

## SECTION XIX

### LIFE: JULY - DECEMBER 1899

In May and June William Sharp asked W. B. Yeats several times to review the new Fiona Macleod book of stories, *The Dominion of Dreams*. He assumed Yeats would praise the book and thereby boost its sales. In early July, while Sharp was in the west of Scotland, someone told him Yeats had reviewed the book negatively. On July 3, he conveyed his surprise and disappointment in a letter to Yeats. Fiona, he said, would be distressed and disheartened by a negative review from Yeats. When a copy of the July *Bookman* arrived the next day, Sharp found that Yeats' review contained two paragraphs of praise and only one expressing reservations about Fiona's too-florid style. Sharp decided not to send the letter, and it has surfaced only recently in a batch of Sharp's letters to John Macleay who may have been Sharp's mistaken informant. Instead, writing as Fiona, he asked Yeats "to indicate the passages he took most exception to." According to Elizabeth Sharp, Yeats sent "a carefully annotated copy of the book," and "a number of the revisions that differentiate the version in the Collected Edition from the original issue are the outcome of this criticism" (*Memoir* 309). In a July 11 letter to Macleay, Sharp, then back in London, quoted a letter from Fiona in which she expressed her thanks for his favorable review of *The Dominion of Dreams* in *The Highland News*.

In a July 12 letter to Benjamin Burgess Moore, the Yale undergraduate who had fallen in love with her, Fiona regretted her inability to meet him during his upcoming visit to London. She assured him he was one of the few for whom she would break her invariable rule and meet him, but she needed complete and prolonged rest and was about to leave Edinburgh for a two or three month yachting trip in the far north. She hoped Moore would instead meet her "most intimate friend, Mr. William Sharp," who "asked me to say he hoped you would call next Monday afternoon (17th) about 3 or 3.30." Moore did call on Sharp and wrote to Fiona to say how much he liked Sharp. In reply, Fiona said she was glad Moore liked Sharp and continued, "If you had not, you would not like me! Truly: for we are not only close kindred but at one in all things." Mr. Sharp had taken a liking to his "American friend" and hoped he would call again on his way back to America sometime in October. The letter demonstrates Sharp's enjoyment in

manipulating the intricacies of the fictional Fiona, especially the stratagems he devised to keep her out of reach.

The Sharps vacated their South Hampstead flat on July 20 and stored their furniture. It was decreed, perhaps by William or perhaps by their physician, “that we were to live no more in London; so we decided to make the experiment of wintering at Chorleywood,” a small town immediately northwest of London, now part of greater London. After vacating their flat, the Sharps stayed briefly with Elizabeth’s mother in Bayswater and then “went to our dear West Highlands, to Loch Goil, to Corrie in Arran, and to Iona. And in August we crossed over to Belfast” (*Memoir* 311). After spending a few days in the city, they went north to Ballycastle on the Antrim coast. On August 26, they moved south to Newcastle in County Down, stayed there three weeks, and spent ten days in Dublin before returning to London on September 26.

Sharp wrote several remarkable letters in Ireland. After reading his *Silence Farm*, Sharp’s new friend Edith Lyttelton, a fan of Fiona Macleod, asked about his other writings. Responding on August 11, Sharp mentioned, among other books, *Sospiri di Roma*, the lyrics he wrote and published in Italy in 1891. He promised to give or lend Mrs. Lyttelton a copy of the rare limited edition and described some of the circumstances of its composition. Then he said he might tell her more in person that “he did not care to write.” Did he intend to tell Mrs. Lyttelton about his love for Edith Rinder and how it had led not only to the poems in *Sospiri di Roma*, but to the emergence of Fiona Macleod? Had he done so he would have identified the woman as Fiona Macleod, not Edith Rinder. He sometimes claimed the mysterious and elusive Fiona was his cousin, and sometimes he went further to imply they were lovers. Sharp’s wife was his first cousin, and Edith was often conflated in his mind with Fiona. The fictional Fiona story was intricately interwoven with the facts of his life.

On September 12, his birthday, Sharp thanked Adelaide Elder, Elizabeth’s girlhood friend, for giving him on his birthday in 1877 “a beautifully bound book by a poet with a strange name and by me quite unknown — Dante Gabriel Rossetti.”

To that event it is impossible to trace all I owe, but what is fairly certain is that, without it, the whole course of my life might have been very different. For the book not only influenced and directed me mentally at a crucial period, but made me speak of it to an elderly friend (Sir Noel Paton) through whom I was dissuaded from going abroad on a career of adventure (I was going to Turkey or as I vaguely put it, Asia) and through whom, later, I came to know Rossetti himself — an event which completely redirected the whole course of my life.

Aware he would experience only a limited number of birthdays, Sharp came to see them as occasions for reflecting on his past and mustering new resolve to get on with unfinished projects.

The most interesting letter he drafted in Ireland was copied by his sister into the Fiona handwriting, dated September 16, and mailed from Edinburgh to W. B. Yeats. It contains Sharp's most extensive attempt to describe the nature of his relationship with Edith Rinder, who Yeats knew only as Fiona Macleod, and to satisfy Yeats' curiosity about her role in the Fiona Macleod writings. The letter's immediate purpose was to thank Yeats for his suggested revisions of *The Dominion of Dreams*. Fiona said the book had "already been in great part revised by my friend" (Sharp himself) who had "in one notable instance followed [Yeats'] suggestion." Sharp didn't bother to say why he was revising a book written by Fiona.

Yeats had asked Fiona which tales she liked best, and she responded "Temperamentally, those which appeal to me most are those with the play of mysterious psychic force in them," a preference designed to appeal to Yeats' interest in spiritualism. She was sure of one thing, as is her friend Sharp:

There is nothing in *Dominion of Dreams* or elsewhere in these writings under my name to stand beside "The Distant Country." Nothing else has made so deep and vital an impression both on men and women — and possibly it may be true what a very subtle and powerful mind has written about it, that it is the deepest and most searching utterance on the mystery of passion which has appeared in our time. It is indeed the core of *all* these writings — and will outlast them all.

This was the second time Sharp had drawn Yeats' attention to "The Distant Country." In mid-May he wrote: "I think some of the best of F. M. will be found in this book. Few can guess how personal much of it is." Then, affirming the spiritualist content of the story, he said: "You

almost alone will read ‘The Distant Country,’ for example, with ‘other eyes.’” Sharp hoped Yeats would read the story as an honest though coded effort to describe how his love for Edith and hers for him quickened his imagination, enabled him to write as Fiona Macleod, and, by burning too brightly, evolved from hot flames to simmering coals. Whether or not anyone but Sharp had called “The Distant Country” “the deepest and most searching utterance on the mystery of passion which has appeared in our time,” the story is a deeply personal attempt to portray and explain the love and passion that underlay and defined Sharp’s relationship with Edith Rinder. Concurrently, the story portrays in language Sharp hoped Yeats would understand how experiments in the occult, which had paralleled and often propelled both the course of the love affair and the career of Fiona, had dangerously disturbed his mental well-being.

After drawing Yeats’ attention to “The Distant Country” in the September 16 letter, Sharp, writing as Fiona, turned to that story’s fire metaphor which he had introduced to Yeats more than a year earlier, in a letter dated June 28, 1898. Yeats knew Sharp was the writer of the Fiona stories and poems, but he continued to ask if Fiona was a real person who inspired Sharp to write as Fiona, a secondary personality of Sharp’s, a spiritual being inhabiting Sharp’s body and using him as an amanuensis, or some combination of the three. In the September 16 Fiona letter, Sharp transformed the relatively simple fire metaphor into an elaborate allegory involving match, torch, and flame.

The match represents both Fiona Macleod, the presumed author of the letter, and Edith Rinder; the torch is William Sharp. In “The Distant Country” Sharp made the point that the passionate love between Edith and William had changed shape. In this letter he made the additional point that Edith’s role as Sharp’s muse, as his inspiration for the Fiona Macleod writings, was diminishing. “Honey of the Wild Bees” was a story Yeats liked in *The Dominion of Dreams*. It takes allegory to the realm of mythology and introduces very precisely the equation between Love and Death. Rinn, known as “Honey of the Wild Bees” in ancient Celtic lore, fell in love with Aevgrain, the beautiful daughter of Deirdre and Naois. Having seduced her and caused her to love and follow him, he announced he is the Lord of the Shadow whose name in this world is Death. As in “The Distant Country,” passionate love can be perfectly consummated only in death. Sharp’s point in drawing Yeats’ attention to this story, however, is

to suggest that the match, be it Fiona Macleod or Edith Rinder, has diminished in importance. Edith Rinder and her love have become less essential in enabling Sharp to assume the persona of Fiona Macleod, and Fiona Macleod has become less important in producing the writings published as her work. The torch was entirely responsible for “The Honey of the Wild Bees.” Sharp was its sole author, and neither Edith nor Fiona nor Edith/Fiona saw a line of it until after it was written. Employing an allegory he hoped Yeats would understand in the context of their collaboration in establishing the rituals of the Celtic Mystical Order, Sharp emancipated himself from the fictional Fiona and claimed both sole authorship of the writings of Fiona Macleod and a reintegration of his personality. It is an exceptionally personal — indeed confessional — letter which is why Sharp asked Yeats to destroy it, a request Yeats failed to honor.

Earlier in the September 16 letter Fiona assured Yeats she was speaking only for herself in expressing her preferences for stories in *The Dominion of Dreams*, not for her friend Sharp:

[His] heart is in the ancient world and his mind for ever questing in the domain of the spirit. I think he cares little for anything but through the *remembering* imagination to recall and interpret, and through the formative and penetrative imagination to discover certain mysteries of psychological and spiritual life. (Apropos, I wish you very much to read, when it appears in the *Fortnightly Review* — probably either in October or in November — the spiritual ‘essay’ called “The Divine Adventure” — an imaginative effort to reach the same vital problems of spiritual life along the separate, yet inevitably interrelated, lines of the Body, the Will (Mind or Intellect), and the Soul.)

The forthcoming expression of William Sharp’s attempt “to discover certain mysteries” would be published as the work of Fiona Macleod. The gender difference between the voice of Fiona Macleod and that of William Sharp which Sharp had tried so hard to maintain in his fiction and poetry no longer seemed important. From this point forward the Fiona sensibility was dominant in Sharp’s creative fiction and poetry while that of the practical, semi-scholarly William controlled his critical pieces on literature and art regardless of the name he assigned as author. It is not uncommon for writers to adopt and employ different voices for their fictional and non-fictional work.

On the first of October 1899 the Sharps occupied their new residence, rooms overlooking the high common in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire. Ever in need of more money, they hoped to economize by living outside London and avoid having to go abroad to escape London's smoke and smog in the winter. At first they were delighted by the new location. On October 19 Sharp thanked Watts-Dunton for a poem he had sent and concluded: "How lovely autumn is at this moment. The trees here are divinely lovely." On October 25, Sharp's long-time friend Grant Allen died, and his effort to attend the cremation service was stymied by poor communications and missed connections. He apologized to Allen's son and to his nephew, Grant Richards. In a letter to Murray Gilchrist on the 25th, Sharp said he was saddened by the Boer War and acutely saddened by the death of his dear friend: "I loved the man — and admired the brilliant writer and catholic critic and eager student." With Allen's death, the world seemed shrunken a bit more. He told Gilchrist he had undertaken for financial reasons a huge study of art in the nineteenth century that, with his other writing, occupied all his time. Still, he remained pleased with Chorleywood and the beauty of the fall season: "We like this most beautiful and bracing neighbourhood greatly. . . . It has been the loveliest October I remember for years. The equinoxial bloom is on every tree. But today, after long drought, the weather has broken, and a heavy rain has begun."

An undertow soon diminished the pleasure of life in Chorleywood. As November darkened into December, Sharp wrote to Watts-Dunton: "What with long and disastrous illness at the beginning of the year — having to help others dear to me — and, finally, losses involved through the misdeed of another, I find myself on my beam-ends. By next Spring I hope to have things righted so far, if health holds out — but my pinch is just now, with less than £5 in the world to call my own at this moment!" Since so much of his and Elizabeth's income was dependent on journalistic art criticism, they were feeling severely the effect of the Boer War as all such work had been cut back by two-thirds. The big history of Fine Arts in the 19th century would eventually repay the time and effort he was devoting to it. He asked Watts-Dunton if he could possibly lend him £50 or maybe even £25 to be repaid next year, probably in February or even sooner. The recipient of this sad request was a man of some means and also a man of considerable compassion since he and Sharp had grown apart through the years. Even sadder is

the fact that Sharp, in February 1900, had to tell Watts-Dunton he was still unable to repay the loan of £25.

“The Divine Adventure” appeared as the work of Fiona Macleod in the November and December issues of *The Fortnightly Review*. On December 30, Sharp told Gilchrist, who knew Fiona was Sharp, “It was written *de profundis*, partly because of a compelling spirit, partly to help others passionately eager to obtain some light on this most complex and intimate spiritual destiny.” Also on that day, he wrote to Frank Rinder, his “dear friend and literary comrade” to wish him “health and prosperity in 1900.” He wanted him to read the opening pages of the Fiona Macleod essay called “Iona”: “I have never written anything . . . so spiritually autobiographical. Strange as it may seem it is almost all literal reproduction of actuality with only some dates and names altered.” Having asserted his authorship of the essay, he said to Rinder, “But enough of that troublesome F.M!” This assertion — he is and he is not Fiona Macleod — is a fitting conclusion to a year in which he made some progress in clarifying, for himself if not for others, the complex relationship among William Sharp, Edith Rinder, and Fiona Macleod.

## LETTERS: JULY – DECEMBER 1899

*To William Butler Yeats, July 3-4, 1899<sup>1</sup>*

Monday

My Dear Yeats

I want to write to you about the rite, and a very strange outcome of inward concentration upon it. Also about the plays — I believe they will appeal to you deeply.

(Tuesday Forenoon)

was interrupted by people last night – & so could not write, & now am not in the mood & cannot.

I have not yet seen your *Bookman* article, but this morning I had a letter from a friend, who incidentally writes as follows: — “and upon that we all pretty well agreed (i.e. abt “Silence Farm,” which my friend was discussing with 3 literary men at the Savile, & all spoke of in a way that has deeply gratified & encouraged me) — “Then the talk drifted to your friend (she is your friend, is she not?) Miss Macleod’s new book, and what a notable thing it is for a book of that kind to go into a second edition within three weeks of publication. So, there is a split in the Celtic Camp! I admit it amuses me. I never have believed, never can believe, in the ability of these folk to sink minor matters for a common end. I’m speaking of course of W. B. Yeats’ article on Miss M. in the *Bookman*. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ laughed, & said that it was the worst snub Miss M. had received. Have you seen it? Yeats says she has enough faults to ruin any ordinary writer, and that there’s not a story in her book which should not have many words struck out. As

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<sup>1</sup> Yeats’ review of Fiona Macleod’s *The Dominion of Dreams* appeared in the July issue of *The Bookman*. Sharp was in the west of Scotland when he received word from “a friend” about Yeats’ review so he had to wait a day for a copy of the July *Bookman*. He probably started this letter to Yeats on Monday, July 3, finished it on July 4, and held it until he received and read the *Bookman* review on July 5. He then decided not to send the letter because the review turned out to be less negative than he was led to believe. The ALS was recently acquired by the National Library of Scotland with a group of letters to John Macleay from William Sharp and Fiona Macleod. How the letter came into the group of Sharp letters to Macleay remains unknown. The most likely explanation is that it was preserved among Sharp’s own papers and EAS sent it to Macleay when she returned the letters he received from Sharp/Macleod after reading those letters and using some in the *Memoir*. It certainly went to someone since it escaped Elizabeth’s burning of most Sharp papers before she died, and it was not among the few that survived and were donated to the National Library of Scotland by EAS’s brother.

he doesn't say a word of praise or welcome about it, but only something about her surely unquestioned mythopoeic faculty — it's obvious he either doesn't find much in the book, or wants to take her down a peg or two."

(He then adds something I needn't repeat.)

I have sent for "The Bookman," & shall get it by tomorrow, I daresay. Meanwhile I can hardly credit what my friend writes. I hope it is not true. It will greatly distress & dishearten Miss Macleod, who had hope so much for a cordial & generous word from you about her maturest & most carefully wrought book: but I hope it is not true for the sake of the plays also, for if once deeply discouraged Miss M. may not touch them again for months. And still more, & far more importantly than for any individual concern, I hope it is not so — for the always bitterly opposed idea of unselfish & united action among "our scattered few" will be grievously handicapped by any suggestion that you have 'gone for' or even 'snubbed' Miss Macleod.

However, I write on the head of that letter only. Tonight or tomorrow I'll see the 'Bookman': & so meanwhile hold my opinion in suspense.

I was profoundly disappointed, & in every way, with "Literary Ideals in Ireland."<sup>2</sup> How significantly it proves that there is no literary Ideal in Ireland — but only individual & continuous tendencies, just as everywhere else!

I have been dreaming, dreaming, dreaming, of a great awakening, a great redemption, a small & faithful concert of unselfish & individual aims. I still believe — shall still, and as long as I live, work towards that end. But at times one stands profoundly disheartened.

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<sup>2</sup> This article by AE (George Russell) appeared in the Dublin *Daily Express* on November 12, 1898. That paper had published an exchange of letters between John Eglinton and Yeats which AE had encouraged in order to draw attention to the Celtic cause. In this article, AE supported Yeats position that ancient legends can and should be used by contemporary writers. "Arguing that WBY sought to ennoble literature 'by making it religious,' he thought Eglinton simply unfamiliar with the symbolist tradition, and pointed out that since WBY's aesthetic was governed by the mystical temper and his art 'inspired by the Holy Breath,' he was using his art for the 'revelation of another world' rather than 'to depict this one' (*CLWBY*, II, 293n). AE's nationalistic linking of Celtic literature with Irish literature and his disavowal of "Pan-Celticism," which emerged in this article and others, was offensive to Sharp because he saw it as devaluing the Scottish contributions, particularly those of Fiona Macleod, to the broader Celtic movement. The disagreement between AE and Sharp on this issue became more pronounced and more public in the months ahead.

Yours | W.S.

ALS NLS

*To Richard Garnett, [early July, 1899]<sup>3</sup>*

30 Greencroft Gardens | South Hampstead

Reverend Companion of the Bath, (as my brother-in-law told me a Parsee recently addressed an eminent official, as though he were a Sponge!)

Where shall I find the best account or record of your pen-work? I am I believe to do an article on “Richard Garnett.”<sup>4</sup>

I have just returned from Scotland — but during my absence I know that you have retired from the Brit. Mus. Are you actually at last at leisure? It must be strange, but on the whole very welcome. You will now give more time to your own work I hope.

Ever cordially yours with kind regards & congratulations to you and yours,

William Sharp

ALS University of Texas, Austin

*To Grant Richards, July 10, 1899*

Monday | 10th July | 99

My dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter of Friday last agreeing to my amended form of your kind proposal as to my anthology, “The Hour of Beauty.”<sup>5</sup>

I am glad, too, to be relieved from the pressure of urgency — particularly as a book of this kind should grow leisurely — however much it has already been nurtured and trimmed. So I will let you have it, as you suggest, by or just before the end of this year.

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<sup>3</sup> This letter is not dated, but Richard Garnett retired from his position as Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum in 1899 and it was written when Sharp had just returned from Scotland. The Sharps permanently left their flat at 30 Greencroft Gardens on July 20, 1899.

<sup>4</sup> I have not located an article by Sharp on Garnett.

<sup>5</sup> This anthology never materialized. “The Hour of Beauty” is the title of a section of poems in the 1907 edition of Fiona Macleod’s *From the Hills of Dream* (Portland, Maine: Thomas Mosher).

Thanking you for your consideration of my requests, and for your kind remark about myself,

Believe me | Yours faithfully | Fiona Macleod

P.S. You may care to know that my new book “The Dominion of Dreams” has gone into a second edition within the month of issue. I mention it because publishers are said never to believe that the public will buy books of short stories!!

ALS Stanford University

*To Grant Richards, July 11, 1899*

Tuesday | July 11th /99

My dear Sir,

I forgot to ask you if Mr. Lucas found it necessary to obtain author’s or publisher’s consent for fragmentary excerpts (e.g. Mrs. Maynell, Jefferies, etc.). I presume not.

I have just been reading a review of my new book in *The Highland News* (Inverness) and as there is an allusion in it to a book you publish, the *Silence Farm* of my friend and Kinsman Mr. William Sharp, I send it to you, as you are not likely to see *The Highland News* in London. (You need not return it.) I read the book in question with very deep interest, naturally: but admit that I cannot see where any likeness to my own work, either in style or method is shown: certainly I know it would be impossible for me to write “Silence Farm”.

Each of us “gangs his own gait,” as we say in the Lowlands here.

With kind regards | Yours very truly | Fiona Macleod

ALS Stanford University

*To John Macleay, [July 11, 1899]<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> Ireland/1899 is written in the top left corner in pencil not in Sharp’s hand. Internal evidence confirms that the letter was written on Tuesday July 11, 1899 when the Sharps were in London preparing to vacate their South Hampstead flat and then go to the east coast of Ireland for part of August and September. The two reviews of *The Dominion of Dreams* mentioned in the letter appeared in early July: *The Outlook* review, titled “Priestess of Beauty,” in the issue of July 8 and *The Highland News* review in the preceding week.

Tuesday

Dear Mr. Macleay

I received simultaneously your note and review, and a letter from Miss Macleod. She says “Do you still take the ‘Highland News’ — if so you will have seen the generous and also suggestive notice of my book by “Mac,” i.e. Mr. John Macleay. I am particularly glad to have a review by so sympathetic and understanding a critic, in the H. N. And on the whole am in agreement with him on one important point: I am sure that my best work, *from the standpoint of literature*, is in the old tales, and particularly in those like “The Laughter of Scathach,” “The Sad Queen,” “Enya” etc. — i.e. those wherein there is a Scandinavian as well as a Celtic element, and perhaps one earlier than either. On the other hand I don’t think he understands, or, rather, sympathizes with that other vital side which seems so far the more essential to “AE” and those for whom he stands. (There follows some private matter about the second section.) But in any case I am grateful to Mr. Macleay for his steadfast and early and continued friendship — and if you write to him, as I hope you will (for I must, as you know, do no writing just now that I can possibly avoid) please give him my cordial thanks.”

She adds, later, “I am very glad about that allusion to “Silence Farm,” at once so sympathetic & so critical in its discernment.”

For myself let me thank you, too. I think your review excellent every way — though I don’t agree with either you or A.E. about the “Moonrock”: that is, I don’t think A.E. is right about the frankly human and true opening parts, & I don’t think you are right about the imaginative close. But that is doubtless an all round disputable matter.

With Miss Macleod, I am very glad that so good & sympathetic a paper has appeared in the H. News. Than the critical allusion to my own work I could wish nothing better.

Yesterday at my Club I read the review in *The Outlook*. It interested me extremely: and I would like to know the name of the writer. *Who* is the literary editor of the ‘Outlook.’ Of course it may not be he — but I shd, be glad if you would kindly let me know. I fancied from the writing that it was W. E. Henley’s. Perhaps he is still (as at the start I know he was) litry Editor.

My wife and I go to Ireland shortly. Let me know, later, the exact date of your marriage so that I may wish you well.

Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

P.S. There is, I have just seen, a long article on “Silence Farm” by R. Le Gallienne in *Saty’s Star* — good if somewhat patronizing or unconsciously arrogant: & he too notices the divergence between Miss M. & myself.

ALS NLS

*To Benjamin Burgess Moore, July 12, 1899*

c/o Miss Rea. | The Columbia Literary Agency  
| 9 Mill Street. Conduit St. | London | 12: July: 99

My dear Mr. Moore

I thank you for your long and friendly and generously appreciative letter about “The Dominion of Dreams” — which, you will care to know, is already in a second edition. I am very glad indeed that you like the book so well, and what you say interested me very much. It has been very widely and influentially reviewed — and, all things considered, with surprising sympathy and understanding. The two most recent of any weight are that in the current number of *The Outlook* (8<sup>th</sup> July) which you may likely come across in London, and the enclosed from *The Highland News*, which you need not return. It is the more significant as that influential Highland paper (Inverness) has sometimes been hostile to my writings, and to what for good or ill they stand, and are supposed to stand.

I am glad to hear that you are to be in this country, and hope you will have a memorably pleasant visit. It is with genuine regret that I know there is no likelihood of our meeting, as you suggest.

You are one of the very few for whom I might break my otherwise invariable rule — for private reasons, and only so far my own, of a complicated kind — but in any case it can’t be this year. I have not been strong: and a complete and prolonged rest and bracing is necessary. A day or two hence I leave Edinburgh (where I have just come from the Hebrides) to go on a two or three months yachting voyage in the far north, including Ireland and Scandinavia.

But though we can’t meet I would much like you, if practicable, to meet my most intimate friend, Mr. William Sharp (who has seen several of your letters, and knows your friendly interest, and would, I know, be very glad to meet you).

He and his wife, however, are about to relinquish their flat in South Hampstead, and leave London soon. I wrote to him two days ago, and he asked me to say that he hoped you

would call next Monday afternoon (17<sup>th</sup>) about 3 or 3.30 — when he would be in — and perhaps, now, his only free day, as he and Mrs. Sharp leave their flat before the end of that week.

The address is | Rutland House | 30 Greencroft Gardens | South Hampstead — and the neighboring station is “Finchley Road” on the Metropolitan line via Baker St.

I will write you again about literary matters at some later date (to same address?) but now am tired and must write no more.

Cordially yours, | Fiona Macleod

ALS Huntington

*To Mrs. Grant Allen, [week of July 24?, 1899]*<sup>7</sup>

72 Inverness Terrace | Bayswater W.

My dear Nellie,

We have now ‘moved’ and ‘stored’ — and as soon as we possibly can (we hope in a week) intend to go to Wales and Ireland. But I must snatch a moment to write and say how deeply sorry I was to hear that Grant was feeling so far from well. We both realized how much we love him and you when we heard of this unwelcome mischance.

Do not let us add to any weariness by asking you to write a letter — but could you send a Post Card to say if he is now better. I do hope he is — and that this lovely summertide is bringing warmth to his life and bloom to your own bonnie face. With love from us both,

Your friend, | Will.

ALS Pierpont Morgan

[To Catherine Ann Janvier] August 6, 1899

. . . We are glad to get away from Belfast, tho’ very glad to be there, in a nice hotel, after our fatigues and 10 hours’ exposure in the damp sea-fog. It was a lovely day in Belfast, and Elizabeth had her first experience of an Irish car.

We are on the shore of a beautiful bay — with the great ram-shaped headland of Fair Head on the right, the Atlantic in front, and also in front but leftward the remote Gaelic island of

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<sup>7</sup> This letter was written shortly before or after the Sharp’s left their South Hampstead flat on July 20, 1899 since its return address is that of Elizabeth Sharp’s mother where they probably spent some time before leaving London.

Rathlin.<sup>8</sup> It is the neighbourhood whence Deirdrê and Naois fled from Concobar, and it is from a haven in this coast that they sailed for Scotland. It is an enchanted land for those who dream the old dreams: though perhaps without magic or even appeal for those who do not.

[William Sharp]

*Memoir* 311

To W. Lawler Wilson Esq.,<sup>9</sup> August 7, 1899

Ballycastle | Co. Antrim | 7/Aug/99

Dear Sir,

Your letter has been forwarded to me in Ireland.

I meant to have answered your previous letter — but I went abroad, and the address escaped me.

As I am in Ireland, I cannot do as you are good enough to suggest — call on your official photographers, and as you prefer not to use copyright photos, I do not refer you to one or other of the London photographers who have specially taken me — but send you one taken recently of me privately. (Of course it must be understood that your using this does not give you copyright in it.) The photographer is Stanley, of Dublin — the same who did the other photograph reproduced in the current “Bookman.”<sup>10</sup>

My bibliographical record is, I think, given most fully and accurately in *Who’s Who* (1899) and “Dictionary of English Authors”.

A proof made up from either can be revised and if wished augmented — if you desire it.

My best letter-address (as I have just left my South Hampstead address) is 72 Inverness Terrace, Kensington Gardens W.

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<sup>8</sup> Fairhead is a promontory on the North Coast of County Antrim in Northern Ireland, five miles from Ballycastle.

<sup>9</sup> W. Lawler Wilson was the author of *The Imperial Gallery of Portraiture: and Biographical Encyclopedia* (1902), *The Menace of Socialism* (1909), *The Will of the People*, co-authored with C. P. Yates (1910), and *The Lords and Liberty* (1910).

<sup>10</sup> A photograph of Sharp appeared along with a review of *Silence Farm* in *Bookman* (London: August, 1899).

Believe me, | Yours very truly, | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

*To Richard Le Gallienne, August 11, 1899*<sup>11</sup>

c/o Miss Rea | The Columbia Literary Agency | 9 Mill St. Conduit St. | London |  
11th Augt 1899

Dear Mr. Le Gallienne

It was only a day or two ago that I saw your most friendly and sympathetic notice of “The Dominion of Dreams” — for I have been yachting round the extreme north of Scotland: and though I have but a snatched quarter of an hour today to spare, for I [...] article I have seen sent me by our common friend) — and hope that you will publish the record in book form. I also greatly hope for another volume of poetry soon. You are a poet first and foremost.

Hurriedly but with most cordial greetings,

Sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

*The Romantic '90's, 91-2*

*To Benjamin Burgess Moore, August 11, 1899*

c/o Miss Rea | The Columbia Literary Agency  
9 Mill Street. Conduit St. | London  
11th Augt. 1899

My dear Mr. Moore,

We have “put in,” pro-tem, at a place called Nairn on the North coast of Scotland after a delightful voyage west and north of Cape Wrath.

Your welcome letter gave me great pleasure. I am glad you went to see Mr. William Sharp, and glad that you liked him. If you had not, you would not like me! Truly: for we are not only close kindred but at one in all things. Did you speak of your “beloved France”? You would have found a sympathetic listener, for his love for France is almost a passion — in which I share, though with less knowledge, for he knows it from north to south as few do. After Italy, he

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<sup>11</sup>This letter is reproduced from Le Gallienne’s *The Romantic 90’s* where it is used as an example of the Fiona Macleod handwriting. The middle portion of the letter is missing.

knows it better than any other European country. You know Italy too? I have been there three times, and long to go again. Venice in the Summer, Sicily in Winter, Rome always — that is what I advise, with endless interludes of “anywhere everywhere” from Verona in the north to the Umbrian Maremma and from that strange borderland to Messina and Palermo.

But I must not begin to talk of Italy! Give me Scotland, Ireland, France, and Italy, and I will relinquish the world, from San Francisco to the Gates of Eden!

I hope you will have a delightful time abroad. Be sure you see Mr. Sharp again before you go back to America. He will be greatly disappointed if you do not, for he took a genuine liking to you, and wrote to me appreciatively about “my American friend.”

He was sorry he could see so little of you — but (as he wrote) looks to seeing you in October. When he left South Hampstead, his plans were still uncertain: but now he has arranged to be in pleasant upland country not far from there, beyond Harrow — and asked me to let you know that on the 1st of October and for that month and into November anyway his address will be Wharncliff[e] | Chorley Wood | (via Rickmansworth) — and either there, or at his club, the Grosvenor, in New Bond Street, he would be most glad to see you. He is now in Ireland at a place on the north Antrim coast called Ballycastle (the neighbourhood whence Deirdre and the Sons of Usna sailed for Scotland when fleeing from Concobar) — and in a letter I have just received speaks of a titanic swim among rough breakers on a wild coast near the Giant’s Causeway, so, after all, his hated London life does not seem to have sapped his vigour! Later, we shall meet in Ireland, for my plans are in part changed. I already know that wild Antrim coast — and the lonely, remote, Gaelic-speaking isle of Ragherry (Rathlin) where the grandson of the great Nial the Victorious went down with all his fleet.

Yes, I have decided to take out “The House of Sand & Foam” from *The Dominion of Dreams*, and to substitute (about the same length) “The Four Winds of the Spirit.” There will be other alterations, and a revised text. The piece in question has been much admired, but in the wrong way and by the wrong people — and it was that which made me suspicious, re-read it in cold blood, and decide against its prettiness, a poor quality. The publishers are against any such changes —but I hope to gain my point. After all, the third edition has not got my revisions — for at the last the demand necessitated an immediate reprinting, and so now I have to look to the fourth, if that should be called for, as I hope it will, for I much want to give the book its final form.

I am very dissatisfied with it — and would gladly rearrange and rewrite it all from beginning to end. There was an exceedingly good review of it last week in an important Book-trade weekly, “The Publisher’s Circular”<sup>12</sup> and also (what I understand is not only a compliment but an extremely serviceable one) a very favorable notice in *Punch*<sup>13</sup> of all papers!

I hope this autumn to finish the volume of spiritual essays called “The Reddening of the West” (or, after its chief inclusion, “The Divine Adventure”) but I shall probably postpone the book till Spring. It depends on whether I can get the “Iona” part done.<sup>14</sup> I also hope to finish and issue before Christmas, the volume of three plays: *The King of Ireland’s Son* | *The Immortal Hour* | *Queen Ganore*.<sup>15</sup> (The first, old Celtic, the longest: the second, the same, in blank verse: the third and shortest, a wild Scottish variant of the Guinevere story, in ruder form.) I shall probably add some poems to the volume. By the way, in the current issue of *Literature* (5th August) there is a poem of mine, “The Tryst of Queen Hynde,” I would like you to see.

Now after all this personal detail see that you write to me from France, or I will not forgive you, nor ever write to you again.

So, conditionally, your friend, Fiona Macleod

ALS Huntington

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<sup>12</sup> This review of F.M.’s book of stories, improbably titled “A Beautiful Novel,” appeared in *The Publisher’s Circular*, No. 1727 (August, 1899), p. 120.

<sup>13</sup> This review, by the improbably named Baron De B. -W., appeared in *Punch* (August 2, 1899), p. 53.

<sup>14</sup> *The Divine Adventure* was published in May, 1900.

<sup>15</sup> According to EAS, this volume of plays, which did not materialize, was to be called *The Theatre of the Soul* or *The Psychic Drama*. “The King of Ireland’s Son” had become “The House of Usna” when it was performed “under the auspices of The Stage Society, of which William Sharp was the first Chairman” at the Fifth Meeting of the Society at the Globe Theatre, April 29, 1900” (*Memoir*, 317). “The House of Usna,” appeared in *The National and English Review* in July, 1900 (pp. 733ff) and as a separate publication by Thomas Mosher of Portland Maine, in 1903. “The Immortal Hour” appeared first in *The Fortnightly Review* of November 1900, pp. 867-96. It was published as a separate edition in the United States by Thomas Mosher (1907) and in England by T. N. Foulis (1908). The two plays are included in *Poems and Dramas*, Vol. VII of *The Works of Fiona Macleod*. “Queen Ganore” was not completed.

*To [Edith Lyttelton], [August 23?, 1899]*

. . . Her visit to Iceland was a short one, however: and she came south to the Inner Hebrides before a continuous polar wind which almost made sails as swift as steam. Then we had a short time together. She is still uncertain whether to go to Venice or not: it means railway-travelling & much else that is neither good for nor welcome to her — though eager to see again a place she loves & knows well. If she goes, it will be at once. It depends on health as well as friends. The chances are that she will come to Ireland for a week or so in Connemara, and again in Antrim.

I am glad you cared for “Silence Farm” — and in the way you do. I daresay you are right in your objection that “There is too much dung in it”. It may be. In the artistic instinct of emphasis there is always danger of excess. It was not done self-consciously, however: that is, the book, in its minor details as well as its broad development, was written just as it was quintessentially seen, quintessentially felt — after that final resurrection in the mind out of which alone any work of art can come. Strangely, out of this “Silence Farm” another has arisen. But it must remain unwritten -- though its lesson may mould & strengthen other work. Someday I will tell you of this — & of what lies behind “Silence Farm” and how it came to be written just as it is.

If you ever see “The Speaker” I would be glad if you read a review of it in that weekly for last week (Augt. 19th).<sup>16</sup> A friend who saw it has just sent it to me: but what especially pleases me, apart from [ ? ] is the intimate artistic understanding of the book & what may be called its artistic *motif*. I was just about to add, “Enough about myself,” when I recalled your request about which of my books I like best myself — apart from “Silence Farm” and “Ecce Puella”.

I can hardly say: the law of association has so much to do with one’s partialities. I think that which I could in later life take up with most pleasure, or least dissatisfaction, as the occasion might rule — would be my book of unrhymed irregular verse, “*Sospiri di Roma*,” written when I lived in Rome some nine or ten years ago (though reminiscent also of Rome when I first knew it,

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<sup>16</sup> This reference indicates the letter was written from Ballycastle in County Antrim after August 20 and before August 26 when the Sharps had moved on to Newcastle in County Down.

in 1882) — and printed under my supervision at a rude printing press in the Sabine Hills, worked by ‘Horace’s Fall’ at Tivoli, & nominally published by the Società Laziale of Rome. The edition of (I think) 400 was mostly taken up at once, & soon the book became difficult to get, & is now very rare. There has been no later English edition — though it was reprinted in America, along with an earlier volume of poems called “Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy.” It is probable that next Spring I may (it is my wife’s urgency, for I am not eager) bring out a selection of these *Sospiri* with a few other published & unpublished poems, all I care to preserve. But I think (I dare not promise for certain) that I have a spare copy: if, on my return, I find that this is so, you shall have it. In any case, you can have one to read, if you care — as I think you will the more when I may perhaps tell you something about it which I do not care to write.<sup>17</sup>

The ‘Sospiri’ and the volume of imaginative dramatic psychological studies called “*Vistas*” are the two most intimate of my books. The latter is best read in the 3<sup>rd</sup> American edition, which has a preface, & this I know I can let you have later.

In fiction I don’t care for my two early efforts: my more recent comedy, “Wives in Exile” (Grant Richards) had a success in both countries, as also a vol. of short stories called “Madge o’ the Pool” (Constables). Among my critical writings, I care most for “*Heine*” (Walter Scott). Even in Germany itself it is, I understand, accepted as (short as it is) the most vivid monograph on Heine.

And now — enough! I write at this length only because you are a friend whom I value — for frankly I am not of those authors who find their own work in the mass a subject of profound interest! I care only for the little that is best, or what really touches some spiritual or other vital problem, or (in an intimate way) for what has some vivid personal association. My interest indeed lies in what is to be done: not in the tentative little I *have* done. And above all, I am interested in life: in men and women: in every phase of art and literature — & hope to win therefrom, later, a little honey, perhaps bittersweet, to give to others. Do you write at all? *That* would interest me. I would like to talk over with you a phrase in your letter, when you say,

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<sup>17</sup> This sentence suggests Sharp was intending to tell Edith Lyttelton about the crucial role his love affair with Edith Rinder, probably calling her Fiona Macleod, played in his composition of the poems in *Sospiri di Roma* in the winter of 1891-2.

apropos of the dramatic intensity of ‘Silence Farm,’ “that you long for this same intensity for a moment on something beautiful”.

Yes: I too. But perhaps there is an undue limitation in your “something beautiful.” In any case, we can talk it over — & this letter is already too long & may have wearied you. Forgive it for the friendly intent. I hope, too, you will write again, and that we shall meet again & become friends.

Sincerely yours, | William Sharp

ALS Churchill College, Cambridge

*To Grant Richards, August 26, 1899*

“Post Office House” | Newcastle | Co. Down | Ireland | 26/8/99

My dear Richards

Herewith payment for the two copies of “Wives in Exile” sent me.

I hope “Silence Farm” has gone fairly well. I have seen it little advt<sup>d</sup>, but then of late I have not seen many papers. In the main the reviews have been good. I was glad to see such a splendid one in *The Speaker* of last week (19th Aug). Surely such a review should have some effect. I would be glad to know how the book is faring. As I gave away my own copy received at special request for a review copy, I sh<sup>d</sup>. be glad if you will kindly send me one in its place.

I hope you & your wife are well, & having a pleasant autumn. My wife & I came to Ireland at the end of July, & have had glorious weather & a pleasant time (with partial holiday for me). We have just come to Newcastle, Co. Down, & shall be here till mid-September.

I may take this opportunity of saying that (my South Hampstead address being cancelled) from 1st October my address will be Wharncliff | Chorleywood |Herts (it is a pleasant place not far beyond Harrow & Rickmansworth).

Best regards | Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS SUNY, Buffalo

To Adelaide Elder, [September 12, 1899]<sup>18</sup>

Dear Adelaide,

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<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Sharp said (*Memoir* 35) this letter was written in 1899. Sharp’s birthday was September 12.

Do you know why I thought of you to-day particularly, it being my birthday? For it was you who some two and twenty years ago sent me on the 12th of September a copy of a beautifully bound book by a poet with a strange name and by me quite unknown — Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

To that event it is impossible to trace all I owe, but what is fairly certain is that, without it, the whole course of my life might have been very different. For the book not only influenced and directed me mentally at a crucial period, but made me speak of it to an elderly friend (Sir Noel Paton) through whom I was dissuaded from going abroad on a career of adventure (I was going to Turkey or as I vaguely put it, Asia) and through whom, later, I came to know Rossetti himself — an event which completely redirected the whole course of my life.

It would be strange to think how a single impulse of a friend may thus have so profound a significance were it not that to you and me there is nothing strange (in the sense of incredible) in the complex spiritual interrelation of life. Looking back through all those years I daresay we can now both see a strange and in much inscrutable, but still recognisable, direction.

[William Sharp]

*Memoir 35-6*

*To William Butler Yeats, September 16, 1899<sup>19</sup>*

16 September 1899

P.S. As this is such a long letter I have typed it.

My dear Mr. Yeats

I am at present like one of these equinoctial leaves which are whirling before me as I write, now this way and now that: for I am, just now, addressless, and drift between East and

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<sup>19</sup> In a letter to Yeats dated 19 September, 1899, George Russell (AE) wrote in a postscript: “I saw Sharp last night on his way to England. No particular news of him. Mrs. Sharp with him.” Sharp must have drafted this letter while he and Elizabeth were in Ireland and sent it to Edinburgh for his sister to type, date, and send.

West, with round-the-compass eddies, including a flying visit of a day or two in a yacht from Cantyre to the north Antrim coast.<sup>20</sup>

Thus it is that your welcome note of the 3rd was delayed in reaching me. You, I suppose, are still at your friend's in Galway.

I am very interested in what you write about the "Dominion of Dreams," and shall examine with closest attention all your suggestions.<sup>21</sup> The book has already been in great part revised by my friend.<sup>22</sup> In a few textual changes in "Dalua" he has in one notable instance followed your suggestion, that about the too literary "lamentable elder voices." The order is slightly changed, too: for "The House of Sand and Foam" is to be withdrawn, and a piece called "The Winds of the Spirit" substituted: and "Lost" is to come after "Dalua" and precede "The Yellow Moonrock."<sup>23</sup>

You will like to know what I most care for myself. From a standpoint of literary art *per se* I think the best work is that wherein the barbaric (the old Gaelic or Celto-Scandinavian) note occurs. My three favorite tales in this kind are "The Sad Queen" in the *Dominion of Dreams*, "The Laughter of Scathach" in *The Washer of the Ford*, and "The Harping of Cravethen" in *The*

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<sup>20</sup> Cantyre is a peninsula at the southern part of Argyllshire between the Firth of Clyde and the Atlantic across from County Antrim in Northern Ireland.

<sup>21</sup> After Sharp read Yeats' review of Fiona's *Dominion of Dreams* in the July *Bookman*, which contained a paragraph critical of the book, he (as Fiona) asked Yeats "to indicate the passages he took most exception to, and Mr. Yeats sent a carefully annotated copy of the book under discussion (*Memoir* 309 and see note to Sharp's July 3-4 letter to Yeats above). Yeats' "welcome note of the third" must have accompanied the annotated copy of Fiona's *Dominion of Dreams*.

<sup>22</sup> This sentence exemplifies the conundrum Sharp created. In a letter to Yeats, William Sharp, writing as Fiona Macleod, said her friend William Sharp had made some revisions in a book he wrote and published as the work of Fiona Macleod.

<sup>23</sup> *The Dominion of Dreams* went through several reprintings, but there was no new edition until 1910 when it appeared in Vol. III of the Uniform Edition of *The Works of "Fiona Macleod,"* arranged by Mrs. William Sharp. There, according to EAS, it contained revisions a number of which were the outcome of Yeats' suggestions. EAS also moved stories in and out of the volume, "in accordance with the instructions and wishes of the author," as she described in a "Biographical Note."

*Sin-Eater*. In art, I think “Dalua,” and “The Sad Queen,” and “Enya of the Dark Eyes,” the best [in] the *Dominion of Dreams*.

*Temperamentally*, those which appeal to me most are those with the play of mysterious psychic force in them — as in “Alasdair the Proud,” “Children of the Dark Star,” “Enya of the Dark Eyes,” and, in earlier tales, “Cravethen” and “The Dan-nan-Ron” and the Iona tales. Those others which are full of the individual note of suffering and other emotion I find it very difficult to judge. Of one thing only I am convinced, as is my friend (an opinion shared with the rare few whose judgment really means much), that there is nothing in *Dominion of Dreams* or elsewhere in these writings under my name to stand beside “The Distant Country.”<sup>24</sup> Nothing else has made so deep and vital an impression both on men and women — and possibly it may be true what a very subtle and powerful mind has written about it, that it is the deepest and most searching utterance on the mystery of passion which has appeared in our time. It is indeed the core of *all* these writings — and will outlast them all.

Of course I am speaking for myself only. As for my friend, his heart is in the ancient world and his mind for ever questing in the domain of the spirit. I think he cares little for anything but through the *remembering* imagination to recall and interpret, and through the formative and penetrative imagination to discover certain mysteries of psychological and spiritual life. (Apropos, I wish you very much to read, when it appears in the *Fortnightly Review* — probably either in October or in November — the spiritual ‘essay’ called “The Divine Adventure” — an imaginative effort to reach the same vital problems of spiritual life along the separate, yet inevitably interrelated, lines of the Body, the Will (Mind or Intellect), and the Soul.)<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> This story appeared in *The Dominion of Dreams* and is discussed at some length in the introduction to this section of the letters as it relates to the elaborate metaphor Sharp constructed later in this letter to Yeats.

<sup>25</sup> Here Sharp, as Fiona, suggests “The Divine Adventure” was written by “her” friend William Sharp, whose “heart is in the ancient world and his mind for ever questing in the domain of the spirit.” When the essay appeared in the November and December 1899 issues of *The Fortnightly Review* it was the work of Fiona Macleod, and it became the titular essay of Fiona Macleod’s *The Divine Adventure: Iona: By Sundown Shores* which was published by Chapman and Hall in May 1900.

And this brings me to a point about which I must again write to you — I say ‘again’, for once last summer I wrote to you, trying so far as practicable in a strange and complex matter to be explicit. Let me add that I write to you, as before, trusting to you honourably to destroy this letter.

You are both right and wrong in your diagnosis of the passive and expressional factors. (As a *generalization*, I think what you say is right: but here, as so often elsewhere, the puzzling exception invalidates the ides of invariability.)

Again I must tell you that all the formative and expressional as well as nearly all the visionary power is my friend’s. In a sense only his is the passive part; but it is the allegory of the match, the wind, and the torch. Everything is in the torch in readiness, and, as you know, there is nothing in itself in the match. But there is the mysterious latency of fire between them: in that latent fire of love — the little touch of silent igneous potency at the end of the match. Well, the match comes to the torch, or the torch to the match — and, in what these symbolize, one adds spiritual affinity as a factor — and all at once flame is born. The torch says all is due to the match. The match knows that the flame is not hers, but lies in that mystery of thitherto unawakened love, suddenly brought into being by contact. But beyond both is the wind, the spiritual air. Out of the unseen world it fans the flame. In that mysterious air, both the match and the torch hear strange voices. But the match is now part of the torch, lost in him, lost in that flame. Her small still voice speaks in the mind and spirit of the torch, sometimes guiding, sometimes inspiring, out of the deep mysterious intimacies of love and passion. That which is born of both, the flame, is subject to neither — but is the property of the torch. The air which came at the union of both is sometimes called Memory, sometimes Art, sometimes Genius, sometimes Imagination, sometimes Life, sometimes the Spirit. It is all.

But, before that flame, people wonder and admire. Most wonder only at the torch. A few look for the match beyond the torch, and, finding her, are apt to attribute to her that which is not her’s, save as a spiritual dynamic agent. Now and then that match may also have *in petto* the qualities of the torch — particularly memory and vision: and so can stimulate and amplify the imaginative life of the torch. But the torch is at once the passive, the formative, the mnemonic and the artistically and imaginatively creative force. He knows that in one sense he would be flameless — or at least without that ideal blend of the white flame and the red — without the match: and he knows that the flame is the offspring of both, and that the wind has many airs in it,

and that one of the most potent of these under-airs is that which blows from the life and mind and soul of the ‘match’ — but in his heart he knows that, to all others, he and he alone is the flame, his alone both the visionary, the formative, and the expressional.

Do you understand? Read — copy what you will, as apart from me — and destroy this.

Of late the ‘match’ is more than ever simply a hidden flame in the mind of the ‘torch’. When I add that the match never saw or heard a line of “Honey of the Wild Bees” (which you admire so much) till after written, you will understand better.<sup>26</sup>

Please send me a note by return to say that you have received this — and destroyed it — and if you understand: but as my address is uncertain, send it in an *outer envelope* addressed simply, William Sharp Esq, Murrayfield, Midlothian. When [for Where] it will safely reach me.

I have no time now to write you about the plays. Two are typed: the third, and chief, is not yet finished. When all are revised and ready, you can see them. “The Immortal Hour” (the shortest — practically a 1 act play in time,) is in verse.<sup>27</sup>

Sincerely yours | Fiona Macleod

P.S. I think you could have a proof-set of “The Divine Adventure” in your case.

TS Yale, LWBY 61-4, and partially in *Memoir* 309-10

*To Henry Mills Alden, September 18, [1899]*

72 Inverness Terrace | London | W. | 18th September

Dear Mr. Alden

As I have never had any word, nor even mem. [for memo?] of acknowledgment, of my letter to you with enclosures, & notably of my long sea-ballad, *The Admiral of the Sea* — which I sent to you from London about mid-*June* — three months ago — I am afraid that some mishap has occurred.

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<sup>26</sup> “Honey of the Wild Bees” appeared in *The Dominion of Dreams*. Drawing on the elaborate allegory in this letter of the match, torch, and e flame — which is discussed in the introduction to this section of letters — this sentence assigns principal responsibility to Sharp rather than Fiona for the stories in *The Dominion of Dreams*.

<sup>27</sup> Regarding the plays, see note to the Fiona Macleod letter to Benjamin Burgess Moore dated August 11, 1899.

I now send you my duplicate copy of “The Admiral of the Sea” — hoping very much that you may care for it for *Harper’s Monthly*.

As I said in my June letter with it — it would lend itself to picturesque illustration (if so, the ship should be very archaic, with the crossbow-men in little turrets on the mast, etc.).

The theme itself is a stirring one, apart from its interest as the first naval battle between England & Scotland: & as what led on to Flodden.

I send with it also a copy of the other short poem which accompanied it — “Cap’n Goldsack.”

I hope all goes well with you & yours?

Did you get the copy of “The Dominion of Dreams” which Miss Macleod sent to you at Metuchen (I *think* — tho’ she may have sent it to C/o Messrs. Harper’s) — for she tells me she has not heard from you.

I hope this long silence has meant that you have had a long holiday — not that you have been unwell?

Ever sincerely yours | William Sharp

ALS Stanford University

*To Edmund Clarence Stedman, September 27, 1899*

72 Inverness Terrace | London. W. | 27th Sept /99 | For the 8th Oct?

Dear Poet, Comrade, and E. C. S.

For “a good few” years now I have not forgotten to write to you for year birthday — & I certainly am not going to stop now! From my heart, cher ami, I wish all good to you and yours — & hope most eagerly that your new year will be one of greater health, leisure, & congenial work than any you have had for long. You have few friends in America, & I am sure none here, who love you & are more proud of you than your friend W. S.

I won’t upbraid you for leaving both my long birthday letter of last year, and that at Xmas, unanswered. You have not been strong, & always been overworked, &, with Charamard, old friends like ourselves can say “Love is Enough.” I don’t suppose either you’ve had time to read my latest book, “Silence Farm,” which has had so marked a literary reception — which I sent you last summer.

I saw the Janviers the other day. Tom has been very seedy, but is now slowly getting stronger. Ned Dodd, too, has been *very* ill — but is convalescing satisfactorily, and Nan Dodd is to come over to England for a short visit next week. She is a dear.

Is Miss Stuart married yet? I would like to hear of her.

Could not you or my good friend Mrs. Stedman (to whom my love) send me a Postal Card, just to say how things are with you. *Do*. A card will do: don't think of writing.

Ever, Dear Stedman, Affectionately, William Sharp  
Again (& now my wife joins — & so does Chas. G. D. Roberts, who has just looked in) all loving good wishes for your new year.

ALS Princeton

*To Mrs. Grant Allen, September 28, 1899*

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood, Herts | 9/28/99

Dear Nellie

We are only a day or two back from Irish wilds — and learned with infinite regret, first from a paper and then from friends, that Grant was not up and about again as we had hoped (having been unaware of what has happened the past 6 or 8 weeks) but is still seriously ill. We are so sorry, dear Nellie, and send you our loving sympathy — and our most eager hopes that dear Grant will soon get well and be his old brave buoyant self again. It must have been, must still be, a horribly anxious time for you. Is there anything I can do for Grant. Please ask him. And Elizabeth will so gladly do anything for *you*.

Don't trouble to write a note, but do send a postcard. The above is our new address (not far beyond Harrow) — a kind of small Hindhead!

Our love to you and poor dear Grant, and all eager good wishes.

Ever dear Nellie, for Elizabeth and myself | Your friend, | Will

ALS Pierpont Morgan

*To John Macleay, [October,] 1899*

. . . There is a sudden departure from fiction ancient or modern in something of mine that is coming out in the November and December issues of *The Fortnightly Review*.

“The Divine Adventure” it is called — though this spiritual essay is more ‘remote’ i.e. unconventional, and in a sense more ‘mystical’, than anything I have done. But it is out of my

inward life. It is an essential part of a forthcoming book of spiritual and critical essays or studies in the spiritual history of the Gael, to be called *The Reddening of the West*. . .<sup>28</sup>

A book I look forward to with singular interest is Mr. Arthur Symons's announced *Symbolist Movement in Literature*.<sup>29</sup>

This is the longest letter I have written for — well, I know not when. But, then, you are a good friend.

Believe me, yours most sincerely, | Fiona Macleod

*Memoir 314*

*To Anatole Le Braz,<sup>30</sup> [October,] 1899*

Dear M. Le Braz,

Your letter was a great pleasure to me. It was the more welcome as coming from one who is not only an author whose writings have a constant charm for me, but as from a Celtic comrade and spiritual brother who is also the foremost living exponent of the Breton genius. It may interest you to know that I am preparing an *etude* on Contemporary Breton (i.e. Franco-Breton) Literature<sup>31</sup>; which, however, will be largely occupied with consideration of your own high achievement in prose and verse.

It gives me sincere pleasure to send to you by this post a copy of the 'popular' edition of Adamnan's *Life of St. Colum*<sup>32</sup> — which please me by accepting. You will find, below these

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<sup>28</sup> *The Divine Adventure: Iona: By Sundown Shores: Studies in Spiritual History* (London: Chapman and Hall, May 1900). Sharp also considered and rejected *The Sun-Treader* as a title for this book (*Memoir 314*).

<sup>29</sup> (London: William Heinemann, 1900).

<sup>30</sup> Le Braz (1859-1926) was a Breton author whose publications include *Au Pays des Pardons* (1894), *Le Gardien du Feu* (1900), *Essai sur L'histoire du Théâtre Celtique* (1904), *Ames d'Occident* (1911), and *La Bretagne* (1925).

<sup>31</sup> Not completed.

<sup>32</sup> St. Adamnan, Abbot of Hy (625?-704), wrote a *Life of Saint Columba (Columb-Kille)*. A popular edition of Adamnan's work entitled *The Light of the West* and edited by Dr. John Goodchild appeared in April, 1898. See letter to Dr. John Goodchild, dated early May, 1898.

primitive and often credulous legends of Iona, a beauty of thought and a certain poignant exquisiteness of sentiment that cannot but appeal to you, a Breton of the Bretons. . . .

It seems to me that in writing the spiritual history of Iona I am writing the spiritual history of the Gael, of all our Celtic race.<sup>33</sup> The lovely wonderful little island sometimes appears to me as a wistful mortal, in his eyes the pathos of infinite desires and inalienable ideals — sometimes as a woman, beautiful, wild, sacred, inviolate, clad in rags, but aureoled with the Rainbows of the west.

“Tell the story of Iona, and you go back to God, and end in God.” (The first words of my ‘spiritual history’). . . .

But you will have already wearied of so long a letter. My excuse is . . . that you are Anatole Le Braz, and I am your far-away but true comrade,

Fiona Macleod

Memoir 315

*To Richard Garnett, October 8, 1899*

Wharnccliffe | *Chorleywood* / Herts

My dear Garnett

We are now settled here, at this bracing & delightful place, near Milton’s Chalfont St. Giles and Arnold’s beloved Ches: & here sometime you may feel inclined to come for a breath of vivid air.

If in this new undertaking of yours you have some part you could depute to me, I should be glad to be associated with it & with you. But that of course is just as suits your no doubt already matured plan of operations.

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<sup>33</sup> The essay entitled “Iona” appeared first in the *Fortnightly Review* of March (507-23) and April (692-709) 1900. Later that year it was included in *The Divine Adventure: Iona: By Sundown Shores: Studies in Spiritual History*.

I thought at first the Library was to be a reprint of the Amer. Library of World's Best Literature to which I contributed several essays ("Kalevala", "Icelandic Sagas", "Celtic Lit", "Villemarqué & Burzaz Breiz" etc. etc.)<sup>34</sup> — but I see it is not.

I hope Mrs. Garnett is better of the change, & that you & yours are well. My wife would join in cordial regards & remembrances, but she is at Tunbridge Wells.

Ever sincerely yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

*To Theodore Watts-Dunton, [October 19, 1899]*<sup>35</sup>

Wharncliffe | *Chorleywood* / Herts

Dear Aylwin

This is only a brief line to say that I have read your beautiful poem with singular pleasure. There is no mistaking its authorship — & how great a thing that is in these mocking-bird days none can know better than yourself. To its flawless metrical beauty is added a floating atmosphere of essential poetry: it is as impossible not to feel the one as not to be charmed by the other. I look forward greatly to "The Luck of Vesprie Towers" when it is published complete.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Library of Best Literature: Ancient and Modern* (New York: R. S. Peele and J. A. Hill, 1898), edited by Charles Dudley Warner. Sharp contributed entries on the following topics: Celtic literature (with Ernest Rhys) to vol. V; Henri Conscience to vol. VII; Icelandic literature, to vol. XIV; Maarten Maartens to vol. XVI; Maurice Maeterlinck to vol. XVI; myths and folklore of Aryan People (with Ernest Rhys) to vol. XVIII; Ossian (with Ernest Rhys) to vol. XIX; and Hersart de la Villemarqué to vol. XXVI. The *Kalevala* is an epic poem which Elias Lönnrot compiled from Finnish and Karelian folklore in the nineteenth century. The national epic of Finland and one of the most significant works of Finnish literature, the *Kalevala* inspired the national awakening that led to Finland's independence from Russia in 1917. The epic consists of 22,795 verses, divided into fifty cantos (Wikipedia).

<sup>35</sup> Although added to the manuscript in pencil, presumably by the letter's recipient or his secretary, the date is supported by internal evidence. Also added in pencil at the top of the first page in the same hand: *T W.D rep Wm Sharp Letter — referring to The Luck of Vesprie Towers*.

<sup>36</sup> *The Luck of Vesprie Towers* was a novel that did not appear until 1909 (London: John Lane). *The New York Times* review of the book, which appeared in the issue of May 20, 1909, begins as follows: "Amazement is perhaps the predominating sensation of the reader who turns the pages of the story 'Vesprie Towers,' the posthumous novel by Swinburne's old friend and faithful comrade, Watts-Dunton. It seems incredible that such a book could be published in our day and

(By the way, the phenomenon of the mirrored rainbow is not so rare as you imagine. I have myself seen it, & in a note I had from Miss Macleod the other day — who, I may add, greatly admires your poem — she says that she has seen it in Aora Water & elsewhere in the West Highlands, and adds that if you will visit Benbecula<sup>37</sup> you may on rare occasion from a certain standpoint see the lovely effect known as the Rainbow Chain — the innumerable fiord-lets, pools, inlets, tarns, etc. of any part of that “Isle of the Thousand Lakes,” within immediate vision, linked by the mirrored rainbow). She has a description of it in one of her uncollected stories.

How lovely Autumn is at this moment. The trees here are divinely lovely. I am so glad of having “Vesprie Towers” to look forward to.

Ever affectly yrs. | William Sharp

ALS Leeds, Brotherton Library

*To John Macleay, October 20, 1899*

Friday, / 20<sup>th</sup> October 1899

Dear Mr. Macleay

It is very kind of you to send to me that appreciative and gratifying notice from the ‘Liverpool Courier’ — which, I take it, is from your own pen, and, if so, is the more welcome.

I was interested to hear recently of your marriage, and wish happiness and well-being to you and your wife. But I wish you could be in Inverness instead of Liverpool! Yes, you may be sure, if ever I can direct any work or influence your way, that it will give me pleasure to do so.

Thank you, I am now in much better health: but a brief return to Edinburgh is convincing me that I shall never be well in any town. And that reminds me, that I would have answered your letter earlier, but that it followed me about from Kyleakin to Oban and then to Islay, and ultimately arrived in Edinburgh just as I did I suppose.

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hour. Nothing like it has seen the light since 1870 or thereabout, we feel sure. It is entirely of mid — or later (very little later) — Victorian times, the sort of tale our grandmothers would have read in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* with the most genteel approval and many maidenly thrills.” The poem Sharp praises is unknown, but it may have been intended for inclusion in the novel.

<sup>37</sup> Benbecula is an island of the Outer Hebrides.

You have always been so friendly and so interested in my work that I know you will be pleased to hear that “The Dominion of Dreams” is now in a fifth edition (though it is not yet quite five months since first issue). Had I foreseen so unlikely a success, I would have had this fifth edition my “definitive” one as to revisions and alterations — but, now, this “definitive” edition is to be the Seventh — if, as seems probable, that is called for by or soon after the end of the year. I am very dissatisfied with much of the book: but I shall cancel only one piece, the weak because merely pretty “House of Sand and Foam.” Strangely, the story which will take its place is also so-called — indeed its title was ‘lifted’ for the other — but I may rename it. What brought me to do this was the glowing praise of it in an ill-written adulatory article: whereat I at once became suspicious, re-read the story, and promptly canceled it. I may alter the arrangement a little — and there are few pages except in “The Herdsman” which will not have at least an emendatory touch. I am uncertain what to do about the first part of “The Yellow Moon Rock.” Mr. Yeats and Mr. George Russell write to me begging me to cancel it as “unworthy of me”: Mr. Sharp and others do not concur: a few others highly esteem these condemned pages: and I am myself on the back of the blind wind, as we say in the isles.

There is a sudden departure from fiction ancient or modern in something of mine that is coming out in the November and December issues of “The Fortnightly Review.” I hope you will read “The Divine Adventure,” as it is called — though this spiritual essay is more ‘remote,’ i.e. unconventional, and in a sense more ‘mystical,’ than anything I have done. But it is out of my inward life. It is an essential part of a forthcoming book of spiritual and critical essays or studies in the spiritual history of the Gael, called “The Reddening of the West.”

I have much else on hand — some of which you know about already, but of this I need not speak even to one so interested as you have always shown yourself, and to whom I am indebted. No, I have not yet read Mr. Munro’s book. I took it up, but I admit that the greater virility and power of Mr. Maurice Hewlett’s new Italian stories prevailed with me. Of course though, I shall read it later. I liked the opening, but did not care much for what I said [ for “saw”] ‘dippingly.’

A book I look forward to with singular interest is Mr. Arthur Symons's announced "Symbolist Movement in Literature."<sup>38</sup>

This is the longest letter I have written for – well, I know not when. But, then, you are a good friend.

Believe me, / Yours most sincerely, / Fiona Macleod

TLS, NLS

*To R. Murray Gilchrist, [October 25, 1899]<sup>39</sup>*

My Dear Robert,

It is a disappointment to us both that you are not coming south immediately. Yes.; the war-news saddens one, and in many ways.<sup>40</sup> Yet, the war was inevitable: of that I am convinced, apart from political engineering or financial interests. There are strifes as recurrent and inevitable as tidal waves. Today I am acutely saddened by the loss of a very dear friend, Grant Allen. I loved the man — and admired the brilliant writer and catholic critic and eager student. He was of a most winsome nature. The world seems shrunken a bit more. As yet, I cannot realise I am not to see him again. Our hearts ache for his wife — an ideal loveable woman — a dear friend of us both.

We are both very busy. Elizabeth has now the artwork to do for a London paper as well as *The Glasgow Herald*. For myself, in addition to a great complication of work on hand I have undertaken (for financial reasons) to do a big book on the Fine Arts in the Nineteenth Century.<sup>41</sup> I hope to begin on it Monday next. It is to be about 125,000 words, (over 400 close-printed pp.), and if possible is to be done by December-end! . . .

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<sup>38</sup> Prior to this point the letter is typed. The rest is in the Fiona Macleod hand.

<sup>39</sup> This letter was written on the day Grant Allen died which was late on October 24 or early on October 25, 1899. His close friend Edward Clodd in his *Memoir* (Grant Richards, 1900) gives the 25<sup>th</sup> as the date.

<sup>40</sup> The Boer War.

<sup>41</sup> *The Progress of Art in the Nineteenth Century* (London and Edinburgh: W. & R. Chambers, Ltd., 1902). This book also appeared in *The Nineteenth Century Series* edited by Justin McCarthy, et. al. (Toronto and Philadelphia: The Linscott Publishing Co., 1902).

You see I am not so idle as you think me. It is likely that our friend Miss Macleod will have a new book out in January or thereabouts — but not fiction.<sup>42</sup> It is a volume of ‘Spiritual Essays’ etc — studies in the spiritual history of the Gael.

We like this most beautiful and bracing neighbourhood greatly: and as we have pleasant artist-friends near, and are so quickly and easily reached from London, we are as little isolated as at So. Hampstead — personally, I wish we were more! It has been the loveliest October I remember for years. The equinoxial bloom is on every tree. But today, after long drought, the weather has broken, and a heavy rain has begun.

Yours, | Will

*Memoir 311-2*

*To Jerrard Grant Allen, October 25, 1899*

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood, Herts | 27/Oct/99

My dear Allen

It was a grief to me (as explained in enclosed copy of telegram sent) not to be able to be present in person at Woking, in evidence both of my deep affection and high regard for my dear friend your father.

I send this to you now only lest my telegram never reached Grant Richards. (I sent it to him, as I thought you would have heavy enough a burden to bear without my adding to it at such a moment.) It was only by chance that I saw in a morning paper today that the service was to take place at Woking at 3 — & I at once changed my clothes, caught the one available train, & drove straight across — but, in the hurried departure, I had unfortunately read ‘Charing Cross’ for ‘Waterloo’ — & so I missed the train after all, to my profound regret everyway.

You have my deepest sympathy, as has your bereaved mother to whom I wrote two days ago.

Your friend, | William Sharp

ALS Pierpont Morgan

*To Grant Richards, [October 25, 1899]*

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood, Herts

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<sup>42</sup> Sharp may have had in mind the book that would become *The Divine Adventure* in May 1900.

My dear Richards,

I hope you got my telegram. It was a deep regret to me not to be present. It was only at the last moment I saw in a morning paper that the funeral was to be today, at 3, at Woking — and I had time only to change my clothes and catch the one available train.<sup>43</sup> I drove straight across — but in my hurry I had taken a wrong memory with me, and so went to Charing Cross instead of to Waterloo — and only too late discovered my mistake. It is a very deep regret to me, every way. He was a dear and loved friend.

As the one thing I could do, then, I telegraphed to you as per enclosed, and hope you received it.

Perhaps you will not grudge the time to let me know, and add how poor Nellie is.

(Did you not say that your sister lived at Chorleywood? Is she a married sister?)

Ever yours, my dear Richards, with deep sympathy for you in the loss of one so near and dear to you —

William Sharp

ALS Pierpont Morgan

*To William Blackwood, October 31, 1899*

Wharncliff | Chorleywood | Herts | 31/Oct/99

Dear Sir,

I send herewith for your consideration a poem — a sea-ballad called “The Admiral of the Sea” — for which I hope you may care.

Indeed this is the reason why I do not send it to *Harpers*, where I have promised to send something of the kind — for I am anxious that a poem of so patriotic a nature should appear in an English magazine, and, among these, preferably in “Blackwood’s”.

Believe me | Yours very brief | William Sharp

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<sup>43</sup> An account of Grant Allen’s cremation at Woking appeared in *The London Times* on October 28, 1899, p. 8. The list of those in attendance included Mr. Jerrard Grant Allen (son), Mr. and Mrs. R. Fergusson (brother-in-law and sister), Mr. Franklin Richards (brother-in-law), Mr. T. W. Jerrard, Mr. Grant Richards (nephew), Mr. Frederick Whelen (nephew), Mr. J. S. Cotton, the Rev. G. B. Stallworthy, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Le Gallienne, Mr. James Welch, Mr. A. C. Ashton Jonson, and Mrs. C. B. Macdonell. There was no religious ceremony, but an address was given by Mr. Frederic Harrison.

William Blackwood Esq.

P.S. I find I have to send you the rather untidy first-typed copy, as the duplicate has been accidentally destroyed.

ALS NLS

*To Theodore Watts-Dunton, [November 6, 1899]<sup>44</sup>*

Chorleywood | *Monday Night*

My dear Watts-Dunton

Excuse a delayed acknowledgment. I have been away for five days, & returned only tonight. I hope soon now to send you the MS.<sup>45</sup> but it cannot be for about a week yet. I expect — on account of exceptional pressure both of literary & private affairs (& as Dalton's series in *Literature*<sup>46</sup> is arranged in advance some 3 weeks). But there shall be no avoidable delay. Meanwhile my thanks, not only for 'Astrophel'<sup>47</sup> (& at this moment, I see, C. Kernahan's book<sup>48</sup>) but the other Material, which shall go safely back to you in due course.

Part of my absence was spent on a brief visit to George Meredith. He told me you had been down, & spoke cordially of you. I had a very happy visit, loving him as I do.

Have just left Eugene Lee Hamilton & his wife. He too spoke of you.

In haste for the last train (by which I shall send this in)

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<sup>44</sup>This letter is postmarked November 7, which was a Tuesday.

<sup>45</sup> Watts-Dunton, who was poetry editor of *The Athenaeum*, may have sent Sharp several books to review. That would explain his promise to get them safely back in due course, presumably after he wrote the review or reviews. I have found no record of Sharp publishing anything in *The Athenaeum* in late 1899 or 1900, though he might have a written one or more reviews published anonymously.

<sup>46</sup> Sharp must have been writing a piece for a series edited by Dalton[?] in *Literature*, the weekly magazine edited by H. D. Traill.

<sup>47</sup> Perhaps an edition of Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophel and Stella* first published in 1591.

<sup>48</sup> Probably Coulson Kernahan's *Scoundrels & Co.* (1899) which Watts-Dunton sent Sharp to review.

Yours ever | William Sharp

ALS Leeds, Brotherton Library

*To Grant Richards [early November, 1899]*

Wharnccliffe | Chorleywood

My dear Richards

Thank you for your letter. I am indeed glad to hear that our dear friend Nellie is behaving with so much heroism of good sense and courage and loving fealty. I am glad you have written to the *Athenaeum* (which by an accident I have not seen). If ever there was an unembittered and generous nature it was Grant Allen. I never knew a sweeter and finer. It is either gross heedlessness or culpable malice that could call him bitter.

No time for more (post just going). I have already met your sister.

Yours cordially, | W. S.

P. S. Could you send me kindly a P/C to say if G. A. was a member of the Omar K. Club. I ask because I want to make a special allusion to his death, and our loss, in the Presidential verses for the 1st Omar dinner, which Sir Geo. Robertson<sup>49</sup> has asked me to write. (This is between ourselves meanwhile.)

ALS Pierpont Morgan

*To R. Murray Gilchrist. [early] November, 1899*

Chorleywood, | Nov., 1899.

My Dear Robert,

The reason for another note so soon is to ask if you cannot arrange to come here for a few days about November-end, and for this reason. You know that the Omar Khayyam Club is the "Blue Ribbon" so to speak of Literary Associations, and that its occasional meetings are more

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<sup>49</sup>George Scott Robertson (1852-1916) was a British physician, government agent, and author. He entered the Indian Medical service in 1878 and served through the Afghan campaign of 1879-80. He was the British agent of Gilgit in Kashmir in 1888 and 1889. From 1890 to 1891 he lived amongst wild hill men in Kafiristan. He conducted a political mission to Chitral in 1893. During this mission, Chitral was besieged, and Robertson was severely wounded. He survived his wounds and was installed as ruler of Chitral in September of 1895. Among his publications are *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush* (1896) and *Chitral: The Story of a Minor Siege* (1898).

sought after than any other. As I think you know I am one of the 49 members — and I much want you to be my guest at the forthcoming meeting on Friday Dec. 1st, the first of the new year.

The new President is Sir George Robertson (“Robertson of Chitral”) — and he has asked me to write (and recite) the poem which, annually or biennially, someone is honored by the club request to write. The moment she heard of it, Elizabeth declared that it must be the occasion of your coming here — so don’t disappoint her as well as myself! . . .

Ever affectly yours, | Will.

*Memoir 312-3*

*To Theodore Watts-Dunton, [November 1899]*

Wharnccliffe | *Chorleywood* / Herts

My Dear Aylwin

I am not writing to you this time about literary doings, but about a personal matter. I want to know if you can help me with a loan.

What with long and disastrous illness at the beginning of the year — having to help others dear to me — and, finally, losses involved through the misdeeds of another, I find myself on my beam-ends. By next Spring I hope to have things righted so far, if health holds out — but my pinch is just now, with less than £5 in the world to call my own at this moment!

If, therefore, you could lend me £50 — no, that will only be the harder to repay, & I *may* be able to manage all right with less — if, then, you can lend me £25, repayable as early next year as I can manage (probably February, if not, as possible, much sooner) you would be doing an old friend a vital service in a time of great difficulty.<sup>50</sup> (So much of our small income being dependent on journalistic art-work, we are feeling severely the pinch of the war, as all work of the kind is curtailed by two-thirds.)

Meanwhile I have undertaken to do a big History of the Fine Arts in the Nineteenth Century, which, eventually, should repay the heavy outlay of time & labor I must give to it (I have 100,000 words of it to write before the end of the year!).

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<sup>50</sup> We know Watts-Dunton loaned Sharp £25 because on February 9, 1900, he wrote a long letter to Watts-Dunton to explain why ill health had intervened to make it impossible to repay the loan. He promised to repay it whenever he could get the money together.

Fortunately I need to go to town very seldom just now — so both health & pocket benefit, as well as sorely needed time.

My wife is away today, or would join with me in cordial greetings.

Ever affectly Yours | William Sharp

ALS British Library

*To Frank Rinder, [December 30, 1899]*

. . . Just a line, dear Frank, both as a dear friend and literary comrade, to greet you on New Year's morning, and to wish you health and prosperity in 1900. I would like you very much to read some of this new Fiona work, especially the opening pages of "Iona," for they contain a very deep and potent spiritual faith and hope, that has been with me ever since, as there told, as a child of seven, old Seumas Macleod (who taught me so much — was indeed the *father* of Fiona) — took me on his knees one sundown on the island of Eigg, and made me pray to "Her." I have never written anything mentally so spiritually autobiographical. Strange as it may seem it is almost all literal reproduction of actuality with only some dates and names altered.

But enough about that troublesome F. M! . . .

William Sharp

*Memoir 315-6*

*To R. Murray Gilchrist, [December 30, 1900]*

. . . It was written *de profundis*, partly because of a compelling spirit, partly to help others passionately eager to obtain some light on this most complex and intimate spiritual destiny.<sup>51</sup>

William Sharp

*Memoir 316*

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<sup>51</sup> The reference is to "The Divine Adventure" which appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* in November and December.