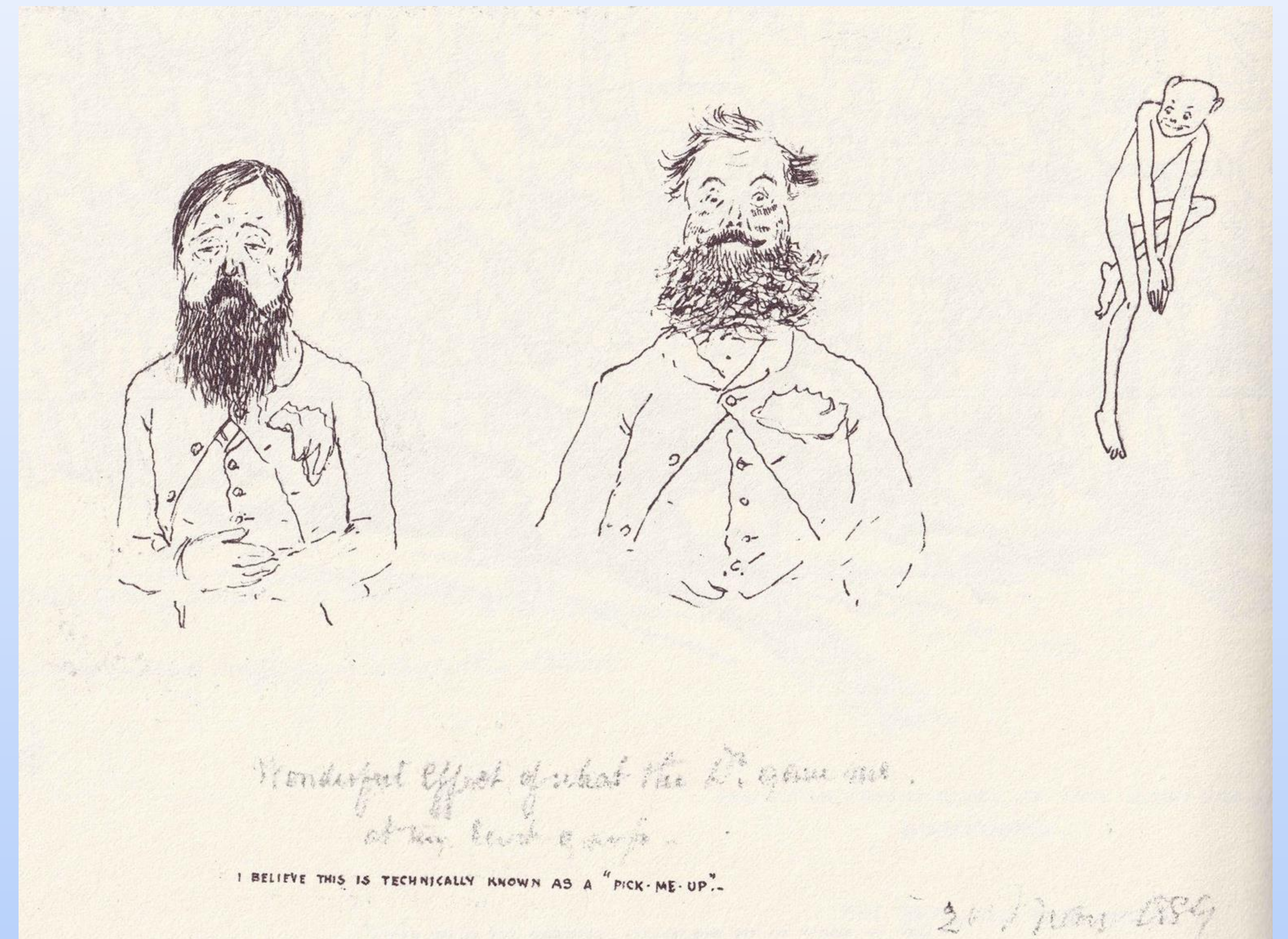
Photo: Jón Karl Helgason

Detail from “Skirnir and the Dwarfs” on page 270.

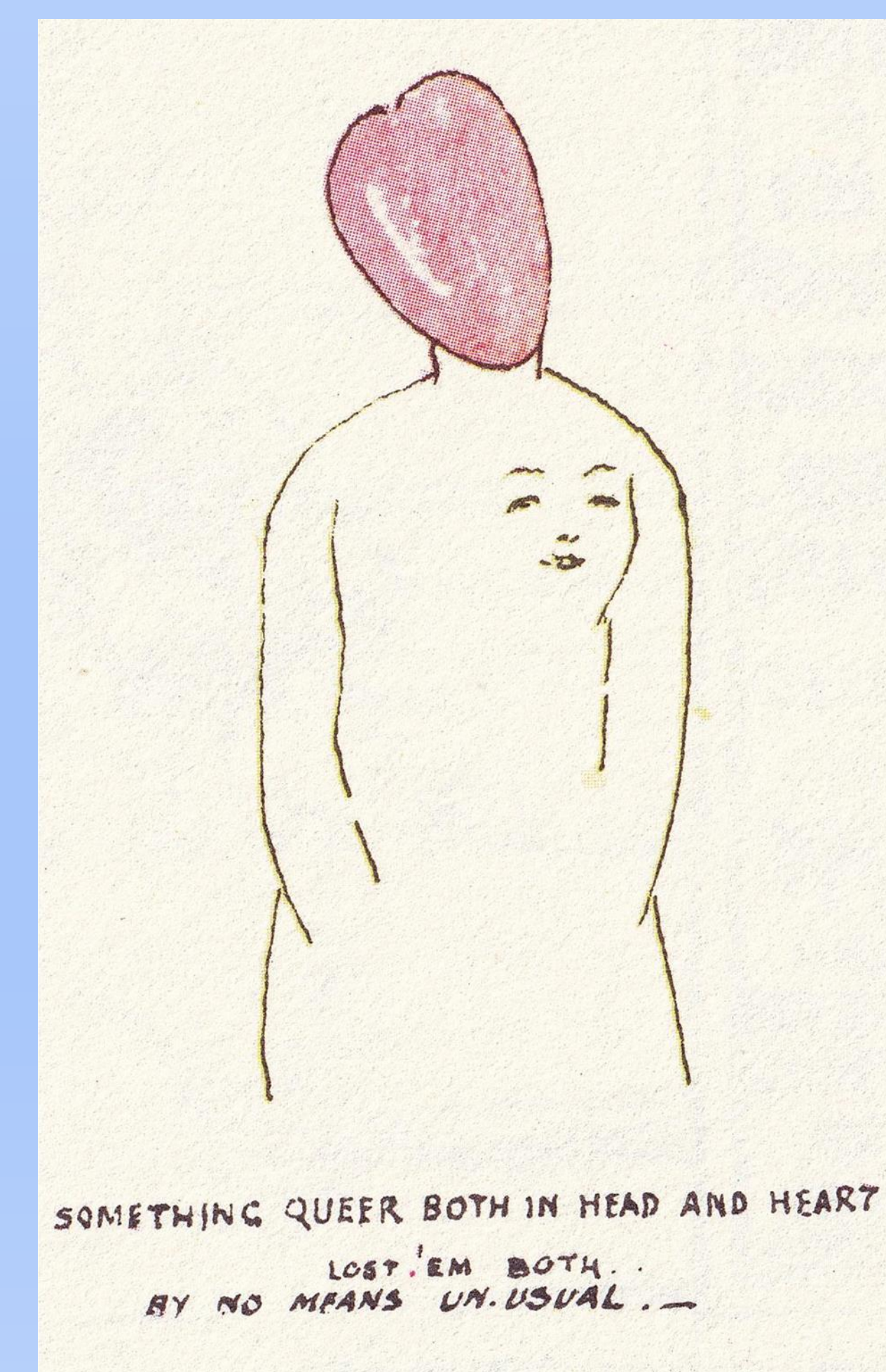
Illustrations of Charles and Mary Doyle from *The Doyle Diary*



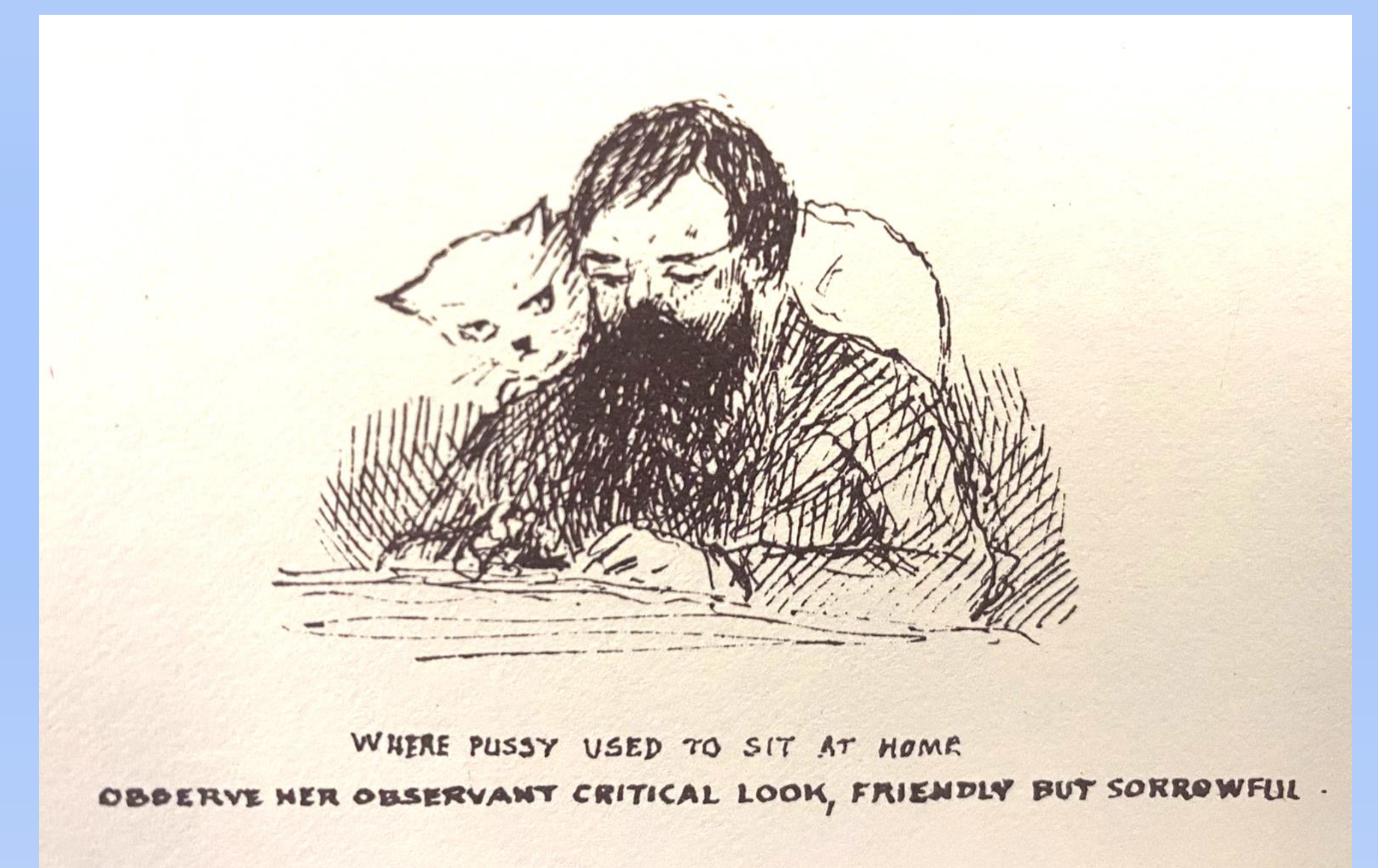
“Mary, my ideal home ruler. No repeal of the union proposed in this case.” (27)



“I believe this is technically known as a pick me up.” (27)



“Something queer both in head and heart” “Lost ‘em both. By no means unusual.” (27)



“Where pussy used to sit at home. Observe her observant critical look, friendly but sorrowful.” (71)

Sources

Cleasby, Richard and Vigfússon Guðbrandur . An Icelandic-English Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon Press,1957.

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– “[Meditation Self Portrait](#).” Royal Albert Museum 18 May 2022. Web.

– “[Self Portrait](#)”. National Galleries Scotland. 18 May 2022. Web.

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“[Ellerwomen](#).” The Mythical Creatures Catalogue. 18 May 2022. Web.

Abstract:

The Demons are in the Details: Charles Altamont Doyle and *The Heroes of Asgard* (1857)

Two out of the three illustrators for the editions of *The Heroes of Asgard*, i.e., Charles Altamont Doyle (1832-1893), Louis Huard (1814-1874), and Charles E. Brock (1817-1938), included fairies in their illustrations. The inclusion of incongruous details such as fairies in illustrations of Norse mythology may have been culturally influenced. Doyle and Brock were English and grew up with English fairy tales, but Huard moved to England from France as an adult and his illustrations adhere to the details of the text. Brock's illustrations are charming. However, despite including fairies, the tone of Doyle's illustrations is darker and suggests signs of a troubled mind.

This poster will focus on two of Doyle's illustrations: 1) "Hermod's Return with the Dwarfs" depicts Hermoðr as a fairy leading a chaotic crowd, some of whom are naked, into Óðinn's court (31); and 2) "Skirnir Among the Dwarves" depicts a nightmarish underground scene crammed full of figures and activities reminiscent of a Hieronymus Bosch painting (270). Doyle is not given credit on the title page of the first edition of *The Heroes of Asgard* (1857) nor does it indicate that the edition is illustrated. Doyle was from a family of illustrators and was the father of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Unfortunately, he suffered from melancholy, alcoholism, and epilepsy, and died in a mental institution.

Doyle's illustrations are forthcoming as digital images in [My Norse Digital Image Repository](#) (MyNDIR).



Detail from "[Hermod's Return with the Dwarfs](#)" on page 31.



Detail from "[Skirnir and the Dwarfs](#)" on page 270.

Contemporary Reviews of *The Heroes of Asgard* (1857)

“The fables of the Northern mythology are here reduced to a form adapted to the intelligence of children. They have been cleverly set to an accompaniment of occasional dialogue, lightening and relieving the narrative of giants' wars and of heroic prowess achieved by dwellers in the immortal city. The book is a good specimen of learning made easy by being made pleasant.”

Review of *The Heroes of Asgard*, by Annie Keary, and Liza Keary. *The Athenaeum*, 11 Apr. 1857: 470. Web. 27 July 2021.

"The Scandinavian mythology converted into a tale told for the edification of children, after the manner of books that have taught the Greek and Roman mythology. But no genius can invest the gods of Asgard with the charms of the gods of Olympus. They have none of the grace or dignity. But the authoress has made the best of an unattractive theme."

Review of *The Heroes of Asgard*, by Annie Keary, and Liza Keary. *The Critic*, 16 Mar. 1857: 130. Web July 27, 2021.

Birth	Civil Servant	Married	The <i>Heroes of Asgard</i>	Retired due to poor health.	Blairerno House, a "home for Intemperate Gentlemen"	Sunnyside, Montrose Royal Lunatic Asylum	Crichton Royal Institution	Death
1832	1849	1855	1857	1876	1881	1885	1892	1893