

the boom she weaves. But she is patient, abiding, certain, inviolate, and silent ever. It is only when we come to this vision of her whom we call Isis, or Hera, or Orchil, or one of a hundred other names, our unknown Earth-Mother, that men and women will know each other aright, and go hand in hand along the road of life, without striving to crush, to subdue, to usurp, to retaliate, to separate."

The human race is thus identified with nature, becomes a part of nature, and we realise the intimate association of natural beauty, awe and mystery with the beauty, and happiness, the awfulness and mystery, of human life. "That we are intimately at one with nature is a cosmic truth we are all slowly approaching. Truly we are all one. It is a common tongue we speak, though the wave has its own whisper, and the wind its own sigh, and the lip of man its word, and the heart of woman its silence."

Every page of Fiona Macleod's work is crossed by some exquisite glimpse of nature, yet the description of the natural is always a part of the narrative and closely connected with the mood of the character. In "Green Fire" the poet-astronomer watched the nightly procession of the stars:

"With him, the peopled solitude of night was a concourse of confirming voices. He did not dread the silence of the stars, the cold remoteness of the stellar fire. . . . In the vast majestic order of that nocturnal march, that diurnal retreat, he had learned the law of the whirling leaf and the falling star, of the slow-moon-delayed comet and of the slower wane of solar fires. Looking with visionary eyes into that congregation of stars, he realised, not the littleness of the human dream but its divine impulsion."

This intimate oneness with nature even translates human feeling into natural images as where a brilliant metaphor strikes one with the vividness of an actual scene:

"The exultant Celtic joy stood over against the brooding Celtic shadow, and believed the lances of the sunlight could keep at bay all the battalions of gloom."

It is an interesting point to notice in this connection that while sounds, lights and colours are brought to us with the vividness of reality, and

fragrance is mentioned occasionally, yet nothing is characterised by its touch or feeling quality. It is this which gives a peculiar brightness, delicacy, and gracefulness to the description of persons and of nature. Merely as a descriptive touch, could the art of this be surpassed:

"I could hear nothing but the soft, swift slipping feet of the wind among the rocks and grass and a noise of the tide crawling up from a shore hidden behind crags."

Even his hope of success as an artist of life Fiona Macleod has expressed in a nature picture:

"A handful of pine-seed will cover mountains with the green majesty of forest, and so I too will set my face to the wind and throw my handful of seed on high."

They who are tired of life deserve death. They who die who are not tired desire immortality. The hope of both lies in God. So many-sided, so universal, is the Celtic thought of death.

The old man says:

"I the shadow am that seeks the darkness,
Age, that hath the face of Night unstarred
and moonless,
Age, that doth extinguish star and planet,
Moon and sun and all the fiery worlds,
Give me now thy darkness and thy silence."

But what bitterness is like the bitterness of early death?

"Green wind from the green-gold branches,
what is the song you bring?

What are all songs to me now, who no more care to sing?

Deep in the heart of summer, sweet is life to me still,

But my life is a lonely hunter that hunts on a lonely hill.

Green is that hill and lonely, set far in a shadowy place;

White is the hunter's quarry, a lost-loved human face;

O hunting heart, shall you find it, with arrow of failing breath,

Lead o'er the green hill lonely by the shadowy hound of Death?"

At the conclusion of "The Divine Adventure" there is the most intimate and profound contemplation of death and immortality:

"When, tired, I lay down the pen, and with it the last of mortal uses, it will be to face the glory of a new day. I have no fear. I shall not leave all I have loved, for I have that in me which binds me to this beautiful world, for another life at least,