

# THE WORDS OF THE WEST

*The vocabulary Volume II uses and does not explain, with what each means and which language it is. Where a being also appears in Volume I under a northern name, the entry says so.*

| Word                       | What it means                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <b>pouke</b>               | Middle English: a mischievous spirit, and the ancestor of Puck. Keightley connects it to the Irish púca and the Welsh pwca; the connection is old and has never been settled.                                                                                                 |
| <b>Robin Goodfellow</b>    | The English house-spirit, and the exact counterpart of the Danish nis and the German kobold: he does the work, takes his bowl of cream, and leaves when he is given clothes. Milton's lubber fiend in L'Allegro is him.                                                       |
| <b>pixy</b>                | West-country English, chiefly Devon and Cornwall. Pixy-led is to be made to lose your way; turning your coat inside out is the remedy.                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>brownie</b>             | The Scottish and northern English house-spirit. Same bargain as Robin Goodfellow, same ending: a gift of clothes drives him off.                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>bogle</b>               | Scots: a frightening spirit, not a helpful one. English bogey.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>seelie and unseelie</b> | Scots: the blessed and unblessed courts. The seelie court may help; the unseelie will not.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>fairy ring</b>          | The ring in the grass, in fact a fungus growing outward from a centre. English fairy ring, Danish elledans, German Hexenring — three peoples explaining the same visible thing the same way, which Keightley reads as descent.                                                |
| <b>fairy ointment</b>      | The salve that lets a mortal see the fairies; when the mortal is found out, the seeing eye is put out. One of the most widely attested English tales, and it runs to Scotland, Brittany and France.                                                                           |
| <b>changeling</b>          | The substituted child. See the concordance: it is the motif with the widest spread in the book, and the one with the darkest history — the belief was used to justify the mistreatment of disabled children into the nineteenth century, which none of these collectors says. |
| <b>sidhe</b>               | Irish: properly the mound, and by extension the people of the mound. Daoine síth in Scots Gaelic is the people of peace. Keightley writes shee.                                                                                                                               |
| <b>sheefra</b>             | Keightley's rendering of Irish siabra, modern siabhra — a fairy, a sprite. The dotted b carries the lenition that modern Irish writes bh, which is why his transliteration has an f-sound in it.                                                                              |
| <b>leprechaun</b>          | Irish: the solitary fairy shoemaker with the purse. Keightley's spelling varies; the modern standard is leipreachán.                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>banshee</b>             | Irish bean sídhe, woman of the mound: the death-warner. Not a fairy in the sociable sense, and the closest Irish counterpart to the Welsh gwrach y rhibyn and the Scottish caoineag.                                                                                          |
| <b>pooka</b>               | Irish púca: a shape-shifting spirit, often a horse. See pouke.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>daoine maí</b>          | The good people — Keightley gives the pronunciation as deenè mâh. Modern Irish daoine maíthe. The name is a euphemism, like the Welsh tylwyth teg and the Danish habit of not naming the hill-folk: you flatter what you would rather not provoke.                            |
| <b>fenodyree</b>           | Manx: the hairy household spirit, a brownie by another name. Manx tradition sits where Norse and Gaelic meet, which makes it the natural test of this book's argument.                                                                                                        |
| <b>buggane</b>             | Manx: a large and hostile spirit, the counterpart of the troid rather than of the nis.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>tylwyth teg</b>         | Welsh: the fair family, the Welsh fairies. Another euphemism.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Word                       | What it means                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>gwragedd annwn</b>      | Welsh: the lake maidens, who marry mortals on conditions and leave when the conditions are broken. Singular gwraig annwn.                                                                                                                       |
| <b>coblynau</b>            | Welsh: the knockers of the mines, whose knocking shows where the ore is. The same figure as the German Wichtlein of Volume I and the Cornish knockers — a belief that follows mining rather than a people.                                      |
| <b>korrigan</b>            | Breton: the fairy of the fountains and standing stones. Among the most distinct beings in either volume, and one with no close English counterpart.                                                                                             |
| <b>lavandières de nuit</b> | Breton and French: the washerwomen of the night, met at a ford, who ask for help wringing the linen and break the arms of anyone who wrings the wrong way.                                                                                      |
| <b>lutin</b>               | French: a household or mischievous spirit, the French Robin Goodfellow. Follet is a near synonym.                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>fée</b>                 | French: a fairy, from the same Latin fatum as the Italian fata and the English fairy. See the etymology chapter in Volume I.                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Nereid</b>              | Modern Greek: the fairy of the springs and hills, carrying an ancient name into a nineteenth-century peasantry. Keightley's strongest single case for survival, and the one where the survival of the word is doing more work than it can bear. |
| <b>duende</b>              | Spanish: the house-spirit. Keightley found very little Spanish material and says so, which is creditable; the thinness is about what had been printed, not about Spain.                                                                         |

*From The Fairy Mythology by Thomas Keightley, Volume II — Britain, Ireland and the West, Valice Classics 18. Free at [valicepress.com/companion/fairy-mythology-vol-2](http://valicepress.com/companion/fairy-mythology-vol-2)*