

"FEY"

Fey: literally "On the way," "Death-bound." A Saxon word denoting a Celtic mood. One who not only realizes himself on the inevitable way, but through some unusual experience in some instant of Time, has awakened to an alien, inexplicable Existence that leaves him bewildered, foolishly indifferent, madly impersonal, to the concerns of Life. To the Highlander the full meaning of the term is not expressed in either of the following passages, but it lurks between them:

"The Scotch peasants have a word that might be applied to every existence. In their legends they give 'Fey' to the frame of mind of a man who, notwithstanding all his efforts, notwithstanding all help and advice, is forced by some irresistible impulse towards some inevitable catastrophe. It is thus that James I.—the James of Catherine Douglas—was 'fey' when he went, notwithstanding the terrible omens of earth, heaven and hell, to spend the Christmas holidays in the gloomy castle of Perth, where his assassin, the traitor Robert Graeme, lay in wait for him."—*Maurice Maeterlinck.*

"A mermaid had once met a piper on Sandag beach, and there sang to him a long, bright midsummer's night, so that in the morning he was found stricken crazy, and from thenceforward, till the day he died, said only one form of words; what they were in the original Gaelic I cannot tell, but they were thus translated: 'Ah! the sweet singing out of the sea!'"—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*