

# CHAPTER X

## LIFE: 1893

The Sharps boarded a ship bound for North Africa on 7 January 1893 and arrived a week later in Algiers. From there they traveled, mostly by train, west to Tilimsen near the border with Morocco and returned to Algiers. After resting a few days, they went south across the mountains to Baskra, out to the oasis of Sidi Okba, then back north to Constantine, and finally east to Tunis and Carthage. They enjoyed the beauty and variety of the African landscape and observed with great interest the customs of the people. After several weeks in North Africa, they crossed to Sicily and stayed for awhile in Taormina, the beautiful old town set high above the Bay of Naxos with grand views of Mt Etna. This was the first of many winter visits to Taormina and the surrounding area. Returning to England and Phenice Croft at the end of February, Sharp once again became absorbed in his writing. Mrs. Sharp listed some of the many guests who visited them at Phenice Croft during the spring: Richard Whiteing, Mona Caird, Alice Corkran, George Cotterell, the Richard Le Galliennes, Roden Noel, Percy White, Dr. Byres Moir, the Frank Rinders, R. A. Streatfield, Laurence Binyon, Elizabeth's mother and her brother, Robert Farquharson Sharp, and Mary Sharp, William's sister, who would soon begin to serve the essential function of copying Sharp's Fiona Macleod letters in what became known as the Fiona Macleod handwriting.

Elizabeth went to Paris in April to review the salons for the *Glasgow Herald*, and Sharp went to Ventnor and Freshwater on the southern coast of the Isle of Wight. During the early summer at Phenice Croft, he devoted much of his time to writing and attempting to place articles on the African trip. Among those published were "African Health Resorts" in the December 1894 issue of *Nineteenth Century*; "The New Winterland of French Africa" in the January 1895 issue of *Nineteenth Century*; "Cardinal Lavigerie's Work in North Africa" in the August 1894 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*; and "Rome in Africa" which appeared in *Harper's Magazine* in June 1895. He also worked on a new life of Rossetti which had been commissioned by Swan Sonnenschein and Company but was never finished.

Elizabeth said her husband "was happy once more to be resident in the country, although the surroundings were not a type of scenery that appealed to him. . . . At Phenice Croft his imagination was in a perpetual ferment." The quiet and leisure was welcome to him and "once again he saw visions and dreamed dreams; the psychic subjective side of his dual nature predominated. He was in an acutely creative condition; and, moreover, he was passing from one phase of literary work to another, deeper, more intimate, more permanent. So far, he had found no adequate method for the expression of his 'second self' though the way was led thereto by

*Sospiri di Roma and Vistas*” (*Memoir*, 221-2). But he soon found that “method” at Phenice Croft.

In a December diary entry summarizing the work he had done in 1893, Sharp mentioned ‘the first part of a Celtic romance called *Pharais*, from the work of Muireadach Albarmach, ‘Mithil domb triallgu tigh na Pharais’”(*Memoir*, 216).<sup>1</sup> In an August 12, 1893 letter to Catherine Janvier from St. Andrews, he had described “a scene in a strange Celtic tale I am writing called *Pharais*, wherein the weird charm and terror of a night of tragic significance is brought home to the reader ... by a stretch of dew-wet moonflowers glimmering through the murk of a dusk laden with sea mists” (*Memoir*, 225). While writing *Pharais*, he described it as “written deeply in the Celtic spirit and from the Celtic standpoint,” but he made no mention of publishing it pseudonymously. It was not until his late September visit to Murray Gilchrist, when he met the bookseller/publisher Frank Murray in Derby, or perhaps even later, that he decided to issue it as the work of Fiona Macleod. Sharp’s first mention of Fiona Macleod in writing occurred in a 27 December 1893 letter to Murray about *Pharais* which he had agreed to publish: “I wish to adhere rigidly to the ‘Fiona Macleod’ authorship.” He went on to tell Murray that the “two most paramount conditions” that caused him to give the work to Murray were “pseudonymity and publication by the end of March.”

“During the writing of *Pharais*,” according to EAS, her husband “began to realize how much the feminine element dominated in the book, that it grew out of the subjective or feminine side of his nature. He, therefore, decided to issue the book under the name of Fiona Macleod, that ‘flashed ready made’ into his mind” (*Memoir*, 227). His decision to publish pseudonymously is not surprising. He had experimented with pseudonyms during the past two years partly because he loved the mystery of them, but mainly because he had come to believe that any serious creative work published under his name would be met by skepticism or disdain due to the reputation he had developed and the enemies he had made as an editor and reviewer. Of the name itself, Sharp said, “It was born naturally: (of course I had associations with the name Macleod). It, Fiona, is very rare now. Most Highlanders would tell you it was extinct — even as a diminutive of Fionaghal (Flora). But it is not. It is an old Celtic name (meaning ‘a fair maid’) still occasionally to be found” (*Memoir*, 226-7).

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<sup>1</sup> There are errors in the transcription of the Gaelic phrase and the Gaelic name in the *Memoir*. Sharp transcribed the poet’s name and the quotation correctly and provided a translation in a footnote in the dedication of *Pharais* to EWR (Edith Wingate Rinder) which EAS included in volume one of *The Works of “Fiona Macleod,”* Uniform Edition, (London: Heinemann, 1910). There Sharp said the word *Pharais* is “A slightly anglicized lection of the Gaelic word Pàras = Paradise, Heaven. ‘Pharais’ properly is the genitive and dative case of Pàras, as in the line from Muireadhach Albannach, quoted after the title page, ‘Mithich domh triall gu tigh Pharais’ — ‘It is time for me to go up unto the House of Paradise.’” Muireadhach Albannach, spelled variously in the Gaelic, was a Gaelic poet later known as Murdoch of Scotland. A portion of the poem from which Sharp quoted a line is found in the Dean of Lismore’s Book.

At the end of July the Sharps went to Scotland where they spent three weeks in St. Andrews, stayed for a time with Mrs. Glasford Bells at Tirinie, near Aberferdy in Perthshire, and then went for a fortnight to Corrie on the Island of Arran. In mid-September, Elizabeth left to visit friends, and William went to Arrochar and other places in the West. This time in Scotland fed the atmosphere of gloom and melancholy he was creating in *Pharais*. On August 12, for example, he told Catherine Janvier, “I was writing in pencil in Pharais of death by the sea — and almost at my feet a drowned corpse was washed in by the tide and the slackening urgency of the previous night’s gale.” Sharp’s period of creativity in the spring and summer of 1893 was facilitated first by the quiet and leisure of Phenice Croft and then by the melancholy and mystery with which he endowed his native Scottish landscape.

There was a third factor of equal or greater importance which Elizabeth described with remarkable candor and generosity. The emergence of her husband’s “second self” in the writings of Fiona Macleod began, she said, in Rome in the winter/spring of 1890-91. “There, at last, he had found the desired incentive towards a true expression of himself, in the stimulus and sympathetic understanding of the friend to whom he dedicated the first of the books published under his pseudonym. This friendship began in Rome and lasted throughout the remainder of his life.” This friend was the “E.W.R.” to whom he dedicated *Pharais*, and the initials are those of Edith Wingate Rinder. In a letter of instructions to EAS in the event of his death written before a trip to the United States in 1896, Sharp said “to her [Edith Rinder] I owe my development as ‘Fiona Macleod’” and “without her there would have been no ‘Fiona Macleod.’” After reproducing this statement in the *Memoir* (222), Elizabeth continued: “Because of her beauty, her strong sense of life and the joy of life; because of her keen intuitions and mental alertness, her personality stood for him as a symbol of the heroic women of Greek and Celtic days, a symbol that, as he expressed it, unlocked new doors in his mind and put him ‘in touch with ancestral memories’ of his race. So, for a time, he stilled the critical, intellectual mood of William Sharp to give play to the development of this new found expression of subtler emotions, towards which he had been moving with all the ardour of his nature.” Mrs. Sharp went on to say her husband’s two natures were frequently at odds with each other. They required different conditions, different environments, and different stimuli. As this internal conflict developed, it “produced a tremendous strain on his physical and mental resources; and at one time between 1897-8 threatened him with a complete nervous collapse.” As time passed the two sides of his nature developed into two distinct personalities “which were equally imperative in their demands on him.” He preferred the dreaming creative feminine existence in which he could produce the writings of Fiona Macleod and which was facilitated by the presence of Edith Rinder. But “the

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I am grateful to Stephen Blamires for assistance in this matter.

exigencies of life, his dependence on his pen for his livelihood . . . required of him a great amount of applied study and work.” He came to associate Elizabeth — his first cousin, ever-supportive wife, and breadwinning critic and editor — with the mundane, practical side of his nature.

So Phenice Croft was linked by both Sharp and his wife with his dreaming, creative side, with the birth of Fiona Macleod, and with Edith Rinder. While Sharp “always looked back with deep thankfulness” to the two years at Phenice Croft, Elizabeth disliked the place. She was ill for much of those two years, having contracted malaria in Italy or the south of France in the spring of 1891. She attributed her continuing health problems to the moist air and clay soil of Rudgwick. Phenice Croft, she thought, had “a haunted atmosphere — created unquestionably by him [her husband] — that I found difficult to live in, unless the sun was shining” (*Memoir*, 223). She spent much of her time during these years with her mother and friends in London. During those periods of absence, Edith Rinder was often a guest at Phenice Croft, and her presence there surely contributed to Elizabeth’s distaste for the house. Her comments about Phenice Croft and Rudgwick in the *Memoir* were as close as she came to admitting that her relationship with her husband was strained in the early 1890s.

There was another reason for her feelings about Phenice Croft. There, she said, Sharp was “testing his new powers, living his new life, and delighting in the opportunity for psychic experimentation.” The last seemingly innocuous “psychic experimentation” reveals that Sharp, at Phenice Croft, was attempting to communicate with the spirit world. These experiments reached their peak a few years later when he and Edith Rinder were recruited by W. B. Yeats to assist him and Maud Gonne in their efforts to obtain by psychic means the rituals for a new religion based in Celtic mythology. That involvement with Yeats precipitated the splitting of Sharp’s personality that worried Elizabeth and threatened a “complete nervous collapse” in 1897-8. Edith was probably cooperating in the experiments in 1893; they were common enough at the time. Indeed, Elizabeth went to mediums after her husband died in 1905 and left a record of her communications with his spirit. But Elizabeth recognized the disturbing impact of such activities on her husband’s mental balance. When his psychic crisis occurred in 1897-8, she and Edith took turns looking after him and nursing him back to mental health. All the elements of Phenice Croft that appealed to Sharp in 1893 and nourished his imagination were anathema to Elizabeth, and they would soon decide to leave the place.

On his way home from the Highlands in late September, Sharp stopped first in Edinburgh to see his mother and then at Eyam, near Sheffield, in Derbyshire to stay with Robert Murray Gilchrist, a man ten years Sharp’s junior who would become his good friend. Gilchrist was on his way to attaining a wide audience and a considerable reputation as a writer of ghost stories and

supernatural romances. Sharp had heard from Gilchrist that Frank Murray in nearby Derby was publishing a book by Gilchrist called *Frangipanni* as the first volume in a projected series called the Regent Library. Sharp had written to Murray in July to say he could not accept the terms Murray offered for a romance (ten pounds), but he would accept that amount for a book of “dramatic interludes” called *Vistas*. Sharp had been peddling that volume unsuccessfully for several months. After spending two nights at Gilchrist’s, he met with Murray in Derby on his way to London on Monday 2 October. Murray was a simple man who dropped some of his h’s, so Sharp reported in a thank you letter to Gilchrist, but altogether agreeable and trustworthy. Sharp liked very much the quality of the paper and boards and designs Murray was proposing to use for his Regents Library series. When they met briefly in Derby, Sharp became convinced that Murray, though he could afford to pay very little, should publish not only *Vistas*, but also *Pharais*.

Back in Phenice Croft, Sharp sent a story called “The Last Fantasy of James Achanna” to the *Scots Observer*. Elizabeth called that story, which was not accepted, “the first expression of the new work,” (*Memoir*, 227) meaning the first finished work by the Fiona Macleod side of her husband’s personality. After several rewritings, “The Last Fantasy,” renamed “The Archer” and a very interesting story, was included in Fiona Macleod’s *The Dominion of Dreams* in 1899. During the fall Sharp also wrote for *Harper’s* an article on the Belgian literary movement, “La Jeune Belgique.” In November he proposed to James Stoddart, editor of *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine* in Philadelphia, a projected romance called *Nostalgia*, which was never written, and , for serial publication, *Pharais*, which he told Stoddart was “written deeply in the Celtic spirit and from the Celtic standpoint” (*Memoir* 225). Stoddart accepted neither, whereupon Sharp proceeded with his plans for *Pharais* to appear first not serially but as a book by Fiona Macleod from Murray in Derby.

## LETTERS: 1893

*To Alfred Austin, January 1, 1893*

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | January 1, 1893

My dear Austin

One thing after another has prevented my writing to you as I had often intended and wished to do, to thank you again most heartily for your new book,<sup>2</sup> and to say how heartily I have enjoyed it. It gave me keen pleasure to see, the other day, the announcement of its having gone into a second edition.

“Fortunatus” is full of charm and beauty with all your wonted lyric grace. To me it appeals more, on the whole, than “Prince Lucifer,”<sup>3</sup> though that dramatic poem has always been a great favorite with me. I wonder how often I have repeated those splendid lines, in the speech of Franklin

“There was a time I had a feud with Death,”

—— the superb passage beginning

“For us the spacious bounty of the air,  
The impregnable pavilion of heaven,  
And silent muster of the disciplined stars.”

down to the end.

It is a magnificent passage throughout, with many haunting lines — e.g.

“Freshness of dawn and frankincense of eve,  
And vestal hush of meditative night.”

and the Homeric

“Helm-plumes unhorsed, and women wailing round  
The wind-blown smoke of crackling funeral pyres.”

Naturally, there is much else I delighted in and would like to indicate: but my old enemy is upon me, neuralgia in the eyes, from the cold (and late writing) and I must perforce stop. My wife and I leave here tomorrow to go to Tunis. When we return some weeks hence (end of February or early in March) I will give myself the pleasure of calling on you, & telling you more of what I think about your most able & poetic work.

Best wishes for 1893 to Mrs. Austin & yourself, & kindest remembrances from us both

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Cordially yours | William Sharp

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<sup>2</sup> *Fortunatus the Pessimist* (1892).

<sup>3</sup> *Prince Lucifer* (1887).

*To J. Stanley Little, January 7, 1893*

7 Jany 1893

My dear Stanley

I return the Leon MS meanwhile, as D.C.T.<sup>4</sup> does not want the article for some months. Please hold it over for me.

I have written to Scott & sent him the "Current Fiction" paper etc. He will communicate with you at Woodville F. H. I have been writing & working till 2, 3, & 4 a.m. for the last 10 days: &

am about tired of it. Just off to N. Africa. In about a week hence we hope to reach the oasis of El Biskra, some 200 miles inland, & on the verge of the Northern Sahara.

Take care of yourself. I am going to write no letters when I am away, but I'll send post card now & again when in civilised parts.

Addio, old chap

Yours ever | William Sharp

My letter-address will be | chez MM. Thos Cook & Son | 6, Rue de la République, | Algiers |  
Algerie They will take care of & forward every thing to me.

ALS University of British Columbia

*To Arthur Stedman, January 16, 1893<sup>5</sup>*

Mustapha S<sup>n</sup>. – Algiers.

We have enjoyed our first week in North Africa immensely. Even apart from the Moorish and oriental life, everything is charming to the eyes after London fogs — the greenness, the palms, the orange and lemon trees, the roses and brilliant creepers, the blue of the sea and the deeper blue of the sky.

We leave tomorrow for the inland and little visited city of Tlemcen in the S.W. of the Province of Oran, near the frontiers of Morocco. Thereafter we shall return to Algiers for some days of rest and idleness ere we start on our many wayfarings thro' Kabylia (the African Highlands) the Province of Constantine, El Biskra and the Oases of the Sahara, the Holy City of

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<sup>4</sup> The Leon MS may have been an article Stanley Little wrote about the work of his brother, George Leon Little, who was a painter. Or it may have been an article written by George Leon Little. In a letter to Stanley Little on 16 April 1890, Sharp said he admired Leon's work and added: "You may be sure that whenever it is practicable for me to put in a spoke anywhere 'will' shall not lag behind 'can.'" He then suggested Little encourage his brother to try placing his work in a Glasgow gallery where Sharp could do more for him in his capacity as art critic for the *Glasgow Herald*. D.C.T. must have been an editor at the Walter Scott publishing firm to whom Sharp had sent the manuscript. See Sharp's letter to Little dated 22 January 1893.

<sup>5</sup>Date from postmark.

Sidi-Okbar (in the desert), Tbessa, Lambessa, etc., and thence if practicable to Kairouan (the Mecca of N. Africa) and thence thro' the kingdom of Tunisia to Tunis & Carthage.

Kindly hand on this P/C to E.C.S., to whom I shall write later. I have sent one by same post to the Janviers.<sup>6</sup>

Hope you are flourishing, cher ami,

W.S.

ACS Columbia

*To J. Stanley Little, January 22, 1893<sup>7</sup>*

Blidah. | At the base of the Atlas Mtns, | North Africa

I forgot to say in my last that I sent back the L. L. MS.<sup>8</sup> to you before I left (or rather left it with R.F.S.<sup>9</sup> to post) & also wrote to Scott.<sup>10</sup>

I have had no home letters since we left, except one with enclosures from America: so I am behindhand with all news.

We are here en *route* for Tlemcen. It is very strange & beautiful: miles of orange and tangerine trees in full fruit *à terre*, and on high the grand heights and fantastic peaks of the Atlas range. As I write, I hear the *Imam* in the Mosque close by chanting the evening prayer of the Muslim: & below me a constant coming and going of stately shrouded Moors and Arabs.

After Tlemcen, if the tribes are not 'up', or are not unduly fanatical, we may push on across the frontier of Morocco to the city of Oudjda.

W.S.

ACS Princeton

*To \_\_\_\_\_, February 2, 1893<sup>11</sup>*

Biskra, 2d Feb., 1893.

. . . Here we are in the Sahara at last! I find it quite hopeless to attempt to give you any adequate idea of the beauty and strangeness and the extraordinary fascination of it all. The two days' journey here was alone worth coming to Africa for! We left Mustapha shortly before dawn on Tuesday, and witnessed a lovely day-break as we descended the slopes to Agdz: and there we

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<sup>6</sup>Edmund Clarence Stedman.

<sup>7</sup>Date from postmark.

<sup>8</sup>L.L. was probably George Leon Little, Stanley Little's brother who was a painter. See note to Sharp's letter to Little dated 7 January 1893.

<sup>9</sup>Robert Farquharson Sharp, Elizabeth Sharp's brother.

<sup>10</sup>Probably the Walter Scott publishing company. Sharp's 7 January letter implies that D.C.T of that firm agreed to publish the manuscript, but not immediately.

saw a superb sunrise streaming across the peaks and ranges of the Djurdjura of Kabylia (the African Highlands) and athwart the magnificent bay. The sea was dead calm, and in parts still mirrored the moon and a few stars: then suddenly one part of it became molten gold, and that nearest to us was muffled into purple-blue wavelets by the down-wind. The sound of it washing in, almost at the feet of the palms and aloes and Barbary-figtrees was delicious. We had a long and delightful day's journey till sunset. Our route was through Grande Kabylie, and the mountain scenery in particular was very impressive. At many places we had a long stop: but everywhere here railway-traveling is more like journeying in a carriage, the rate of speed not being much more, with ample facilities for seeing everything en route. The Kabyles are the original inhabitants of Mauritanian Africa — and both in language and appearance these Berbers differ markedly from the Moors and the nomadic Arabs. They are the hardest and most industrious though also the most untamable, of the native races. They live in innumerable little villages scattered among the mountains and valleys and plains of the Djurdjura country.

The sun sank over the uplands of Kabylia as we mounted towards the ancient Roman outpost city, Setif. Setif stands about 3,500 ft. high: and crossing the plateaux beyond it was like making an excursion through Scotland in midwinter. Still, despite the snow on the hills, and even along the roads of Setif itself, the cold was not so severe as we expected.

At four next morning we steamed slowly out of Setif in full moonlight. An hour or so later dawn broke as we passed a series of Arab encampments, and then came another sunrise over a wild and desolate country. We were now entirely in Mahomedan lands, for there are comparatively few Europeans south of the city of Constantine.

At a place called Guerrara we stopped for half an hour for déjeuner. Soon thereafter we passed the Salt Lakes, covered with wild-fowl, flamingoes, and other birds. It was hereabouts that we first saw some camels. Once more we mounted, and soon were high among the Aurès mountains, perhaps the most delightful hill-region of North Africa, with certainly the finest population, Berbers like the Kabyles, but Berber "aristocrats" — Berbers refined by potent inherited strains from the Romans of old. From Batna onwards the journey was an endless delight. We come more and more into the East, and soon grew wholly accustomed to Arab encampments, herds of camels, Moors and Negroes coming in with herds of bouricoes (little donkeys) wild black goats and gaunt sheep, Nomads travelling southward or eastward, picturesque Saharians or Spahis dashing past on grey Arab horses, and semi-nude agriculturous Berbers. At last the desert (the hill-desert) was entered. Here one can realise the full

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<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Sharp included three letters Sharp wrote "to a friend" from Africa (*Memoir* 208-14). This is the first of the three. Had that friend been anyone other than Edith Rinder, EAS would have given the name. And only for Edith would Sharp have taken time to write in such detail about the scenery and atmosphere of North Africa.

significance of the French epithet *tourmenté*: and, as one fares further, of the Biblical phrase, the abomination of desolation. The whole country seemed under the curse of barrenness: nothing but gaunt ribbed mountains, gaunt ribbed hills, gaunt ribbed sand-plains — this, or stony wastes of an arid desolation beyond words. But though the country did not become less awful in this respect, it grew wilder and stranger as we neared El Kantara. I never saw scenery so terrific. The entrance to the last Gorge was very exciting, for beyond the narrow outlet lay the Sahara and all torrid Africa! North of this last outpost of the colder zone the date-palm refuses to flourish: and here, too, the Saharan Arab will not linger: but in a quarter of a mile one passes from this arid waste into African heat and a superb oasis of date-palms. It is an indescribable sensation — that of suddenly swinging through a narrow and fantastic mountain-gorge, where all is gloom and terror, and coming abruptly upon the full splendour of the sun-swept Sahara, with, in the immediate foreground, an immense oasis of date-palms, all green and gold! The vistas — the vast perspectives — the glory of the sunflood! From that moment, one can hardly restrain one's excitement. Very soon, however, we had fresh and unexpected cause for excitement. The train slowly came to a stop, and crowds of Arabs came up. The line had been destroyed for more than half a mile — and we were told we must walk across the intervening bit of desert, and ford the Oued-Merjarla, till we reached the train sent to meet us. We could see it in the distance — a black blotch in the golden sunlight. One account was that some revolted Arabs (and some of the outlying tribes are said to be in a chronic state of sullen ill will) had done the mischief: another, and more probable, that the hill-courses had swollen the torrent of the Oued-Biskra, which had rent asunder the desert and displaced the lines. The Arabs carried our baggage, and we set forth across our first Sahara-stretch. Despite the heat, the air was so light and delicious that we enjoyed the experience immensely. The river (or rather barren river-bed with a pale-green torrent rushing through a deep cleft in the sandy grit) was crossed on a kind of pontoon-bridge. Soon after this the sun sank. We were in the middle of a vast plain, almost surrounded by a series of low, pointed hills, which became a deep purple. Far to the right was a chott (or salt lake) and of lucent silver. For the rest, all was orange-gold, yellow-gold, green-gold, with, high over the desert, a vast effulgence of a marvellous roseate flush. Then came the moment of scarlet and rose, saffron, and deepening gold, and purple. In the distance, underneath the drooping sparkle of the Evening Star, we could discern the first palms of the oasis of Biskra. There was nothing more to experience till arrival, we thought: but just then we saw the full moon rise out of the Eastern gloom. And what a moon it was! Never did I see such a splendour of living gold. It seemed incredibly large, and whatever it illumed became strange and beautiful beyond words.

Then a swift run past some ruined outlying mud-walls and Arab tents, some groups of date-palms, a flashing of many lights and clamour of Eastern tongues — and we were in Biskra: El Biskra-ed-Nokkel, to give it its full name (the City of the Palms)! We found pleasant quarters in the semi-Moorish Hotel on Sahara. It has cool corridors, with arched alcoves, on both sides, so that at any time of day one may have coolness somewhere. In the courtyard are seats where we can have coffee and cigarettes under the palms, beside two dear little tame gazelles. . . .

This morning we had many novel and delightful glimpses of oriental life. In one narrow street the way was blocked by camels lying or squatting right across the road. As they are laden, they open their mouths, snarlingly, and give vent to an extraordinary sound — part roar, part grunt of expostulation. . . .

We came across a group of newly arrived camels from the distant Oasis of Touggourt, laden with enormous melons and pumpkins: and, hopping and running about, two baby camels! They were extraordinary creatures, and justified the Arab saying that the first camel was the offspring of an ostrich and some now extinct kind of monster. . . . Oh, this splendid flood of the sun!

*Memoir 208-12*

*To J. Stanley Little, [early February, 1893]*

El Oasis Sidi Okba | ‘The Sahara)

Your postcard reached me just as I left Biskra. Sorry abt. Scott.<sup>12</sup> I did my utmost.

I write this from under the palms belonging to the Sheikh of Sidi Okba, right in the Sahara. The heat outside is very great, but there is shade under the date-palms here, and the cool sound of water — always a delight in the Desert.

Yesterday I was at the Oasis of Chetma, guest of the old Sheikh Lagdan. The journey thither was a marvelous ride across the desert, with a fine Mirage thrown in. But at Chetma the Arabs were pleasanter. Here (perhaps because it is a ‘Holy City’) they are fanatical, and one has constantly to be on one’s guard, even when going about with an escort. Today I heard Kelb (dog) and Djifa (Infidel dirt) again and again.

But a wise insouciance carries one through all right. It is all very barbaric, very fantastic, in many ways very savage and even repellent: but then, the desert — the daily sunflood — the vast perspectives — the brilliant and picturesque, or alternately austere but not less fascinating Sahara-life!!

À vous, | W.S.

ACS Princeton

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<sup>12</sup> The editor at Walter Scott Publishing Co has turned down the L.L. manuscript. See Sharp to Little, January 7 and 22, 1893.

To \_\_\_\_\_, February 12, 1893<sup>13</sup>

Constantine, 12th Feb., 1893.

It would be useless to attempt to give you any idea of all we have seen since I last wrote. The impressions are so numerous and so vivid until one attempts to seize them: and then they merge in a labyrinth of memories. I sent you a P/C from Sidi Okba — the memory of which with its 5,000 swarming Arab population has been something of a nightmare-recollection ever since. I can well believe how the City of Constantine was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. It is impossible to conceive anything grander. Imagine a city hanging down the side of gorges nearly 1,000 feet in depth — and of the most fantastic and imposing aspect. In these terrible gorges, which have been fed with blood often, the storks and ravens seem like tiny sparrows as they fly to and fro, and the blue rock-doves are simply wisps of azure. . . .

Last night I had such a plunge into the Barbaric East as I have never had, and may never have again. I cannot describe, but will ere long tell you of those narrow thronged streets, inexplicably intricate, fantastic, barbaric: the Moorish cafés filled with motley Orientals — the turban'd Turk, the fez'd Jew, the wizard-like Moor, to the Kabyl, the Soudanese, the desert Arab: the strange haunts of the dancing girls: the terrible street of the caged women — like wild beasts exposed for sale: and the crowded dens of the Haschisch-eaters with the smoke and din of barbaric lutes, tam-tams, and nameless instruments, and the strange wild haunting chanting of the ecstasies and fanatics. I went at last where I saw not a single European: and though at some risk, I met with no active unpleasantness, save in one Haschisch place, where by a sudden impulse some forty or fifty Moors suddenly swung round, as the shriek of an Arab fanatic, and with outstretched hands and arms cursed the *Gaiour-keleb* (dog of an infidel!): and here I had to act quickly and resolutely. Thereafter one of my reckless fits came on, and I plunged right into the midst of the whole extraordinary vision — for a kind of visionary Inferno it seemed. From Haschisch-den to Haschisch-den I wandered, from strange vaulted rooms of the gorgeously jewelled and splendidly dressed prostitutes to the alcoves where lay or sat or moved to and fro, behind iron bars, the caged beauties whom none could reach save by gold, and even then at risk; from there to the dark low rooms or open pillared places where semi-nude dancing girls moved to and fro to a wild barbaric music. . . . I wandered to and fro in that bewildering Moorish maze, till at last I could stand no more impressions. So I found my way to the western ramparts, and looked out upon the marvellous nocturnal landscape of mountain arid valley — and thought of all that Constantine had been —

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<sup>13</sup> Probably written to Edith Rinder. See note to February 2 letter.

To \_\_\_\_\_,<sup>14</sup> February 19, [1893]

Carthage, / Sunday, 19th Feb.

How strange it seems to write a line to London from this London of 2,000 years ago! The sea breaks at my feet, blue as a turquoise here, but, beyond, a sheet of marvellous pale green, exquisite beyond words. To the right are the inland waters where the Carthaginian galleys found haven: above, to the right, was the temple of Baal: right above, the temple of Tanit, the famous Astarte, otherwise “The Abomination of the Sidonians.” Where the Carthaginians lived in magnificent luxury, a little out the city itself, is now the Arab town of Sidi-ban-Said — like a huge magnolia-bloom on the sunswept hill-side. There is nothing of the life of to-day visible, save a white-robed Bedouin herding goats and camels, and, on the sea, a few felucca-rigged fisherboats making for distant Tunis by the Strait of Goletta. But there is life and movement in the play of the wind among the grasses and lentisks, in the hum of insects, in the whisper of the warm earth, in the glow of the burning sunshine that floods downward from a sky of glorious blue. Carthage — I can hardly believe it. What largesse of the mind the word creates! . . .

Memoir 214

To Charles Webster, March 23, 1893

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | 23/March/93

Dear Sirs,

Herewith I submit for your consideration an unpublished book by myself, entitled “*Vistas*,” about which I think Mr. Arthur Stedman once spoke to you, and at whose standing suggestion I now send MS.

You will see that it is at least out of the ordinary groove in so far as subject-matter and method are concerned. It has been written for more than two years, but I have purposely held it over. It has occurred to me that, following upon *Flower o’ the Vine* you might be able to do better with it than I could do myself — for at one time I thought of issuing a limited edition privately somewhat in the same way as I did my *Sospiri di Roma*.

If you take it up (needless to say, in that case I must myself see the proof revision) I would like, if you could, to arrange with someone here to sell copies in England — possibly you have regular agents — or else for myself to take a certain number of copies for a numbered limited sale here, through myself.

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<sup>14</sup> Probably to Edith Rinder. See note to letter of February 2.

Mr. H. M. Alden, Mr. Bliss Carman, and other friends in New York have seen one or more of the pieces in *Vistas* — and spoke and wrote to me in exceptional terms of praise concerning them — and on their “novel and striking originality.”

I have just returned from North Africa and have not yet gone to my house in Sussex: and I fancy that I have a more thoroughly revised MS of *Vistas* there. This, however, is a minor detail. What I now send is practically the book as it wd. appear, save for a few textual alterations.

Will you please let me hear from you at your early convenience: and if you are willing to undertake the book, with the terms you feel able to propose.

With kind regards

Yours very truly | William Sharp

*P.S.* *Vistas* is the name I arrived at after long deliberation. It not only goes for the contents collectively, but is meant to indicate the new method in imaginative composition to which I have endeavored to give expression. All the pieces are unpublished save that which is entitled “The Black Madonna.”

ALS Wake Forest University

*To J. Stanley Little, March 29, 1893*<sup>15</sup>

Phenice Croft | Wedny.

My dear Stanley,

Yours just recd. What an erratic fellow you have become!

When *are* you to be here again? Both Elizabeth and I shall be very glad to see you once more, and have the pleasant sense of your neighbourhood and neighbourlyness.

In your last note or P/C you said “certainly you thought” you wd. be here during Easter-tide. Farquharson<sup>16</sup> and my sister Madge come tomorrow. Are we to see you?

It is glorious weather, & the Rudgwickian country, Buck’s Green, and Phenice Croft are all looking their best.

Yours Ever, | W.S.

What is Dalmon’s<sup>17</sup> present address?

ACS Princeton

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<sup>15</sup>Date from postmark.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Farquharson Sharp is EAS’s brother. Madge is WS’s sister Mary who provided the FM handwriting.

<sup>17</sup> Charles W. Dalmon. See note to Sharp’s 3 April 1893 letter to Dalmon.

J. Stanley Little, April 3, 1893<sup>18</sup>

Monday

My dear Boy

“Keep your mind easy and etc. etc.”

No: the individual to whom you allude is not my friend — indeed, I have never even heard of Mrs. Louis Diehl.<sup>19</sup>

There’s one of your recent review books I shd. like to see when you return to your forsaken Kensettian nest — F. Moore’s “I forbid the Banns.”<sup>20</sup>

I’m doing what I can at the B/M for Dalmon.<sup>21</sup>

In haste, | Yours Ever, | W.S.

ACS Princeton

To [Henry Mills Alden], April 19, 1893

Phenice Croft, | Rudgwick, | Sussex. | 19:April:93

My Dear Friend,

I was glad indeed to receive your welcome private letter — as well as so much indebted for your kind & considerate editorial one, which I have already affirmatively acknowledged.<sup>22</sup>

I should be sorry not to hear from you occasionally. There are few men for whom I have so affectionate a regard, & this though we have met a few times only. But I feel as if I know you well, and had known you for long. Some of this, of course, is due to your beautiful book,<sup>23</sup> which I have been reading to my wife lately — finding in it fresh and lovely things, with a rare & beautiful breath of spiritual life. More & more I find it something deep, germinal, quintessential: and to be quintessential voilà le motif de tout artist sérieux.

For this, or with this & other complex reasons, I am grieved more than I can say about what you write me concerning Mrs. Alden. She has suffered so much — is of so brave a

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<sup>18</sup> This letter-card is postmarked April 4, 1893, which was a Tuesday.

<sup>19</sup> Possibly Alice Mangold Diehl (1846-1912), a prolific writer of popular novels.

<sup>20</sup> Frank Frankfort Moore, *I Forbid the Banns, The Story of a Comedy which was played seriously*, 4th ed., 3 vol. (1893).

<sup>21</sup> Charles W. Dalmon. Sharp must have been attempting to find employment for him at the British Museum. WS’s cousin and EAS’s brother, Robert Farquharson Sharp worked there in the Department of Printed Books.

<sup>22</sup> Sharp’s business letter to Alden, who was Editor of *Harper’s Magazine*, probably proposed a poem for publication which Alden accepted (“kind and considerate editorial” response). A poem by Sharp entitled “The Weaver of Snow” appeared in *Harper’s* in March 1894.

<sup>23</sup> Perhaps *God in His World* (1890), Alden’s most recent book. Alden obtained a degree from Andover Theological Seminary in 1860, three years after he graduated from Williams College. Alden was Editor of *Harper’s Magazine* from 1869 until he died in 1919. Alden’s wife was ill for many years. Sharp stayed with them during a portion of his trip to the United States in 1892.

temperament, so sunshine-like in her naivité, it seems too hard that she should suffer as she does.

I am haunted by that lovely verse of Malherbe<sup>24</sup>, when I think of her, and the Rose on Perrin

Mais elle était du monde vis les plus belles choses

ont le pire destin;

It rose, elle a vécu ce que vivent les roses

L'espace d'un matin

More than once —strange as it may seem — I have almost felt the pain she endures, as it were vicariously.

And yet —it may yet be well.

I hope the letter I send herewith to her (for her and you) may come with something of that freshening air which alien sight & sound sometimes have. And you, amico mio — I am glad you are writing again. I too am busy: more maturely, more serenely, more hopefully, if with more mental & spiritual stress, than heretofore. I shall write sometime & tell you more.

Ever affectionately your friend, | William Sharp

ALS University of Delaware Library

*To Nina F. Layard, May 1, 1893*

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex

I have read your MS. with interest. I find it difficult to know what to say, for I do not know what kind of opinion you want — I mean, if as a critic, as a publisher's reader, or merely a lover of poetry.

I have certainly no hesitation in thinking your book distinctly above the average. Technically, it is unequal: but there are a few poems which are of exceptional merit in all respects — notably the unambitious "A Penalty" and "Sweet Peas." In the first named it seems to me that you touch your high water mark — for it has the great quality of being artistically complete while reserved in expression.

Your longest poem has many poetic passages in it: but I admit that it seems to me overlong, and to be occasionally crude in conception as well as in execution. This, however, is an opinion rather than a criticism. I may be quite wrong: and the faulty lie with me.

Well, to come to the point: I do not think any publisher will undertake the book on his own risk, not because the collection is not good enough to sell, but because there is so much that is good daily going a begging for the buyer that cometh not: because there are very few purchasers for verse

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<sup>24</sup> François de Malherbe (1555-1628), French poet and critic.

by writers who have not won a wide repute: and because the possibilities of return of outlay are so limited. These are hard facts, but, alas, facts they are.<sup>25</sup>

If you publish in your own account you must be prepared to find little return financially for your outlay. My advice would be: if you can afford it, print at your own expense, through some local printer (not a publisher), say 300 copies, bound simply, in thick paper or cloth. This should not cost beyond 25 shillings at the outside. You could then send say 50 copies to the leading papers & periodicals, and either place the remainder with some publisher or bookseller to dispose of for you at a commission of 10%, or such portion of the remainder as you cannot dispose of privately.

I would gladly send you a more encouraging letter — but I cannot honestly do so. With equal candour I may add that I shall be genuinely pleased if on all points I am disproved, and you are enabled to throw out more stone at the Great Cairn of the Folly of Critics!

I send back your MS. by registered post: kindly send a line or P/C acknowledging its receipt.

If you will forgive the commonplace phrase for the sake of the essential truth that underlies it, let me say that, in any hazard, poetry is its own exceeding great reward. And I often think that the more we love it, the more intimate with it we become, the less exigent are we as to such matters as vogue, popularity, uncritical acclaim.

With good wishes | Sincerely yours | William Sharp

ALS private

*To ?, May 4, 1893*<sup>26</sup>

Phenice Croft, | Rudgwick | Sussex

Dear Sirs

My attention has been drawn to the fact that your agreement and mine, re “Rossetti,” are both unstamped, and therefore both invalid in point of law.

How can this now be rectified? Would not the simplest way be a fresh Agreement Form similar to that existent between us, stamped in duplicate? The date can be altered to the present time.

Yours faithfully, | William Sharp

ALS Dartmouth College Library

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<sup>25</sup> Nina Francis Layard was an American poet whose poems appeared in *Harper's Magazine* and other American periodicals. Longman's had published her volume entitled *Poems* in 1890. She has sent Sharp a manuscript of additional poems intended, presumably, as a second volume of poems. Sharp seems not to have known about the 1890 volume.

<sup>26</sup> The addressees of this letters were officials at Swan Sonnenschein and Company who had agreed to

*To Kineton Parkes, [May 6, 1893]*<sup>27</sup>

Phenice Croft, Rudgwick, Sussex

Dear Mr. Parkes

If you can send me John Davidson's "Fleet St Eclogues" (just pubd by E Mathews & Lane) I will do you an article on *Recent Poetry* apropos of Davidson's "Eclogues," Mathilde Blind's "Songs & Sonnets," and W. Renton's "Poems." (I have the two last named.)

Yours in haste | William Sharp

Let me know the latest convenient date for the June number. Address to me at Alum Bay Hotel, Isle of Wight.

ALS private

*To J. Stanley Little, May 7, 1893*<sup>28</sup>

Sunday Morning | *Horsham Station* / 7. May 93

Well, you *are* a fraud, J.S.L! I suppose you got screwed and forgot all about your promise to come in? I worked till about 1 a.m., & then fiddled about and waited doing odds and ends till 2:15. I then went out, but the ancestral mansion of the Kensetts was buried in a gloom as profound as its greatest ornament's pessimism. I particularly wanted to see you abt. one or two points in my Art-article,<sup>29</sup> abt a letter from Sonnenscheins,<sup>30</sup> & about a small matter I wanted you to do for me. 'By the way, did you pay Horsham Bookstall a/c & tell them to discontinue D/Chronicles?)

It is only the prospect of the virtuous life I am going to live during the coming week that makes me forgive you. The sense of well spent time makes one kindly to sinners like you.

W.S.

I'll send you a line in a day or so.

ACS Princeton

*To Kineton Parkes, May 10, 1893*

Freshwater Bay Hotel | Isle of Wight

Dear Mr. Parkes

All right — only give me your latest convenient date. I could not send any MS before the 19th or 20th. Would it do if you received it on the 22nd?

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publish a new biography of D. G. Rossetti, a projected work Sharp never finished.

<sup>27</sup> Sharp spent the early part of May 1893 on the Isle of Wight while EAS was in Paris for the Salons. This letter appears to have been written just before he left Buck's Green on Sunday, May 7. Kineton Parkes was editor of the *Library Journal*.

<sup>28</sup> Postmark on letter card.

<sup>29</sup> Possibly something for his monograph called *Fair Women in Painting and Poetry* which was published in 1894.

<sup>30</sup> Swan Sonnenschein and Co., a publishing firm. See note to Sharp's 4 May 1893 letter to this firm.

Send me a P/C here.

Sorry you are in financial troubles with the L.R. It is too good a periodical to come to grief.

In greatest haste | Yrs sincerely | William Sharp

I shall leave here in a few days — & be back in Rudgwick by the 17th — but send me the P/C here.

*PS* Of course if there is real urgency, I might be able to send it by this week-end. But I would rather not. If so, you had better wire to me (Lambert's, Freshwater)

ALCS UWM Library

*To J. Stanley Little, May 10, 1893*<sup>31</sup>

Somewhere or other near Freshwater

My dear Boy

Of course I understand. I am quite certain I should omit an after-midnight call on *you*, if a “young charmer” would sit up with me till 2 a.m. and discuss debateable subjects!

I hope you had a really pleasant time of it with your guests altogether. It is glorious here. By Jove, Life *is* well worth living!

Well, if you *are* in Rudgwick on Monday next we'll have a chat over sins and sinners — always a fascinating subject. But perhaps you'll go to Paris: perhaps I'll be dead, or won't get away from here so easily.

Ever, old man, Affectionately Yours,

Will

K. P.<sup>32</sup> seems in a bad way with the *Library Review*.

ACS Princeton

*To Richard Watson Gilder, June 3, 1893*

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | iii:vi:xciii

Dear Mr. Gilder

I have recently returned from a long journey across French Africa, from the frontiers of Morocco across the Sahara and the African Highlands to Carthage and the Tunisian littoral and desert.

Naturally I want to turn my experiences to literary account, with further intent to issue ultimately in book-form.

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<sup>31</sup> Postmark on letter card.

<sup>32</sup> W. Kinton Parkes edited the *Library Review* in 1893 -94.

I obtained, often with difficulty, a great number of interesting photographs: and from these I think good illustrations could be made.

Here is a list of suggested papers, for which I took material, memoranda, etc. on the spot.

\*\*1) *Tlemcen the Magnificent*: A Note on Moorish Civilisation.

\*2) *A Winter in the Sahel: Algeria*.

\*\*3) *The Algerian Sahara* ‘with description of the oases of El Kantara, Biskra, Chetma, the Holy city of Sidi Okba etc. etc.)

\*4) *The City in the Air* Descrip: & Historic Romance of Constantine

5) *The Country of St. Augustine & Apuleius* ‘from Bonâ on the Coast to M’daourouch near the Tunisian frontier — the latter almost unvisited)

\*6) *Fleurs D’Orient* ‘Tunis) with special note of the changed condition & probable future now that the Sea Canal has been cut from Goletta through the lake El Bahira.

\*7) *The Country of Salammbô*.

8) *Carthage Today and Tomorrow* ‘Descriptive, briefly retrospective, and with a forecast of what it may become)

9) *The French in North Africa*

10) *Winter Health-Resorts in French Africa*.

I hope you may see your way to commission one of these. I have put an asterisk against those with which I could send photos for illustrative purposes.

With kind remembrances, | Yours very sincerely, | William Sharp

Richard Watson Gilder Esq.<sup>33</sup>

ALS Huntington

*To Louise Chandler Moulton, June 20, 1893*

Phenice Croft | *Rudgwick* / Sussex | 20.vi.xciii

My dear Louise

I am glad to learn that you are again in England. Naturally, it would have given me great pleasure to be with you today, but, apart from the fact that I never go to town in the middle of the week (& rarely even on Fridays in this glorious summer when I grudge every hour from work and the country) — apart from this, we have a guest with us whom I cannot leave. I will try to see you some day soon, of course: &, failing success, will be with you on next or the following Tuesday.

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<sup>33</sup> The word “no” written in the upper left-hand corner of the letter indicates that Gilder accepted none of Sharp’s suggested articles for the *Century Magazine*. “French-African Health Resorts” was published in the *Nineteenth Century* in December 1893.

What an unparalleled Spring & Summer! Here, in Sussex, we have had no rain (save 3 brief showers, 2 nocturnal) for 3 ½ months, & an almost unbroken succession of blue skies. As we spent the winter in the Sahara & elsewhere in North Africa, we have had one continuous flow of sunshine since Xmas.

I wish we could have a long talk “by ourselves.” But this literary life of ours is so exigent. The pressure becomes greater: and, I find, more & more imperative: the need to isolate oneself from many distractions, and to concentrate one’s energies if a definite good is to be reached even approximately near.

I am working very hard: making the wherewithal for ‘daily bread’ but not omitting dreaming and the weaving of dreams. You, I hope, are well: the poet I know so well and admire so much, is she also doing well? Let her give us some more beautiful breaths from her charmed Garden of Dreams.

Ever, dear Louise

Affectionately your friend | William Sharp

ALS Louise Chandler Moulton Collection, Library of Congress

*To Will Foster,*<sup>34</sup> *June 21, 1893*

Phenice Croft | *Rudgwick* / Sussex | *xxi:vi:xciii*

To Will Foster Esq

My dear Sir,

I have been from home, or would have answered your letter and kind present of your book sooner. I found it among several others awaiting me, and took it up, I admit, with indifference. But I soon recognized with genuine pleasure that the author of *The Fallen City etc.* is a poet. Your book seems to me very good indeed in parts: and by this I mean not the conventional significance but what the words actually convey. You are, I take it, a young man: so I infer from the markedly derivative notes in certain poem — e.g. the Wordsworthian in the Ode on Spring, the Rossettian in the Ode on Remorse, the Shelleyan in “Sleep.” Here, and particularly in “Sleep,” the atmosphere of other poetic minds than your own is too obtrusive. But, after all, this mainly proves that you have a natively keen & true love for the best, and that you have a sensitive ear. Elsewhere I find a fine and alert poetic sense, a worthy investiture of the thought or idea, and the welcome note of native music. Your sonnets are now and again excellent: excellent, too, from a general as well as from the particular present standpoint. Of the several fine lyrical pieces I think I like best the fine Ode on the Mystery of Life: as, of the shorter pieces, I note particularly the highly poetic *Songeuse*.

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<sup>34</sup> [Identify]

With such a real talent as yours, you should do well. Nothing is beautiful but Beauty. So, at least, all poets should hold. This belief will make a true poet more and more exigent, more and more austere, more ill-content of anything mediocre in thought, emotion, or expression, more & more relentless in wise renunciations.

With cordial good wishes | Yours very truly | William Sharp

ALS Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

To \_\_\_\_\_, June 22, 1893]

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | xxii: vi: xciii

My Dear Sir

I thank you for your note & suggestion. The latter has been made to me scores of times — but copyright and other reasons have said ‘nay’ where ‘yea’ would gladly be said by

Yours very truly | William Sharp

P.S. If you have reason to believe that you could get (or if you already have) Dr. Holmes and/or his publisher’s consent to a vol. of selected poems, I should be glad to hear from you again. But I fancy the sole British rights are in the firm which has issued Holmes’ poems in this Country.<sup>35</sup>

ALS Private

To Alfred H. Miles, June 30, 1893

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | 30:vi:xciii

Dear Mr. Miles,

Thanks for sending me your duplicate-set.<sup>36</sup> There are several misreadings, but I suppose these will appear correctly in the book.

I shall write to you shortly for some information for my article on Victorian Poetry. At the moment, I am finishing a long commissioned article which must go off this week-end.

In great haste

Yrs. very truly, | William Sharp

ALS University of British Columbia

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<sup>35</sup> The following note appears on the reverse of the letter in a hand that is not Sharp’s: “Houghton Mifflin say no. Write Sharp to that effect :20:Oct:93:” The individual to whom Sharp’s letter is addressed must have been proposing to Sharp an edition of Oliver Wendell Holmes’ poetry in Walter Scott’s Canterbury Poets series, of which Sharp was General Editor. As Sharp suggested in the postscript, that individual pursued the matter with Houghton Mifflin and received a negative response.

<sup>36</sup> These must be proofs of Sharp’s notice of Philip Bourke Marston for *Poets and Poetry of the Century*.

To Robert Underwood Johnson, July 15, 1893<sup>37</sup>

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick, Sussex | xv:vii:xciii

Dear Mr. Johnson,

On my return from abroad, I find your letter awaiting me — for which, thanks.

I do not wish to bother you or Mr. Gilder<sup>38</sup> with unsought suggestions — but as you say you do not at present wish descriptive articles (such as the North African paper I proposed) it has occurred to me that you might care to have one of the over noted articles upon which I am now intermittently engaged or for which I have accumulated material. No. I would deal with Meredith's keenest delineations from life: and with his extraordinary insight, understanding of, and power of depicting woman's nature. No. II with the personality & varied literary achievement of Lang.<sup>39</sup> No. III with R. Buchanan, Lang, R. L. Stevenson, Barrie, Traill, Sir. Geo. Douglas, Walter C. Smith, John Davidson,<sup>40</sup> etc. etc. among the writers — Richardson,<sup>41</sup> the younger men of the Nature School, the new Glasgow School, etc. among the artists. If you care for No. IV, I would need to stipulate for its appearance by February next *at latest* — as it will probably serve as Introduction to a book next Spring or early Summer. No. V will deal with

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See Sharp's letter to Alfred H. Miles dated 31 October 1892.

<sup>37</sup> The word "Decline" is written in the upper left-hand corner of the letter's first page. In the upper right-hand corner is a note in Johnson's hand: "I do not see anything for us in these suggestions. R.U.J. We have articles on Lang, Coleridge, & others for which we have been long in finding room."

See Sharp's letter of 3 June 1893 to Richard Watson Gilder proposing articles on North Africa which Gilder declined. Gilder was editor and Johnson assistant editor of the *Century Magazine* in New York.

<sup>38</sup> Richard Watson Gilder.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Lang.

<sup>40</sup> Robert William Buchanan (1841-1901), a Scottish poet, novelist, and playwright, is known for his attack on Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites, "The Fleshly School of Poetry," in the 1871 *Contemporary Review*. After a controversy, he withdrew his charges and dedicated his novel, *God and Man*, to Rossetti. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894). Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937), a Scottish journalist, novelist, and playwright, noted for his use of whimsy. His works include *Quality Street* (1901), *The Admirable Crichton* (1902), *Peter Pan* (1904), *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), and *The Twelve-Pound Look* (1910). Henry Duff Traill (1842-1900), a poet and journalist, was on the staffs of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *St. James's Gazette*, and the *Daily Telegraph*; and edited *The Observer* and *Literature*. His best work was done as a critic and literary biographer. Among his works are *Central Government* (1881), *Recaptured Rhymes* (1882), *Coleridge* (1884), *Sterne* (1889), *Saturday Songs* (1890), and *The New Fiction and Other Essays on Literary Subjects* (1897). With J. S. Mann he edited *The Building of Britain and the Empire* (London: The Waverley Book Company, Ltd., 1909). Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908), a Scottish poet and clergyman of the Free Church, wrote narrative, colloquial works under the pseudonyms, "Orwell" and "Hermann Knott." His works include *The Bishop's Walk* (1861), *Borland Hall* (1871), *Hilda Among the Broken Gods* (1878), and *A Heretic* (1890). John Davidson (1857-1909), a Scottish poet, playwright, and novelist, wrote melancholy "tragedies and testaments," poems and plays espousing his "gospel of philosophic science." His works include *The North Wall* (1885), *The Wonderful Mission of Earl Lavender* (1891), *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893), *The Last Ballad* (1899), and *Testaments*, 5 vol. (1901-1908).

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Miles Richardson, Jr. (1813-1890), a painter who worked primarily in watercolors, became an Associate of the Old Water-Colour Society in 1843 and a Member in 1851. He was also a member of the Royal Academy in Scotland. From 1843 until his death, he exhibited his work over 800 times.

the questions at issue in contemporary fiction — in particular with the ideals and methods of the English & American, where they meet, where they differ, & the outlook.

I append the list overleaf.

With kind regards to you and to Mr Gilder.

Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

*Suggested Articles*

I. George Meredith as Student of Life

II. Andrew Lang

III. The Scottish Contingent to Contemporary Art & Literature

IV. Contemporary Celtic Poetry

V. Contemporary Fiction: a Dialogue between Mr. Smith of London and Mr. Browne of New York.

VI. A. C. Swinburne as Dramatist.

ALS Huntington

*To Louise Chandler Moulton, July 15, 1893*

Rudgwick | xv:vii:xciii

My dear Louise,

Your kind card has added to my self-reproach. Had the ability concurred with the will, I would long ere this have called: but, alas, I have been so overwhelmed with work requiring the closest continuous attention that I have postponed and postponed and postponed. Besides this, I have purposely withdrawn from everything this year — having realized that my paramount need at present is isolation — or as much as can be had even at this distance from town. Each finds at last what he needs in order to do his best work. I do not know if I have found it yet: I doubt if I shall ever find it in England: but I am nearer to what I want than I have yet been.

Indeed, my going-out this season has literally been confined to three occasions: a lunch at Henry Arthur Jones<sup>42</sup> in May, a lunch at Mrs. Knowles's<sup>43</sup> in June, and an afternoon-tea at Mrs. Pennell's<sup>44</sup> (when I chanced to be in town at any rate on literary business). Still, I should be regretful indeed if I did not see *you*. I shall try to call on Tuesday: failing this on the ensuing Tuesday. About the end of that week (28th or 29th) we go to Scotland for two months.

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<sup>42</sup> Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929) was a playwright who wrote and produced more than sixty plays during his lifetime. His best-known works include *The Silver King* (1882), *Judah* (1890), *Saints and Sinners* (1894), *Michael and His Lost Angel* (1896), *The Liars* (1897), *Mrs. Dane's Defence* (1900), and *Whitewashing Julia* (1903).

<sup>43</sup> [Identify]

<sup>44</sup> Wife of Joseph Pennell.

I know there is no chance of my wife being able to call on Tuesday next (she returns today with a guest) but I hope she may be able to do so on the 25th.

I, too, much regret that we see so little of each other now. But now & always I am proud & glad to sign myself

Affectionately Your Friend | William Sharp

I wonder if Dalmon<sup>45</sup> has called yet, or forwarded my letter to you.

ALS Louise Chandler Moulton Collection, Library of Congress

*To Frank Murray, July 19, 1993*

Phenice Croft | *Rudgwick / Sussex | 19:July:93*

My dear Sir,

While it is not feasible for me to publish a romance on the terms indicated by you in your reply to my first suggestion, on account of the conditions specified by yourself, I have decided, if you

are willing, to entrust to you the MS. of my most individual imaginative work — a series of seven studies collectively entitled “*Vistas*.”<sup>46</sup> I thought of publishing them myself, privately, — as I did (from Rome) in the instance of my *Sospiri di Roma* — but do not now feel free to undertake the trouble etc. necessarily involved during and after publication.

“*Vistas*” is a series of psychological problems or reveries wrought in a new form, nominally dramatic. I had them with me — or some of them — when I was in New York a year ago: and Mr. W. D. Howells, Mr. Stedman, Mr. W. H. Alden, & Mr. Bliss Carman were among the friends whose names will be known to you, who spoke with emphatic praise of their originality & appeal.

Here I have shown them to very few — but in each case I have found the same thing: that their novelty of form & substance has an exceptional appeal. One of them only has been printed: “The Black Madonna” — which attracted a great deal of attention, favorable and adverse, a year ago.

I should be quite willing to accept your aforementioned terms for “*Vistas*” — as my chief object is to have the book issued by a publisher more or less identified with work of a new & noteworthy kind.

Please let me hear from you at early convenience — as I leave here for Scotland by the middle of next week.

Yours faithfully | William Sharp

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<sup>45</sup> Charles W. Dalman

<sup>46</sup> *Vistas* was published by Frank Murray in Derby in 1894 and in the United States by Stone and Kimball in the same year.

*To J. Stanley Little, [July 27, 1893]*

Thursday Morning

My dear Stanley

Herewith I send you, with many thanks old chap for your considerate & timely aid, cheque for £5, in repayment of your loan to me.

I have asked that all letters for us be sent to you till Sunday inclusive. If anything come[s] for us, will you kindly redirect to us at 72 Inverness Terrace Bayswater: Sunday only if you catch the 10 post.

Thereafter I have directed the post people to send everything to Scotland.

Take care of yourself old fellow. You have my deepest sympathy & esteem in your struggle with adverse circumstances.

Nevertheless I believe the turning of the tide is nearer than you think.

If you do not come north, do not mind if I am a bad correspondent as is my wont: I feel the need of as much cessation from writing (for eyes as well as for head) as is practicable.

Adieu. Begin the new romance soon: there is your line of least resistance: go along that, alertly, determinedly, expeditiously. You will be at the goal while you think it is still below the horizon.

Yours affectionately, | Will

ALS Princeton

*To J. Stanley Little, [early August, 1893]*

6 Albany Place | St. Andrews

My dear Stanley

I have asked Annie, our servant, to take you the key of our house (or to let you in) — & I wd. be much obliged if you wd. go to my study and obtain & send to me what I want.

(1) In the lower shelves at the desk near the door is a bundle of the *Pagan Review*. I want 3 copies.

(2) On the brown wickerstand near the lounge is a little red-cloth-bound book: “*Flashes of French Wit and Wisdom*.” If not there (where I left it), it will be in the swing-case or on the table behind the lounge. It belongs to a friend who wants it back.

(3) In my dressing-room book-case — in (I think) a lower shelf of the section next the window —among translations — is a book by Pierre Loti, called either *Pêcheur d’Islande*, or “An Iceland Fisherman.”<sup>47</sup> This I want also.

Will you take this trouble for me?

My Belgian article will be out in the September *Nineteenth Century*, I understand.<sup>48</sup> It comes to 20 full pages in print.

My ‘Rossetti’, my new one-vol. novel, my vol. of short stories, & my French studies,<sup>49</sup> fully occupy my mind here — when I am not swimming or walking, eating or sleeping or ‘dreaming.’

Thanks for your letter, old man. I knew you wd. understand. All the same, both E. & I hold to our opinion.

[Unsigned]

ALS Princeton

*To Catherine Janvier, August 12, 1893*

St. Andrews | 12th August 1893

. . . The white flowers you speak of are the moon-daisies, are they not? — what we call moonflowers in the west of Scotland and ox-eye daisies in England, and marguerites in France? . . . It is very strange that you should write about them to me just as I was working out a scene in a strange Celtic tale I am writing, called *Pharais*,<sup>50</sup> wherein the weird charm and terror of a night of tragic significance is brought home to the reader (or I hope so) by a stretch of dew-wet moonflowers glimmering white through the mirk of a dusk laden with sea mists. Though this actual scene was written a year or two ago — and one or two others of the first part of *Pharais* — I am going to re-write it, your latter having brought some subtle inspiration with it. *Pharais* is a foil to the other long story<sup>51</sup> I am working at. While it *is* full of Celtic romance and dream and the glamour of the mysterious, the other is a comedy of errors — somewhat in the nature, so far, of “A Fellowe and His Wife” (I mean as to style). In both, at least the plot, the central action, the germinal *motif*, is original: though I for one lay little stress on extraneous originality in comparison with that inner originality of individual life. . . . I have other work on the many

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<sup>47</sup>Pierre Loti’s (pseudonym for Louis Marie Julien Viaud) *Pêcheur d’Islande* was published in Paris in 1886. The first British edition, edited by R. J. March, was published in London in 1891.

<sup>48</sup>“*La Jeune Belgique*”

<sup>49</sup>Sharp’s new biography of Rossetti was not completed. Sharp’s new “one-vol. Novel” was probably *Pharais*, and his “vol. of short stories” was probably *Comedy of Woman*, also never published. His “French studies” was possibly *Chansons d’Amour*. See Sharp’s diary for December, 1893 (*Memoir* 215-7).

<sup>50</sup>*Pharais: A Romance of the Isles*, The Regent Library (Derby: F. Murray, 1894). This was the first of Sharp’s works published under the name Fiona Macleod.

<sup>51</sup>Perhaps *Wives in Exile: A Comedy in Romance* (London: Grant Richards, 1898)

occupied easels in the studio of my mind: but of nothing of this need I speak at present. Of minor things, the only one of any importance is a long article on a subject wherein I am (I suppose) the only specialist among English men of letters — the Belgian literary Renaissance since 1880. It is entitled “La Jeune Belgique” and will appear in (I understand) the September number of *The Nineteenth Century*. . . .

. . . We must each ‘gang our ain gait.’ I’m singularly indifferent to what other people think in any matter where I feel strongly myself. Perhaps it is for this reason that I am rarely ‘put out’ by adverse criticism or opinion — except on technical shortcomings. I do a lot of my own work here lying out on the sand-dunes by the sea. Yesterday I had a strange experience. I was writing in pencil in *Pharais* of death by the sea — and almost at my feet a drowned corpse was washed in by the tide and the slackening urgency of the previous night’s gale. The body proves to be that of a man from the opposite Forfar coast. It had been five days in the water, and death had played havoc with his dignity of lifeless manhood. I learned later that his companion had been found three days ago, tide-drifted in the estuary of the Tay. It was only a bit of flotsam, in a sense, but that poor derelict so sullenly surrendered of the sea changed for me, for a time, the aspect of those blithe waters I love so well. In the evening I walked along the same sands. The sea purred like a gigantic tigress, with a whisper of peace and rest and an infinite sweet melancholy. What a sepulchral fraud. . . .

Life seems to move, now high and serene and incredibly swift as an albatross cleaving the upper air, now as a flood hurled across rocks and chasms and quicksands. But it is all life — even the strangely still and quiet back-waters, even, indeed, the same healthful commonplace lagoons where one havens so gladly often. . . .

*Memoir 224-5*

*To Robert Murray Gilchrist, August 18, 1893*<sup>52</sup>

c/o Mrs. Glasford Bell | Tirinie | Aberfeldy | (Perthshire) | 18:Aug:93

Dear Mr. Gilchrist,

Have you forgotten your kind invitation to me to stay a night with you at Eyam?

If not, and if you are to be at home, and if the visit would be in no way inconvenient for you, it would give me much pleasure to join you on or about the 24<sup>th</sup> of September.

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<sup>52</sup> Gilchrist was born in 1867 at Heeley, Sheffield and educated at Sheffield Grammar School. At twenty-on, he gave up his apprenticeship in the manufacture of cutlery, decided to become a full-time writer, and moved to a house called Highcliffe at Eyam, a village near Sheffield. He became a prolific and popular writer of stories and novels many of which featured ghosts and supernatural phenomena. For a selected list of his publications, see note to Sharp’s October 1892 letter to Gilchrist.

It is difficult for me to fix an exact date at this time — but I think the 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> the likeliest — & particularly so the 24<sup>th</sup>.

I leave here on Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>, & go to my mother's in Edinburgh (Murrayfield) for 3 or 4 days, & on the 1<sup>st</sup> to the Isle of Arran for a fortnight. After that my movements are somewhat uncertain: but Murrayfield, Edinburgh, will always find me.

If by good hap I am to have the pleasure of seeing you I hope that pleasure may be enhanced by meeting your mother also, of whom I have heard — both privily & of course in a literary sense.

With kind regards | Cordially yours | William Sharp

It may interest you to know that I am bringing out something through Mr. Frank Murray of Derby.

ALS Sheffield City Archives

*To Robert Murray Gilchrist, August 18, 1893<sup>53</sup>*

Just a supplementary card to say that — granting the proposed visit be convenient at all — it will probably have to be a day or two later than the date suggested by me.

W.S.

ACS Sheffield City Archives

*To Robert Murray Gilchrist, September [10?], 1893*

Corrie Hotel | Isle of Arran | Scotland

Dear Mr. Gilchrist

At last I am able to fix my travel-dates. I leave here on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup>, & shall be moving about for a little & then be in Edinburgh till the 29<sup>th</sup> inclusive.

On Saty the 30<sup>th</sup> my wife & I leave Edinburgh by the King's Cross morning express. Mrs. Sharp will go straight on to London — and I (if still quite convenient for you) will branch off, so as to spend Saty evening & Sunday with you. I must leave again early on Monday.

As there is no Bradshaw here — & I cannot find Eyam in my other timetables — will you kindly let me know where I shd. diverge from the L. & N.W. Ry main line (by which we have return tourist tickets) — presumably, I take it, at either Preston or Crewe? — and how thence I am to reach Eyam.

My letter address is 9 Up. Coltbridge Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinbro' — But I shall be here, at Corrie, in Arran till Friday of this week.

I hope you are enjoying as glorious weather in Derbyshire as we are in Arran.

Cordially yours | William Sharp

ALS Sheffield City Archives

*To Robert Murray Gilchrist, September 23, 1893*

9 Up. Coltbridge Terrace | Murrayfield | Edinbro'; | 23:9:93

Dear Mr. Gilchrist,

Thanks for your kind note. With your suggestions and a Bradshaw which I have at last been able to obtain, I can now write definitely.

I find that I can leave Manchester (i.e. on Saty 30<sup>th</sup>) by the Victoria Station after all. I'll reach Manchester, from Preston, at 3:10: I leave Manchester for Derbyshire at 3:28, by the train due at Hassop at 5.0 o'clock — where you kindly say you will meet me.

Of course this arrangement is dependent on the punctuality of the Edinburgh-London express. It is due at Preston at 2.5: and the Manchester train goes at 2:15 — &, if the trains are not in connection, there is the obvious hazard of catching the 2:15. [If I miss this train I find that I can reach Hassop at 6:38.]

However, I fancy there will be a connection with Manchester. I regret that I cannot avail myself of your cordial invitation to prolong my visit, but I must be in London on Monday night & wish to talk [sic] Derby en route:<sup>54</sup> so that I must leave Miller's Dale at 10:34 (or at latest Hassop at 11) on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

It will be a pleasure to me to meet you.

Till then | à rivederta | William Sharp

ALS Sheffield City Archives

*To J. Stanley Little, [September 23, 1893]<sup>55</sup>*

Murrayfield: Edinburgh

My Dear Stanley

I have dropped here unexpectedly from the West Highlands. Elizabeth is in Dumbartonshire — no, today by the by she'll be in Fifeshire: and comes here on Monday. We leave for London on the 30th. (I breaking the journey till the 3rd) and go back to Phenice Croft on the 6th.

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<sup>53</sup> Date from postmark.

<sup>54</sup> Sharp meant to say he wanted to stop in Derby on his return to London to talk with Frank Murray with whom he was arranging the publication of his *Vistas* and the first Fiona Macleod romance, *Pharais*.

I am sorry I overlooked replying to your questions about apples. Let old Ticknor (or any one else you wish) have all the fallen apples. Those on the trees to remain. Thanks for what you have ordered or recommended Ticknor to do. Whatever is seasonable shd. be done.

I am selfishly sorry you are to be away when we arrive: but hope you will have a good time in Ireland — tho' not in point of weather, I fear, for a cold autumn has set in apparently. Very glad to hear about the *Wealden Tragedy*,<sup>56</sup> though sorry at the financial deadlock.

Impecuniously and Affectionately Yours, old Chap, | Will

ALS Princeton

*To Robert Murray Gilchrist, October 7, 1893*

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Oct/93

My Dear Murray Gilchrist

I have been so busy since I left Eyam that I find it difficult to realize I was with you so recently as this day last week. Tomorrow I will think of you on the moors. What a lovely day we had last Sunday. I envy you your isolation in so beautiful and inspiring a locality. You should do good work there. I hope you will make immediate and steady progress with your romantic novel. There's a clear perspective for you there: other paths may, meanwhile at any rate, prove each a cul-de-sac or at least a bewildering byway. Possibly you may be able later to vary with advantage your line of advance,

I send you the Etching of myself I promised:<sup>57</sup> also to Mr. Garfitt,<sup>58</sup> a copy of the Pagan Review. Let me know if it reach you without soilure.

I much enjoyed my brief visit to Eyam. Here, in the passive South, I would give much for such moorland & upland as we walked over last Sunday.

Greetings to you both | Cordially yours | William Sharp

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<sup>55</sup> The date is written in another hand.

<sup>56</sup> Perhaps a work by Little never published.

<sup>57</sup> William A. Strang's etching of Sharp which serves as the Frontispiece of the *Memoir* is dated there 1896. However, Mr. and Mrs. William Strang according to EAS (*Memoir* 141) came frequently to the Sharp's Sunday Evenings when they lived at Wescam in the late 1880s. Since no other etching of Sharp survives, the one he sent to Gilchrist may be the Strang, in which case EAS misdated it.

<sup>58</sup> George A. Garfitt was "a well-known student of prehistoric life." Shortly after Gilchrist moved to Highcliffe in Eyam in 1888, Garfitt joined him there, and the two men continued to live in the same dwelling until Gilchrist's death from a sudden and severe bout of pneumonia in the spring of 1917. The two men were close friends of each other and of Edward Carpenter, the socialist poet and advocate of Uranianism, who lived nearby with his lover, George Merrill, at Millthorpe, on the outskirts of Sheffield. Gilchrist and Garfitt were ardent cyclists and began driving a motor car in 1909. (See a pamphlet by Clarence Daniel entitled "Eyam — The Milton of Robert Murray Gilchrist: Portrait of a Victorian Village." Of unknown date, a copy of the pamphlet was kindly provided by the staff of the Sheffield City Archives. Eyam was the model for the village Gilchrist called Milton in his works of fiction).

We came here last night — I am thankful to get out of London.

P.S. I found Murray a decent sort of chap. He dropped his “h’s” occasionally, and in certain small matters was oblivious of what some of us consider to be good breeding. I did not know he was a cousin of Austin Dobson<sup>59</sup> — did you? I think he has a genuine love of literature.

He showed me a charming (though, in drawing, not immaculate) design for the frontispiece of *Frangipanni*, which he hopes to publish before the end of October.<sup>60</sup>

*To Louise Chandler Moulton, [October 9, 1893<sup>61</sup>]*

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | Monday

My dear Louise

Thanks for your card. We have just returned to Sussex, & there is far too much to attend to after our long absence to permit of either of us getting to London tomorrow, or indeed any day this week. But both of us — and I, so far as I can see, *for certain* — will be with you the following Tuesday afternoon (17th). I hope Coulson Kernahan may come that day also — so that we may meet.

Hoping you are flourishing — & begging you to excuse a short & hurried note

Affectionately yours | Will

ALS Princeton

*To: Horace Scudder, [October 10, 1893]*

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | 10:10:93

Dear Mr. Scudder,

It is a long time since we have had communication: but I for my part have often thought of you and yours in your Cambridge home, and of my pleasant visit there. I have not been much in England since I last wrote to you — that is, dissociating Scotland and England, for I have been for some time past in the West Highlands.

As you may have heard from the Stedmans or the Aldens, my wife and I went across French Africa and the Northern Sahara last winter & spring. We had a delightful time of it, & passed from the frontiers of Morocco right to the Tunisian eastern littoral, by the way of the Sahara, the African Highland of the Province of Constantine, and Northern Tunisia to Carthage.

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<sup>59</sup> Henry Austin Dobson (1840-1921) was a well-known English poet and essayist.

<sup>60</sup> Gilchrist’s novel *Frangipanni* (1893) was the first volume published by Frank Murray, a Derby bookstore owner, in his Regent’s Library series. Sharp stopped to see Murray on his way to London after visiting Gilchrist. Fiona Macleod’s *Pharais* (1894) was the second, and William Sharp’s *Vistas* (1894) was the third. These volumes were finely printed on excellent paper.

<sup>61</sup> Internal evidence and the return address establish the date.

And now as to business. I send herewith by Book Post for your consideration a typed copy of a story by myself, mostly written during an autumn I spent at Heidelberg in the very house etc. described in the tale — a house once occupied by Goethe, and where he wrote part of his *Othinbalische Divan*. I hope it may suit you.

In connection with my North African experiences, is there anything you would care to have from me? I am specially interested in historical subjects, particularly when they illustrate the great law of flow and ebb, and among those for which I accumulated special material are the following:

- (1) *The Vandal March* (dealing with the extraordinary & eventful descent of the Vandals upon North Africa: the extent of their March: the duration of their power: and the Outcome.)
- (2) *In the Steps of Jugurtha* ‘The Country of Cista & its neighbourhood: now the Province of Constantine)
- (3) *Tlemcen: A Note on the Moorish Civilisation:* (Tlemcen is to Mauritania what Florence was to Medieval Italy — & more: the head and fount of all its learning and art, African & Mauro-Hispanish.)-

I would prefer No. 3 & No. 1.

Of descriptive travel-articles, I would suggest

4. “*Through the Liban*” (Northern Sahara)
5. “*The African Highland*” (Prov. of Constantine)
6. “*Through Tunisia*”<sup>62</sup>

Are there any of these that you would care to commission?

I shall be at home all winter. Family matters have involved me in considerable financial strain, and any going away is, alas, impossible at present. However, I can’t complain — having had more than my share of gadding about.

Kind remembrances to you and yours, | William Sharp

I hope to be with our common friend Shields<sup>63</sup> tomorrow, at the funeral of poor old Ford Madox Brown.<sup>64</sup>

Horce Scudder, Esq

ALS Harvard Houghton

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<sup>62</sup> Scudder commissioned none of the articles proposed here, but he did publish in the *Atlantic Monthly* in August 1894 an article by Sharp entitled “Cardinal Lavigerie’s Work in North Africa.” Sharp’s friend Henry Mills Alden, editor of *Harper’s Magazine*, published in that journal Sharp’s “Rome in Africa” in June 1895 (91:95-116).

<sup>63</sup> The painter Frederic Shields.

<sup>64</sup> Born in 1821, Ford Madox Brown was a distinguished painter, teacher, and close friend of D. G. Rossetti. Through his own work and his influence on Millais and Holman Hunt as well as Rossetti, he was a central figure in the Pre-Raphaelite movement in British art.

*To J. Stanley Little, November 28, 1893*<sup>65</sup>

Rudgwick

My dear Stanley,

Thanks for your letter. I hope you are enjoying yourself in London and not knocking yourself up with doing too many things.

Will you, if you are coming back tomorrow, dine with us? We'll expect you if we do not hear to the contrary. (We'll be away on Thursday and Friday.)

In haste, | Affectly Yours, | Will

ACS Princeton

*To Nina F. Layard,*<sup>66</sup> *November 29, 1893*

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | 29:11:93

Dear Miss Layard,

I thank you for the volume you have so kindly sent to me — and for which I wish good fortune in all respects, as it certainly deserves:

I have read the poems with much interest and appreciation. Some of them seem to me very good indeed — by which I mean something more than so hackneyed a commendation may seem to convey. But my own taste inclines me to the shorter lyrics — there it seems to me you are at your best: Let me tell you what I like best in your book — though the telling may disappoint you — first (and by a long way) “The Scot of Hollnodine” — then “Sweet Peas” and “Virgin Lily.” But these are preferences, not criticisms —

With cordial good wishes | Yours sincerely | William Sharp

ALS W. Hugh Peal Collection, University of Kentucky

*To Robert Murray Gilchrist, December 2, 1893*

Rudgwick | 2 | 12 | 93

My dear Gilchrist

You must excuse a brief word — where I would fain write at length — for I am deeply immersed in urgent & harassing work: but I must send you a line to say how much I have enjoyed *Frangipanni* a copy of which I ordered from Murray as soon as I received his circular, a good long time ago now.

It is a story that can hardly fail to attract the attention of those whose attention is of worth. It deals adequately with a subject of passion — that rock of shipwreck for the majority

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<sup>65</sup>Date from postmark.

<sup>66</sup> See Sharp's 1 May 1893 letter to Layard. Here he comments on a volume of poems she has sent him. Whether this is her *Poems* (1890) or a subsequent volume that has not been identified is unclear.

who adventure in that perilous sea. You will do firmer & more mature & more impressive work (& I have high hopes of “The Labyrinth”) — but this, though still immature in one or two respects, is genuinely & unmistakably the work of a new writer of romances.

My congratulations & cordial regards, Cher Ami | Yours | William Sharp  
P.S. Alas: no chance of my going North at Xmastide now or in Jany. Is there no chance of your

coming South? What has become of *The Stone Dragon*.<sup>67</sup> I postponed an *Academy* review so as to get it: now too late for me I fear. I wrote to Methuen but got no reply.

ALS Sheffield City Archive

To \_\_\_\_\_ Ingram,<sup>68</sup> December 14, 1893

Phenice Croft | Rudgwick | Sussex | 14:12:93

Dear Mr. Ingram,

Excuse my delay in replying to your letter. I have been (and still am) from home and my correspondence is in arrears accordingly.

Naturally, I sympathise with your wish. This, however, is one of the instances (having reference, as it does, to a living writer) where I cannot act without the full consent of the publisher.

I will write to him tomorrow as an advocate, I need hardly say — and let you hear from me at an early date.

Yours faithfully, | William Sharp

ACS Princeton

To [Mrs. E. C. Stedman], [mid-December, 1893]<sup>69</sup>

Phenice Croft: Rudgwick

With affectionate greetings (in which my wife says she must be allowed to take part) to you and yours, for Christmastide and the Coming Year | William Sharp

Thank E.C.S. for his welcome letter which I hope to answer early in January.

ACS Pennsylvania State University

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<sup>67</sup> Gilchrist’s collection of supernatural stories, many set in Derbyshire, called *The Stone Dragon and Other Tragic Romances*, was published in London by Methuen and Company in 1894. These and other stories by Gilchrist were republished recently in a volume called *The Basilik* (The Ash-Tree Press, British Columbia, 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Identify

<sup>69</sup> This note accompanied a Christmas gift to the Stedmans.

*To Robert Murray Gilchrist, December 20?, 1893*

Amico Mio,

May Christmas give you happiness, and the New Year add weal to it and health and good work. *Skoal* to “The Labyrinth.”

Today I write finis to my Celtic Romance — long dreamed of — I wish I could read some of it to you. It is out of my inmost heart and brain.

*Vistas*, I hope, will be out by the end of Jany. The final revises went back a few days ago.

Greetings & good wishes to Garfitt. If you are with your mother, or she with you, my homage to her.

Cordially your friend | William Sharp

P.S. You are to come here in the early Spring, remember! Come as soon as *The Labyrinth* is finished. I am glad we have become friends. Something drew me to you from the first.

ALS Sheffield City Archives

*To Frank Murray, December 27, 1893*

72 Inverness Terrace | Bayswater | W. | 27:12:93

Dear Mr. Murray

I have sent to you yesterday my (unframed) etching of the late W. Bell Scott after Blake’s design.<sup>70</sup> It was given to me by himself many years ago — & I do not know who published it, or in what form it was published — though I *think* it was in book form (privately published probably).

If you like the design for [the] frontispiece to *Vistas*, I do not know to whom application for consent (if it be necessary at all) should be made: but presumably to Mrs. Scott who, I believe, is still living, and could be addressed | c/o Miss Boyd | Penkill Castle | [*Girvan?*] | *Ayrshire* | or, if you think it better, I could write to her.

If you do not care for the Blake design — perhaps the artist who worked for you for *Frangipanni* could do something satisfactory — or, if you will let me know what you can pay for a drawing, I could ask my friend Theôdore Roussel to do something. I think it is likely I shall be able to get an etched frontispiece for “*Pharais*” from Mr. Strang.

Please take all care of this Blake Etching: as it is rare, & I have never seen any other copy.

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<sup>70</sup> This etching by Scott appeared as the frontispiece of the first edition of Sharp’s *Vistas*. It is an etching of one of Blake’s designs for Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and portrays Adam and Eve in an embrace with Satan, entwined in a serpent, hovering above them.

You will be interested to hear that last week I wrote “finis” to *Pharais*: and have not only finished it but think it the strongest & most individual thing I have done. For several reasons, however, I wish to adhere rigidly to the ‘Fiona Macleod’ authorship. I think the book will attract a good deal of notice, on account of the remarkable Celtic renaissance which has set in & will inevitably gather weight: it touches, too, new ground — and, I think, in a new way. What is perhaps best of all is that it is written literally out of my heart — and indeed, though the critical incident has nothing to do with me, most else is reminiscent.

It is, in fact, your agreement to accept my two most paramount conditions — pseudonymity and publication by the end of March — that weighed with me against a letter from the Editor of one of the leading magazines in America, offering me high terms for a romance written not ‘to order’ but really *con amore*. However, for reasons into which I need not enter at present, I prefer to lose at the moment so as to gain in every way later. Herewith I send you the opening section. My copyist is now busy with the remainder, & I daresay is more than halfway through with the book. I would be glad if you would direct the printer not to place blank pages between the several chapters. The book is in sections, rather than in ‘Chapters’: & it will look much better to have each begin halfway down a page & simply with “V” or “VI.”

As to length: I suggest that a slightly smaller type than that of “Frangipanni” be used. *Pharais* is somewhat longer. Taking the average full Frangipanni page, I estimate it to contain, say, 200 words. At this estimate, “Frangipanni” is about 32,600 words in length.

I have estimated *Pharais* twice, & in two ways. Estimating at full pages, it is as follows:

*Minimum*: 35,000

*Max*: 39,000.

Estimated Length after both tests: From 37,500 to 38,500.

You can judge from this as to the type to be used. I will send you following sections (VII in all) as I receive & revise them: You will probably have all by the 11th or 12th of January.

I presume that, as you have undertaken to have the book out by the end of March, you will put it in hand immediately. Personally, I may add, this will be very much more convenient for me — as I shall be in town throughout January, now, I expect: and in March may possibly have to go abroad for a few weeks.

That is why I send the first installment to you without delay — now that the book is finished, revised, & sent to be copied.

I don’t know if you are yourself interested in Celtic matters. If so, you will find a good deal in *Pharais* that will interest you — particularly the strange chants & weird superstitious women in the romance.

Of course the proofs should come to me under my own name. I shall be at above address until I communicate with you again.

When is *Vistas* likely to be published? I am asked often about it, & can say nothing definite.

With all greetings of the Season | Yours sincerely | William Sharp

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