

# Irish Culture CONRAD J. BLADEG

## The Irish FAIRY folk

The Irish peasants left to fend for themselves in a world dominated by a corrupted church, oppressive landlords and an absence of local government and medicine turned to their own imaginations to understand and order the world around them-to make their peasant culture work. Stories like Nera and the Dead Man helped children to remember rules for staying healthy and safe and to maintain sanitation. Images from the ancient tales combined with observations -the wind in the winter forest-the Banshee- helped them to explain natural occurrences. You too should know them when you meet them!!

### The SOCIABLE FAIRIES

1.The Sheoques: Lived in sacred thorn bushes. Thief fairy music lead humans astray.Sometimes they switched a child with a fairy child to create a changeling which they caused to die in one year.

2.The Merrows:Seen as little hornless cows but really they have fishes tails and wear a red cap(cohuleen driuth).The men have green teeth.green hair,pigs eyes and red noses-women are beautiful and prefer human mates.

### The SOLITARY FAIRIES

1.The Leprechaun The one shoemaker seen mending shoes.Catch him and get crocks of gold.A thrifty professional.Take your eyes off of him and he vanishes. Red Coat seven buttons in each row and he spins sometimes on the point of a cocked hat.

2.The Cluricaun Robbing wine cellars and riding sheep and shepherds dogs the live long night-found panting and mud covered in the morning.

3.The Gonconer(Ganconagh)-Love talker,Idler,appears making love to shepherdesses and milkmaids - smokes a pipe.

4.The Far Darrig-Red man,Jolker gives evil dreams

5.The Pooka-A horse ass etc... takes rider on a wild ride and shakes him off in the grey of morning especially drunkards-a drunkards sleep is his kingdom.When it rains with sun shining that means he will be out that night.

6.The Dullahan-Headless or carrying his head.Black coach a bower with headless horses it goes to your door and if you open it a basin of blood is thrown at you-death omen.

7.Leanhaun Shee-Fairy mistresses seeks love of men-if they refuse she is their slave -If they consent they are hers-her lovers waste away -you must find one to go in your place.

8.The Far Gorta-Man of hunger-brings good luck to those who give him food.

9.Banshee-Fairy woman -morning-wails over dead and calls for them.

10.The Fear Sidhe: Male Fairy

(there are also fairies for parts and aspects of the home,for water(*sherie*) light *Soullh* and a host of lake fairies,dragons and ghosts)