

But whether or not this world of love and nobleness, of beauty and truth, ever existed, matters nothing to us. It existed as truth of interpretation and understanding in the mind of one man and if he has made for us only a dream of joy and life, of sorrow and the sleep of life; even so, surely we owe him gratitude and admiration for the vision. Yet this is not all. For no one of an appreciative spirit can read these poems without acknowledging that Fiona Macleod, in interpreting the almost inexpressible moods of his own personality, finds an echo, not only in the heart of an ancient people but also in the soul of all peoples of the Western world. Our life from day to day covers and hides, suppresses or diverts the emotions they lived openly, yet the emotion is there. Unexpressed, almost unfelt by consciousness, yet we also have, as deeply, as really as they, joy and sorrow, love and anger, the courage of fighting, the bitterness of defeat and the glory of conquering.

Even as they, we too feel the mystery of life and its end, the inexplicable mystery which inspires by turn resignation or anguish, which comes in upon us everywhere, every day, while we strive with the clamour and haste of our life to push it away into a wider circle. Yet at times a man looks away from the world to the circling gloom, and when he looks back again on his own people he sees them always against this background. It intensifies their joy but also their sorrow. It ennobles life but makes it also a thing of the moment, a possession of which the tenure is so uncertain that it might seem of no value. Yet a man strong of heart and spirit, seeing this, rejoices that it is so, and holding on high the golden chalice of life, drains together the bitter and the sweet.

This is the fatalism of the Celts, probably a courage born of the bitter ages, probably inherent in the Celtic temperament, a fearlessness that faces

unflinchingly the ironical destiny of man. Religions washed up against this life and took its form—Celt, Druid, Christian—but its life is the same, its essential meaning unchanged. Strangely compounded of primitive thought which is ignobly criticised as Paganism; of a temperament brooding over centuries of war and conquest; a sympathy for Nature such as is found in no other people; and a world religion of consolation and mystery half suiting the inherent tendency. It is this life which Fiona Macleod has so exquisitely sketched.

It is a difficult thing to do, to put the heart of a people into a book, to express its soul in sound and colour and word. Yet this is what art has to do. This is what Fiona Macleod has tried to do, and reading his books, one cannot but be profoundly impressed by a spirit and temperament different from that of the present but deeply thoughtful of the unchanging, elemental mysteries.

When William Sharp, the man of letters, saw this vision clearly he became "Fiona Macleod," and his literary reputation as William Sharp has been lost in the interest, the discussion, the criticism and appreciation aroused by the Celtic poetry and tales of Fiona Macleod. So different indeed was this work from his acknowledged writings that at his death he was considered to have had a dual personality. Mrs. Sharp even advances this idea, which appears unnecessary if one considers all the work in orderly evolution. The two mental worlds in which he lived existed side by side, merging one into the other. Nay, the one, superficial as it may seem in comparison, must have offered, more deeply to him than appears in those early writings, the same problems as the later. But in his interpretation of Celtic life he found a field which suited his genius and temperament. Without a doubt, it offered also a freer scope for an imagination that sought extraordinary emotion and symbols of mystery.