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At first sight a reader of either MacDonald or Macleod (the alter ego of William Sharp), might wonder at their coming together in one book. The editor, however, well versed in the phenomenon of Highland second-sight, has drawn their similarity from roots and early influences. Her aim in this book is not to provide a critique of the writing of either George MacDonald or Fiona Macleod, but to provide an introduction to the work of both.

Beginning with a brief, lucid biography prior to the selection from each author, she provides the reader with the essential background into which their work may be set. The background in no way overwhelms or obscures the stories; its effect is to set them in relief. **[end of page 38]**

Wishing to present the scope of writing within the broad framework of myth and fantasy, the editor has included two extracts from *Phantastes* and one from *Lilith* (though "The Magic Mirror," from *Phantastes*, can stand alone as a story set within the larger work). She then includes one of MacDonald's better known fairy tales, *The Golden Key*, and two shorter tales which could be classed as either fantasy or horror tales, *The Portent* and *The Gray Wolf*.

The selections from Macleod draw on tales which bring out the different emphases found in her work. There are those drawn directly from Celtic myth, such as *Silk o' the Kine* and its sequel *Ula and Urla*; those showing the paradox of brutality and nobility to be found in legendary figures, for example, *The Laughter of Scathach the Queen*; those exploring the barbarism and insecurity of life in the days of Celtic heroes and Viking warriors (*Mircath*); and lastly those drawing together the twin depths of Christianity and Druidic belief. These two together form an uneasy relationship out of which flows Macleod's "green life." The unease is particularly seen in *Cathal of the Woods*; and the drawing-together in *The Festival of the Birds*.

One might feel that George MacDonald and Fiona Macleod/

William Sharp are strangely brought together in this way, but Elizabeth Sutherland has in this book provided a setting which loses neither the solidity of MacDonald's myth (solid in that it is rooted in truth and goodness) nor the enigmatic quality of Macleod's pagan spirituality. A book of this sort has succeeded if the reader finds his appetite whetted and his imagination stimulated sufficiently to search for more of the works of the writers presented. To anyone motivated to read this work, the remainder of *Phantastes* and *Lilith*, the fairy tales, poetry and novels of MacDonald provide a rich source of food, as do the haunting tales of beauty in Macleod's stories and retellings. Both are well cited in the bibliography. [39]