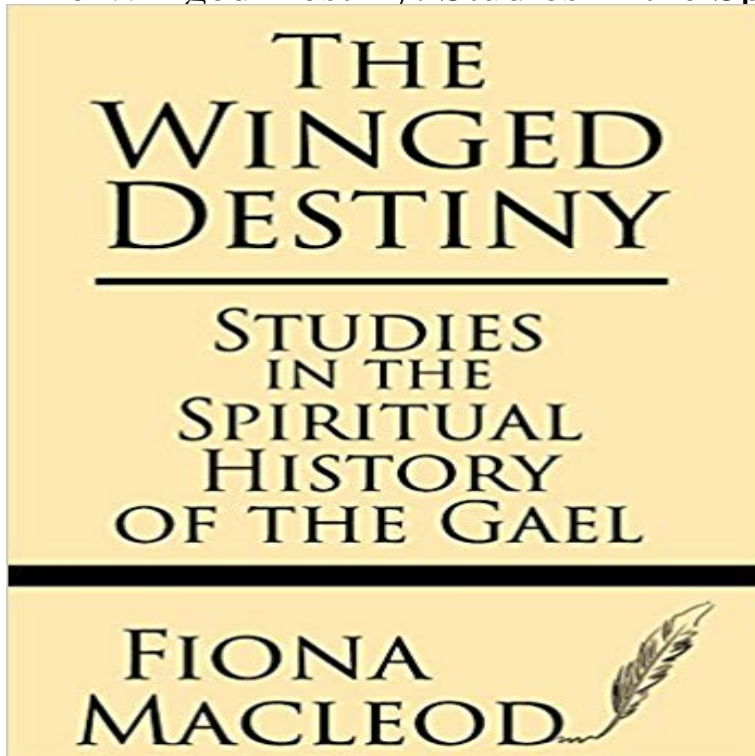


The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael



THE WINGED DESTINY: STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF THE GAEL By Fiona MacLeod CONTENTS DEDICATORY INTRODUCTION THE SUNSET OF OLD TALES The Sunset of Old Tales The Treud Nan Ron The Man on the Moor The Woman at the Cross-ways The Lords of Wisdom The Wayfarer Queens of Beauty Orpheus and Oisín The Awakening of Angus Og CHILDREN OF WATER Children of Water Cuilidh Mhoire Sea-Magic Fara-Ghaol Sorrow on the Wind The Lynn of Dreams Maya FOR THE BEAUTY OF AN IDEA Prelude Celtic The Gaelic Heart ANIMA CELTICA The Gael and His Heritage Seumas: A Memory Aileen: A Memory The Four Winds Of Eirinn Two Old Songs Of May The Shadowy Waters A Triad The Ancient Beauty THE WINGED DESTINY CHAPTER 1 EXCERPT I do not know if in anything I have a keener pleasure than in the hearing . . . by the hearthside, or looking down into green water, or on the upland road that strings glen upon glen along its white swaying neck . . . of the old tales and poems of beauty and wonder, retold sometimes in an untarnished excellence, sometimes crudely, sometimes so disguised in the savour of the place and hour that not then and perhaps not for long, are they recognized in accent or discerned in feature. Perhaps this pleasure is the greater because it is the pleasure of the tale-lover, for the tales sake, rather than of the tale-collector, for the quests sake. I do not know how many tales and fragments of tales and broken legends I have heard, now here, now there; or what proportion of these was old, or what proportion of them was of the fantasy or dreaming mind of to-day, or how many retained the phrase and accent of the past in taking on the phrase of to-day and the accent of the narrators mind. It is the light, the lift, the charm, the sigh, the cadence I want. I care less for the hill-tale in a book

than told by the firelight, and a song is better in the wash of the running wave than in crowded rooms. Every sad tale and every beautiful tale should have a fit background for its setting; and I have perhaps grown so used to the shaken leaf, or the lifted water, or the peat-glow in small rooms filled with warm shadow and the suspense of dreams, as the background of sgeul and ran and oran, that I am become unwisely impatient of the common conditions. Yet even in these much lies with ourselves. I have a friend who says he can be happy with a gas-jet in a room in a street-house. He opens a window by the edge of an inch, if there is no wind crying in the chimney, so that a thin air may be heard rising and falling: and turns his back to the gas-jet: and keeps his eyes on the...

-----Windham

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