

out by day, or when the more favourable hours of the night had arrived, with fires and candles lit, or even during a roadside chat amid the day's journey, there was gathered together little by little, from one country and another, the mass of testimony which chapter ii contains. And with all this my opinions began to take shape; for when I set out from Oxford in June, I had no certain or clear ideas as to what fairies are, nor why there should be belief in them. In less than a year afterwards I found myself committed to the Psychological Theory, which I am herein setting forth.

VI. THEORIES OF THE FAIRY-FAITH

We make continual reference throughout our study to this Psychological Theory of the Nature and Origin of the Celtic Fairy-Faith, and it is one of our purposes to demonstrate that this is the root theory which includes or absorbs the four theories already advanced to account for the belief in fairies. To guide the reader in his own conclusions, we shall here briefly outline these four theories.

The first of them may be called the Naturalistic Theory, which is, that in ancient and in modern times man's belief in gods, spirits, or fairies has been the direct result of his attempts to explain or to rationalize natural phenomena. Of this theory we accept as true that the belief in fairies often anthropomorphically reflects the natural environment as well as the social condition of the people who hold the belief. For example, amid the beautiful low-lying green hills and gentle dells of Connemara (Ireland), the 'good people' are just as beautiful, just as gentle, and just as happy as their environment; while amid the dark-rising mountains and in the mysterious cloud-shadowed lakes of the Scotch Highlands there are fiercer kinds of fairies and terrible water-kelpies, and in the Western Hebrides there is the much-dreaded 'spirit-host' moving through the air at night.

The Naturalistic Theory shows accurately enough that natural phenomena and environment have given direction