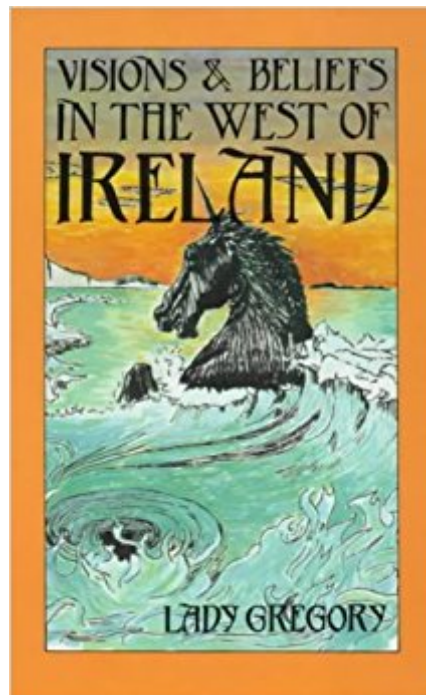


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Visions & Beliefs In The West Of Ireland



Synopsis

This material collected over a period of more than twenty years proved to be a valuable source not only for Gregory's own plays but also for Yeats' work. A classic, it presents many aspects of the supernatural seers, healers, charms, banshees, forths, the evil eye and contains a treasure trove of Irish folk-beliefs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

About the Author: "Lady Gregory... nee Isabella Augusta Persse, was an Irish dramatist and folklorist. With William Butler Yeats and others, she co-founded the Irish Literary Theatre and the Abbey Theatre, and wrote numerous short works for both companies. She also produced a number of books of retellings of stories from Irish mythology. Born into a class that identified closely with British rule, her conversion to cultural nationalism, as evidenced in these writings, was emblematic of many of the changes to occur in Ireland during her lifetime. Lady Gregory is mainly remembered for her work behind Irish Literary Revival. Her home at Coole Park, County Galway served as an important meeting place for leading Revival figures, and her early work as a member of the board of the Abbey was at least as important for the theatre's development as her creative writings. Her motto, taken from Aristotle, was 'To think like a wise man, but to express oneself like the common people.'" (Quote from wikipedia.org) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A rustic, wonderfully unadorned collection of anecdotes and 'stories heard' concerning fairy beliefs

and fairy doings gathered and recorded at the turn of the 20th Century by Lady Augusta Gregory (with the assistance of William Butler Yeats), 'Visions & Beliefs In The West Of Ireland' (1920) will appeal directly to students of folklore, fairylore, anthropology, psychology, and religion. The book will also be of interest to the casual reader, who may be surprised to learn how prevalent the belief in fairies was in rural areas of the British Isles, and how seriously this belief was taken; and not two or three hundred years ago, but only a hundred years ago. Though far less common today, the "fairy faith" still thrives throughout the world, as several articles in the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal recently made clear. Charming, colorful, and occasionally bizarre without being in the least sentimental, 'Visions & Beliefs In The West of Ireland' is required reading for anyone seriously interested in the supernatural or Irish cultural history. The fairies described here vary in appearance, but in most cases are more akin to the image of the Christian angel than to the 'flower fairy' or gnome of modern popular imagination. Never winged, only sometimes small or short, and often the size of an average man or larger, the beings observed in these recountings (or perceived but unseen "all around us, as thick as the grass," as one man says) steal milk, kidnap babies, haunt roads, wells, and shorelines, prefer human women to act as midwives for their newborns, and require human participation to play their games and fight their wars. Who or what is the Fool of the Fort? Why May and June are the most dangerous months of the year? How does one free one's self from enchantment if pixie-led? What happens on May Day's Eve? How does one recognize a fairy doctor? Are babies perceived as changelings in fact sick or deformed children? This volume addresses these questions and a hundred more. As a vision-based collection of folklore, and of actual fact as the rural Irish peasant farmers perceived it, 'Visions & Beliefs In The West of Ireland' deserves the highest praise for its purity of style, method, and intention. The more imagination the reader has, the more the book, with its incredible descriptions, will expand in mind and memory.

A bit light on some of the culture I was hoping to see, but a lot of the works included in this book really resonate. Would have appreciated a little more cultural focus, but would still highly recommend for someone exploring their Irish roots.

Not a book that keeps you glued to your reading chair, but nonetheless a very good study of Irish rural beliefs and practices in the early 20th century.

Fast shipper and great book to read before going to Ireland.

I had heard some of these beliefs from my grandmother who came to the US from Ireland. The details helped me to understand the stories better.

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