

SECTION XXIII: 1903

LIFE

Sharp began a diary at the New Year and, as was his habit, abandoned it a few days later. On New Year's Eve the Sharps dined with the novelist Robert Hichens at the beautiful Hotel Timeo just down the hill from the Greek Theater. On the third they lunched there with Hichens, and, after walking around the theater, called on Maud Valerie White, a clever and gifted member of Taormina's British society who was well known in England for her musical settings of poems and ballads. Also on the third, Sharp finished a story about Flora Macdonald and her daughter and sent it off to Edinburgh for Mary to type and forward to the editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*. It was accepted and published in May/June 1904 as the work of Fiona Macleod though it more nearly resembled the narratives Sharp had published under his own name. On the 4th, Sharp began a vivid account of the rugged land and the hardy people who occupied the vast Nelson estate which he called "Through Nelson's Duchy." He finished it four days later, and it was published with photographs selected by Alexander Nelson Hood in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in October 1903.

The Sharps continued to enjoy the beautiful weather and active social life of Taormina, with Sharp working sporadically on his writing and correspondence, until about January 20 when he set off by himself for a fortnight trip to Greece to gather material for a book he planned to call *Greek Backgrounds*, never completed. After crossing from Messina to Reggio di Calabria, at the western point of the toe of Italy's boot, Sharp took a train to Crotona on the east side of the toe. There he boarded a ferry which took him to the port city of Taranto on the west side of the boot's heel. A train called the *Agamemnon* took him to Brindisi, a port city on the east of the heel, where he boarded a ship bound for Greece. Appropriately named the *Poseidon*, the ship crossed the Aegean, and as it approached the coast of Turkish Albania the shaft of its main screw broke. In a January 23 letter to his wife written aboard the stranded ship, he described the beauty of the mountainous shoreline and the joy he felt in being on his own amidst scenery that reminded him of his native Highlands. He was soon rescued by another steamer that took him to Kerkyra on Corfu where he boarded another that took him on to Athens. Once there, he was delighted by the

ancient sites so familiar from years of reading. “Tis a marvelous home-coming feeling I have here,” he wrote to Elizabeth on January 29,^s “And I know a strange stirring, a kind of spiritual rebirth.” On February first, he wrote,

Yesterday, a wonderful day at Eleusis. Towards sundown drove through the lovely hill-valley of Daphne, with its beautifully situated isolated ruin of the Temple of Aphrodite, a little to the north of the Sacred Way of the Dionysiac and other Processions from Aonai (Athenai) to the Great Fane of Eleusis. I have never anywhere seen such a marvelous splendor of living light as the sundown light, especially at the Temple of Aphrodite and later as we approached Athens and saw it lying between Lycabettos and the Acropolis, with Hymottos to the left and the sea to the far right and snowy Pentelicos behind. The most radiant wonder of light I have ever seen.

Not since 1892 when he discovered the beauty of the Roman countryside in the company of Edith Rinder had Sharp experienced such joy in exploring a landscape and its monuments.

In early February Sharp returned to Taormina and the routine of writing and socializing which soon became tiresome. On the eighteenth he wrote to Catherine Janvier: “with this foreign life in a place like this, with so many people I know, it is almost impossible to get anything like adequate time for essential work — and still less for the imaginative leisure I need, and dreaming out my work — to say nothing of reading, etc.” He proceeded to describe the strains of his double life:

As you know, too, I have continually to put into each day the life of two persons — each with his or her own interests, preoccupations, work, thoughts, and correspondence. I have really, in a word, quite apart from my own temperament, to live at exactly double the rate in each day of the most active and preoccupied persons. No wonder, then, that I find the continuous correspondence of ‘two persons’ not only a growing weariness, but a terrible strain and indeed perilous handicap on time and energy for work.

A March 17 Fiona Macleod letter to Benjamin Burgess Moore thanked him for his concern about her health and continued, “I am much better for being in the south, but it has not been a really good winter anywhere, and I feel that I would like a year of nothing but sunshine and serene life. One tires of everything except illusions and dreams: and longs often for nothing but warm sunshine and rest.” Burgess must have written to Fiona in care of Sharp for which she brought him up short: “Mr. Sharp is still in Sicily, but will be leaving any day: but apart from that please do not address to me again c/o him, as he does not like it, nor do I. My correspondence-address is Miss Macleod, | c/o Mrs. Wingate Rinder, | 21. Woronzow Road, | London. N. W.” Whether

or not the Sharps were still in Taormina on March 17, they were certainly back in London in late April. Fiona's April 24 letter to Thomas Mosher describes at some length Sharp's plans for her writings and describes how he will keep Fiona out of the way should Mosher decide to visit Scotland anytime soon. .

There seems little doubt that I cannot expect to regain assured health unless I remain in the South from the early autumn till May for a year or two to come at any rate and, indeed, I am strongly advised to remain in the South (or, if not, in the Summer, on Scandinavian waters) all this year unbrokenly. Nothing is yet definitely decided: except that I shall not be staying in London or Edinburgh this season, and if in Scotland at all will only be for a flying visit to the West in September, or else much sooner instead. Later, I'll be better able to give you an idea of my whereabouts during the summer and autumn. By October, this year, at least, I hope and expect to get south again. It is extraordinary the difference in health it makes, though I fear it makes one lazy, and far more inclined to read and dream, than to write and revise and be continually exercised by the forces of the mind and the spirit.

The travel plans are an interesting amalgam. Sharp had been advised to go south each fall for his health and stay there as long as possible. The Scandinavian waters were only a means of keeping Fiona hidden, but the Sharps did go south in October with Fiona trailing behind them.

In the *Memoir*, Elizabeth said nothing about their activities after returning from Sicily, but the Fiona letters from mid-May to mid-June have her visiting the Lake District, going on to the inner Hebrides (the Isles of Bute and Mull, and Iona), and then heading south again to the Lake District. The likelihood that Sharp visited those places is supported by a statement in the Fiona's June 6 letter to Yeats that Sharp would be back in London about June 14 where he would show Yeats some of the tracings he was making of symbols carved on stones by ancient Gaels. From these Fiona letters we also know that Sharp was revising and writing prefatory material for three Fiona Macleod books Thomas Mosher would publish in the fall.

When he returned to London, Sharp joined his wife in temporary lodgings at 9 St. Mary's Terrace in Paddington near Elizabeth's brother and his cousin Robert Farquharson Sharp who lived just off St. Mary's Terrace at 56 St. Mary's Mansions. On June 22 Sharp made a day trip down to Box Hill to see George Meredith who had been very ill. He described the visit in a letter to someone Elizabeth identified only as "a friend." Both men, Sharp wrote, felt this would be their last meeting; Meredith's death would mark "the passing of the last of the great

Victorians.” Sharp wished Meredith had known “a certain secret: but it is better not, and now is in every way as undesirable as indeed impossible.”

If there is in truth, as I believe, and as he believes, a life for us after this, he will know that his long-loving and admiring younger comrade has also striven towards the hard way that few can reach. What I did tell him before has absolutely passed from his mind: had, indeed, never taken root, and perhaps I had nurtured rather than denied what had taken root. If in some ways a little sad, I am glad otherwise. And I had one great reward, for at the end he spoke in a way he might not otherwise have done, and in words I shall never forget. I had risen, and was about to lean forward and take his hands in farewell, to prevent his half-rising, when suddenly he exclaimed “Tell me something of her — of Fiona. I call her so always, and think of her so, to myself. Is she well? Is she at work? Is she true to her work and her ideal? No, that I know!”

Meredith had come to know Fiona so well through her writings that he could refer to her by only her first name. His elaborate praise suggests he suspected his friend had some role in the production of her work.

It was then he said the following words, which two minutes later, in the garden, I jotted down in pencil at once lest I should forget even a single word or a single change in the sequence of the words. “She is a woman of genius. That is rare . . . so rare anywhere, anytime, in women or in men. Some few women ‘have genius,’ but she is more than that. Yes, she is a woman of genius: the genius too, that is rarest, that drives deep thoughts before it. Tell her I think often of her, and of the deep thought in all she has written of late. Tell her I hope great things of her yet. And now . . . we’ll go, since it must be so. Goodbye, my dear fellow, and God bless you.” Outside, the great green slope of Box Hill rose against a cloudless sky, filled with a flowing south wind. The swifts and swallows were flying high. In the beech courts thrush and blackbird called continually, along, the hedgerows the wild-roses hung. But an infinite sadness was in it all. A prince among men had fallen into the lonely and dark way.

The way into which Meredith had fallen may have been less dark than Sharp imagined, and there is additional irony in Elizabeth’s observation: “Goodbye it was in truth; but it was the older poet who recovered hold on life and outlived the younger by four years” (*Memoir* 368).

The June 23 Fiona letter to Mosher indicates that Edith Rinder and her family would, as usual, spend the months off August and September in the Lake Tarbert area west and south of Glasgow. Sharp’s mother and sisters would, again as usual, spend August near the Rinders in Kilcreggan and return to Edinburgh in September. The Sharps also went to Scotland in late July and stopped near Falkirk to visit friends before joining his family in Kilcreggan. In August he

continued to revise and write introductions for the three Macleod books Mosher was publishing. Since the content of those books had appeared previously in England, the revisions and introductions were a means of avoiding copyright difficulties. On August 25 Sharp described to his American friend Henry Alden, editor of *Harper's Magazine*, the Literary Geography essays he was writing for the *Pall Mall Magazine*. And he went on to outline his plans for the book — never completed — to be called *Greek Backgrounds*

When Sharp's mother and sister left their rented Kilcreggan house at the end of August, the Sharps went northeast to Perthshire to stay with Mrs. Glassford Bell, formerly Marion Sandeman, a childhood friend of Sharp's in Glasgow. There, according to Elizabeth, her husband, having suffered through a wet spring and a still damper summer, "became so ill we went to Llandrindod Wells for him to be under special treatment." From Perthshire to the spa town in the middle of Wales was a long train journey, but it produced a considerable improvement in Sharp's health. From Wales in late September, he wrote to Ernest Rhys:

I know that you will be sorry to learn that things have not gone well with me. All this summer I have been feeling vaguely unwell and, latterly, losing strength steadily. . . . However, the rigorous treatment, the potent Saline and Sulphur waters and baths, the not less potent and marvelously pure and regenerative Llandrindod air — and my own exceptional vitality and recuperative powers — have combined to work a wonderful change for the better; which may prove to be more "than a splendid rally," tho' I know I must not be too sanguine.

On the 29th Sharp was back in London where he wrote his annual "birthday letter" to E. C. Stedman. At the end of August a specialist thought he was near death from a combination of ailments, including diabetes, superimposed on a weak heart, but he has surprised his doctor and his friends, even himself, by "an apparent complete recovery." Writing to Catherine Janvier on the 30th, he claimed to be "cheerful as a lark — let say as a lark with a rheumatic wheeze in its little song-box, or gout in its little off-claw." He knew the combination of illnesses would soon claim him, but he was determined to laugh and "be glad and take life as I find it, till the end. The best prayer for me is that I may live vividly till 'Finis,' and work up to the last hour."

Shortly after writing and posting the birthday letter to Stedman, a long letter from Stedman raised his spirits. "It has been a true medicine," he wrote again to Stedman on October 2, "for, as I told you, I've been gravely ill. And it came just at the right moment, and warmed

my heart with its true affection.” Sharp was also pleased by a recent visit to his doctor who he had sanctioned Sharp’s trip to Sicily and then to Greece for the winter. “When I’m once more in the land of Theocritus (and oh how entrancing it is) I’ll be quite strong and well again, he says. Indeed I’m already ‘a live miracle’!” Sharp then proceeded to describe in detail the itinerary he and Elizabeth intended to follow:

We sail by the Orient liner “Orizaba” on the 23rd; reach Naples (via Gibraltar and Marseilles) 9 to 10 days later; and leave by the local mail-boat same evening for Messina — arrive there about 8 on Monday morning — catch the Syracuse mail about 10, change at 12 at Giarre, and ascend Mt. Etna by the little circular line to Maletto about 3,000 ft. high, and thence drive to the wonderful old Castle of Maniace to stay with our dear friend there, the Duke of Bronte — our third or fourth visit now. We’ll be there about a fortnight: then a week with friends at lovely and unique Taormina: and then sail once more, either from Messina or Naples direct to the Piraeus, for Athens, where we hope to spend the winter and spring.

The trip south on the Orizaba was not a happy one. The weather was bad, the sea rough, and, according to a letter Sharp wrote Catherine Janvier from the ship on October 31, he suffered a heart attack soon after leaving Plymouth. After they passed Gibraltar and entered the Mediterranean, they encountered a “wild gale” in the Gulf of Lyon, “one of the wildest we had ever known,” according to Elizabeth Sharp. They had hoped to visit briefly with the Janviers, who had returned to the south of France from London, when the ship docked in Marseilles, but the storm by then had become “almost a hurricane.” After taking shelter in a cove, they sailed directly to Naples. Elizabeth reproduced in the *Memoir* a short unrhymed poem called “Invocation” which her husband wrote during the storm. “It was his way of mental escape from a physical condition which induced great nervous strain or fatigue, to create imaginatively a contrary condition and environment, and so to identify himself with it, that he could become oblivious to surrounding actualities”(374-5).

A November 6 letter to Mosher in Mary Sharp’s Fiona script supposedly written near Gibraltar thanked him for sending newly-printed copies of *The House of Usna* to Edinburgh. One copy of the “beautiful little book” had been forwarded to her. In fact, Sharp received that book when he reached Alexander Nelson Hood’s Castle Maniace early in the first week of November. He drafted the Fiona letter there and sent it for Mary to copy and mail from Edinburgh. He was establishing the fiction that Fiona was a week or so behind him in her

travels. She would probably spend some time in Algeria before going on to be with the Sharps for a month or so in Athens. By shadowing his own travels with the imagined travels of Fiona, Sharp was able to describe the same people and places in both sides of the double correspondence. He could also keep Fiona on the move, carefully track her movements, and avoid the possibility of anyone asking to meet her. In the same vein, Fiona's various ailments shadowed his own with one important exception. He did not suffer the neurology in his writing hand that made it so difficult for Fiona to write and thus explained the typed letters that were sometimes necessary.

Sharp's November 11 letter to Mrs. Philpot conveys the joy and renewed energy generated by the warm Sicilian weather and the beauty of the surrounding country. He looked forward to a hazardous trip to the southwestern part of Nelson's huge estate where he would see "one of the greatest orange groves in Europe — 26,000 trees in full fruit, an estimated crop of 3,000,000." The Sharps left Maniace on November 17 to spend a few days with friends in Taormina before sailing to Corfu and then to Athens. When they arrived at the end of the month, the weather turned cold, and Sharp suffered a relapse. Near the end of December, he was able to tell Mrs. Philpot, in whom he had found a kindred spirit and confidant, "I've come out of my severe feverish attack with erect (if draggled) colors and hope to march 'cock-a-hoopishly' into 1904 and even further if the smiling enigmatical gods permit!" He described his pleasure in reading the works of the ancient Greeks in the locations they knew. There he could imagine he "could hear upon the wind the rise and fall of the ancient lives, serene thought-tranced in deathless music." He had so much work to do "besides 'Life' the supreme and most exciting of the arts." A new source of pleasure had entered his life which may explain the passage from Pindar's 7th *Nemean Ode* that closes his December 29 letter to Richard Garnett: "There is a sweet pause in every deed; even honey and the pleasant blossoms of Aphrodite have satiety." Echoing his time with Edith Rinder in Rome a decade earlier, he had met in Athens another young woman whose love warmed the landscape and lifted temporarily the weight of physical and mental decline.

LETTERS: 1903

To Thomas Mosher, [January 1903]

Health, Happiness, and the achievement of Beauty, to you, in 1903, with all sincerity, and friendly hopes and greetings.

F. M.

P. S. And grateful thanks for the beautiful Pater volume which I have just learned have arrived for me.¹ How kind you are.

ACS NYPL, Berg

To Karl Walter, January [?], 1903

Taormina, | Jan., 1903

My Dear Walter,

. . . In some respects your rendering of your sonnet is towards improvement. But it has one immediate and therefore fatal flaw. Since the days of Sophocles it has been recognized as a cardinal and imperative law, that a great emotion (or incident, or idea, or collective act) must not be linked to an ineffective image, an incongruous metaphor. Perhaps the first and last word about passion (in a certain sense, only, of course, for to immortal things there is no mortal narrowing or limiting in expression) has been said more than two thousand years ago by Sappho and today by George Meredith. “The apple on the topmost bough” . . . all that lovely fragment of delicate imperishable beauty remains unique. And I know nothing nobler than Meredith’s “Passion is noble strength on fire.” . . . But turn to a poet you probably know well, and study the imagery in some of the Passion sonnets in “The House of Life” of Rossetti — of Passion

. . . “creature of poignant thirst

And exquisite hunger” . . .

— the splendid sexual diapason in the sestet of the sonnet called “The Kiss” — or, again to “the flame-winged harp-player.”

. . . thou art Passion of Love,

The mastering music walks the sunlit sea.

¹ Walter Pater, *Renaissance Studies in Art and Poetry*, Thomas Mosher: Portland, Maine, 1902.

Perhaps I have said enough to illustrate my indication as to the opening metaphor in your sonnet. Apart from the incongruity of the image, it has no logical congruity with the collateral idea of Fear. The sonnet itself turns on a fine emotion in your mind: let that emotion shape a worthy raiment of metaphor and haunting cadence of music, *not* as the metricist desires but as the poet *au fond* compels. Yes, both in sonnet-writing and in your terza-rima narrative (cultivate elision here, also fluent terminals, or you will find the English prosody jib at the foreign reins) you will find G. useful. But the secret law of rhythm in a moving or falling wave, in the cadence of wind, in the suspiration of a distant song, in running water, in the murmur of leaves, in chord confluent upon chord, will teach you more if you will listen long enough and know what you listen to.

I hope I have not discouraged you. I mean the reverse of that.

Your friend, | William Sharp

Memoir 359-60

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, January 23, 1903

23d Jan., 1903

. . . Where of all unlikely places do you think this is written from?² Neither Corfu nor Samothrace nor Ithaka nor Zante, nor any Greek isle betwixt this and the Peloponnesus, but in Turkey! . . . i.e., in Turkish Albania, surrounded by turbaned Turks, fezzed Albanians, and picturesque kilted Epeirotes, amid some of the loveliest scenery in the world.

You will have had my several cards en route and last from Taranto. The first of a series of four extraordinary pieces of almost uncanny good fortune befell me *en route*, but it would take too long now to write in detail. Meanwhile I may say I met the first of three people to whom I already owe much and who helped me thro' every bother at Brindisi. (He is a foreign Consul in Greece.)

² Mrs. Sharp states in the *Memoir* (362): "William Sharp started for a fortnight's trip to Greece by way of Calabria-Reggio, Crotona, Taranto, Brindisi to Corfu and Athens, with a view of gathering impressions for the working out of his projected book (by W.S.) to be called *Greek Backgrounds*." Reggio Calabria (or Greek Calabria) is at the western point of Italy's boot toe, across the water from Messina, and Crotona is on the east side of the toe. Sharp must have gone by ferry from there to the port city of Taranto on the west side Italy's boot heel. From there he took a train (engine) called the *Agamemnon* to Brindisi, a port city on the west of the heel and from there a ship (the *Poseidon*) to Greece.

(By the way, the engine from Taranto to Brindisi was called the *Agamemnon* and the steamer to Greece the *Poseidon* significant names, eh?)

I had a delightful night's rest in my comfortable cabin, and woke at dawn to find the *Poseidon* close to the Albanian shore, and under the superb snow-crowned Acrokerannian Mountains. The scenery superb — with Samothrace, and the Isle of Ulysses, etc., etc., seaward, and the beautiful mountainous shores of Corfu (here called *Kepkuga* (Kêrkyra) on the S. W. and S. There was a special Consul-Deputation on board, to land two, and also to take off a number of Turks, Albanians, and Epeirotes for Constantinople. We put in after breakfast at Eavri Kagavri — a Greco-Albanian township of Turkey. The scattered oriental 'town' of the Forty Saints crowns a long ridge at a considerable height — the harbour-town is a cluster of Turkish houses beside an extraordinary absolutely deserted set of gaunt ruins. Hundreds of Albanians and Epeirotes, Moslem priests and two Greek *papas* (or popes) were on the shore-roads, with several caravans each of from 20 to 50 mules and horses. Costumes extraordinarily picturesque, especially the white-kilted or skirted Albanian mountaineers, and the Larissa Turks. We were 3 hours — and I the only 'privileged' person to get thro' with the consul. We took many aboard — a wonderful crew, from a wonderful place, the fairyland of my Greek resident from Paris — who is on his way to spend a month with his mother in Athens, and has asked me to visit him at his house there. . . .

Well, the *Poseidon* swung slowly out of the bay, — a lovely, exciting, strange, unforgettable morning — and down the lovely Albanian coast — now less wild, and wooded and craggy, something like the West Highlands at Loch Fynne, etc., but higher and wilder. When off a place on the Turkish Albanian coast called Pothlakov (Rothroukon) the shaft of the screw suddenly broke! The engineer told the captain it would be five hours at least before it could be mended — adding, a little later, that the harm could probably not be rectified here, and that we should have to ride at sea till a relief boat came from Corfu or Greece to take off the passengers, etc.

As no one has a Turkish passport, no one can get ashore except lucky me, with my influential friend, in a Turkish steam-pinnacle! (It is so beautiful, so warm, and so comfortable on the *Poseidon*, that, in a sense, I'm indifferent — and would rather *not* be relieved in a hurry.)

(Later.) Late afternoon on board — still no sign of getting off. No Corfu to-day, now, though about only an hour's sail from here! *Perhaps* tonight — or a relief steamer may come.

I'll leave this now, as I want to see all I can in the sundown light. It is all marvelously strange and lovely. *What* a heavenly break-down! *What* luck!

Just had a talk with another passenger stamping with impatience. I didn't soothe him by remarking I hoped we should drift ashore and be taken prisoners by the Turks. He says he wants to get on. Absurd. "There's more beauty here than one can take-in for days to come" I said — "Damn it, sir, what have I got to do with beauty," — he asked indignantly. "Not much, certainly," I answered drily, looking him over. An Italian *maestro* is on board on his way to Athens — now playing delightfully in the salon. A Greek guitarist is going to play and sing at moonrise. No hills in the world more beautiful in shape and hue and endless contours — with gorgeous colours. Albania is lost Eden, I think. Just heard that a steamer is to come for us in a few hours, or less, from Corfu, and tow us into Kerkira (the town) — and that another Austro-Lloyd from Trieste or Brindisi will take us on to-morrow sometime from Corfu to Athens. . . . The only perfectly happy person on board.

Yours, | Will

Memoir 362-5

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, January 29, [1903]

Athens, | 29th Jan.

. . . This lovely place is wonderful. How I wish you were here to enjoy it too. I take you with me mentally wherever I go. It is a marvelous *home-coming* feeling I have here. And I know a strange stirring, a kind of spiritual rebirth.

[William Sharp]

Memoir 365

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, February 1, [1903]

Athens, | Feb. 1st. 1903

. . . Yesterday, a wonderful day at Eleusis. Towards sundown drove through the lovely hill-valley of Daphne, with its beautifully situated isolated ruin of the Temple of Aphrodîtê, a little to the north of the Sacred Way of the Dionysiac and other Processions from Aonai (Athenai) to the Great Fane of Eleusis. I have never anywhere seen such a marvelous splendor of living light as the sundown light, especially at the Temple of Aphrodite and later as we approached Athens and

saw it lying between Lycabettos and the Acropolis, with Hymottos to the left and the sea to the far right and snowy Pentelicos behind. The most radiant wonder of light I have ever seen. . . .

[William Sharp]

Memoir 365

To Catherine Ann Janvier, February 18, 1903

Taormina, | 18th Feb., 1903

. . . In fact, letters are now my worst evil to contend against for, with this foreign life in a place like this, with so many people I know, it is almost impossible to get anything like adequate time for essential work and still less for the imaginative leisure I need [for] dreaming out my work — to say nothing of reading, etc. As you know, too, I have continually to put into each day the life of two persons — each with his or her own interests, preoccupations, work, thoughts, and correspondence. I have really, in a word, quite apart from my own temperament, to live at exactly double the rate in each day of the most active and preoccupied persons. No wonder, then, that I find the continuous correspondence of ‘two persons’ not only a growing weariness, but a terrible strain and indeed perilous handicap on time and energy for work. . . .

[William Sharp]

Memoir 362

To Benjamin Burgess Moore, March 17, 1903

March 17th 1903

My dear Mr. Moore

I am sorry for the long delay in response to your letter, but I had instructed that letters were not to be forwarded to me for some time past and it is only now on my temporary return (by sea) that I am able to catch up with some of my delayed correspondence.

You will be glad to be in Paris, I daresay, for it is at least nearer to what you care for, and has much of a manifold fascination: but it has not the glow and colour of life in Italy and Spain and Greece.

Owing to M. Davray's³ ill-health the French volume of representative translation has been delayed: but I understand that it is really to appear this year. The translator is M. Henry Davray of the *Mercure de France*.

A Mr. Gottfried Pavlik⁴ is also to bring out a German translation, and (at a later date) a Signor Cervesato⁵ an Italian one, after preliminary magazine appearance. The Tauchnitz representative vol. (which I put together myself, at the request of Baron Tauchnitz, and revised much of the contents) was published some time ago, with a preface, under the title *Wind and Wave* and can no doubt easily be procured in Paris if you wish to see it.⁶

Yes, thanks, I am much better for being in the south, but it has not been a really good winter anywhere, and I feel that I would like a year of nothing but sunshine and serene life. One tires of everything except illusions and dreams: and longs often for nothing but warm sunshine and rest. As to my recent magazine work, there was an essay on "The Magic Kingdoms" in the "*Monthly Review*" for (I think) January: and one in the "Fortnightly" for February on "The Four Winds of Eirinn": and probably the *Contemporary* for April (or May) will have a series of four collectively entitled "The Sunset of Old Tales".⁷ I hope to publish a volume of essays and 'spiritual studies' this early summer.

Mr. Sharp is still in Sicily, but will be leaving any day: but apart from that please do not address to me again c/o him, as he does not like it, nor do I. My correspondence-address is Miss Macleod, | c/o Mrs. Wingate Rinder, | 21. Woronzow Road, | London. N. W.

I hope you will have both prosperity and happiness in your new life.

³ Henry David Defray (1873-1944) wrote and translated for the *Mercury de France* and was the author of *Chez les Anglia's Pendant la Grande Guerre* (1916); *Through French Eyes* (1916); and *Lord Kitchener: His Work and His Prestige* (1917). There is no record of his having published a translation of representative Fiona Macleod writings.

⁴ Unable to identify.

⁵ Arnold Cervesato (1872-1944) was the author of *The Roman Campagna* (1913) and *Allegretto Ma Non Troppo* (1939).

⁶ *Wind and Wave: Selected Tales* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz), 1902.

⁷ "The Sunset of Old Tales" appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 73 (June, 1903), 1087-1110, and both as an essay and as the title of a section, in *The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1904).

Believe me, | Sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod.

ALS Huntington

To Thomas Mosher, April 24, [1903]

Edinburgh | 24th April

Dear Mr. Mosher,

As you have surmised, my postponement of response is not due to heedlessness on my part, but to other causes. In the first place, there was long delay in the arrival of your letter, which followed me by many circuitous ways along the Mediterranean coasts between Athens and Naples, Naples and Gibraltar, etc. Then, when it came, I was ill and unable to attend to it or any other letters. Later, all plans were cancelled by the serious illness and subsequent death of one near and dear to me, — necessitating my return home for a time. And, now, my personal plans still remain very uncertain. There seems little doubt that I cannot expect to regain assured health unless I remain in the South from the early autumn till May for a year or two to come at any rate — and, indeed, I am strongly advised to remain in the South (or, if not, in the Summer, on Scandinavian waters) all this year unbrokenly. Nothing is yet definitely decided: except that I shall not be staying in London or Edinburgh this season, and if in Scotland at all will only be for a flying visit to the West in September, or else much sooner instead. Later, I'll be better able to give you an idea of my whereabouts during the summer and autumn. By October, this year, at latest, I hope and expect to get south again. It is extraordinary the difference in health it makes, though I fear it makes one lazy, and far more inclined to read and dream, than to write and revise and be continually exercised by the forces of the mind and the spirit. And now about your letter of proposals, for which I thank you.⁸

⁸ The following discussion of which Fiona books Mosher should publish in which of his series is confusing. The Fiona books he published in his Old World Series are *From the Hills of Dream: Threnodies, Songs, and Other Poems* (1901, 1904, 1907, 1910, and 1917); *Deirdr  and the Sons of Usna* (1903); *The Divine Adventure* (1903); *The Isle of Dreams* (1905); and *The Hour of Beauty: Songs and Poems* (1907). Three Fiona books were published in Mosher's Miscellaneous Series: *The Silence of Amor: Prose Rhythms* (1902); *The House of Usna: A Drama* (1903); and *The Immortal Hour: A Drama in Two Acts* (1907). The Fiona books he published in his Brocade Series are *By Sundown Shores: Studies in Spiritual History* (1902); *The Tale of the Four White Swans* (1904); and *Ulad of the Dreams* (1904). Each Mosher series differed from the others in

(Old World Series)

(I) Although personally I prefer the idea of “In This Kingdom By The Sea,” there is no reason this should not stand over till, say, next Spring, if you care for it then.

So, since you wish it, let “The Divine Adventure” appear in your Old World Series. There is not much to revise, except a little deletion and dovetailing near the end. But I’ll go over it again carefully, and hope to see my way to add somewhat. And I shall write some prefatory matter. This I shall see to as soon as practicable.

(Brocade Series)

(II) I should prefer “Deirdrê” to the “Tale of the Four Swans” — but if you specially wish the latter, so be it. In either instance, I’ll write an Introduction.

(III) For the third vol. in the Brocade Series (and I quite see the advantage you indicate of having a set of three in this series) I would suggest either the poetic drama of “The Immortal Hour” (which I see the American author of an article on my writings considers the best thing I have done) — considerably revised, with entirely rewritten opening pages, since its appearance in the *Fortnightly Review* for Nov. 1900.

or else

The shorter prose drama of “The House of Usna” (performed in London at the Strand Theater, under auspices of the Stage Society) revised from its stage-version and also (I intend) from that in the *National Review* for (I forget when, probably Spring or Summer of 1901) — with a preface dealing with Tragic Drama, and the Theater as I think of it in one of its potential forces, and its possible development.

As to the new vol. of Poems, I can say nothing yet. All my arrangements and projects have been seriously interfered with, much to their and my detriment. I shall not now be able to achieve or even work towards this volume till the early autumn at earliest I expect.

And my projected volume of Essays and Spiritual Studies, which I had hoped to see out this April or May, is also perforce postponed. (Some of it has appeared in the *Contemporary*,

design and format, but why he chose some works for one series and other works for another is unclear. For detailed bibliographic information about these and other Fiona Macleod books published by Thomas Mosher, consult Philip R. Bishop’s wonderful *Thomas Bird Mosher: Pirate Prince of Publishers: A Comprehensive Bibliography and Source Guide to The Mosher Books Reflecting England’s National Literature and Design* (1998).

Fortnightly, etc. — and it is likely that the June ‘Fortnightly’ (or July) will contain another section called “The Sunset of Old Tales”)

I shall have to set aside much in order to revise and add to those “Old World” and “Brocade” books. For the three [“The Divine Adventure,” “The Four Swans” or “Deirdrê,” and “The House of Usna” or “The Immortal Hour”] I do not think I am asking more than right if I ask if you can pay me Fifty Pounds (£50) not later than Midsummer. Frankly, I doubt if I dare undertake them for less — and even thus I am (though only financially) the loser.

Perhaps the best way will be for you to cable after receipt of this letter — when I shall at once proceed with the work involved. If physically and mentally able, I shall meanwhile, as soon as practicable, take up “The Divine Adventure.” In cabling please say if “Swans” or “Deirdrê”, if “Usna” or “Immortal” — and it will suffice if you cable direct to Mrs. Rinder in London [thus, as an example, if you agree, Rinder, 21 Woronzow Road, London Agree Terms Adventure Swans Usna Mosher]

I hope you are well, and that all goes well with you. [I hope some of my friends to whom I have given your volumes have ordered others — the Duchess of Sutherland, for one, told me that she wanted several things from you, and was going to write to you for your catalogue. If she has not done so, you could address one to her, The Duchess of Sutherland, Dunrobin Castle, Scotland.] I do not feel very well, or eager for work, or for anything but sun, warmth, and rest — but soon, I hope, I may feel differently. All friendliest greetings, dear Mr. Mosher, from

Yours most sincerely | Fiona Macleod

ALS NYPL, Berg

To Benjamin B. Moore, April 25, [1903]

Miss Macleod | c/o Mrs. Wingate Rinder | 21 Woronzow Road | London N.W. |

25th April [1903]

My dear Mr. Moore

You must have thought me very discourteous, or at any rate very heedless, to leave your letter so long unanswered. But by an extraordinary series of postal delays, it always reached some ‘forwarded-to’ address just after I had left, and seems to have stopped almost everywhere between Naples and Algiers! Then, when at last I did get it, I was on my hurried way to Scotland (whence I write to you), and on account of illness and death of a near relative have since been unable to attend to my terrible accumulation of correspondence — some of it, alas,

(including an urgent ‘publishing’ letter from Mr. Mosher, of January-date!!) only just come to hand. I was very glad to hear that you had settled in Paris. It is not the South: it is not the place for work or dream, in a certain order of work or for a certain order of ‘dream.’ But it has its charm and fascination and many interests: if for me, only at early midsummer, i.e. from mid-May till end of June — and then I would prefer it only to London, and far rather be in any of a thousand other places, for I weary more and more of towns, save for the swift transient interest of novelty.

M. Henri Davray fell ill, and had to go to Italy for a year or more, and so all his literary undertakings were indefinitely postponed. But when I last heard from him (about January I think) he wrote of being at work finishing the remainder of his volume of Selected Tales, and that it would be out in 1903, at least he hoped so. Herr Gottfried Pavlik’s translation has also been delayed. There is, later, I believe, to be an Italian one. But the “Tauchnitz” selected edition came out last November, under the title *Wind and Wave* — selected by myself, at Baron Tauchnitz’s request, and here and there a good deal revised, with a Preface.

Forgive so bare a note (I have I see forgotten to thank you for speaking of my work to Eleanora Duse⁹ — to have her among appreciative readers would indeed be a pleasure to me) but I am sadly pressed. (I have sent on your address to W. S. who, I know, wished to write to you.)

Sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

ALS Huntington

To George Halkett, May 9, 1903¹⁰

⁹ Eleanore Duse (1861-1924) was an Italian actress. Gabrielle d'Annunzio wrote plays for her, among them “La Bioconda” and “Francesca da Rimini.” She was one of the first important actresses to perform in Henrik Ibsen’s “Hedda Gabler” and “The Lady from the Sea.”

¹⁰ George Halkett (1855-1918) and Sharp had known each other since they were at school together in Glasgow. Both an artist and a writer, Halkett became the art critic for the *Edinburgh Evening News* in 1876 when he was only twenty-one. Having settled in London, he joined the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1892 as a political cartoonist and art critic. He contributed numerous items to *Punch*, and in 1897 he was appointed editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*. This letter is in Sharp’s hand to be copied by Mary. In reproducing the letter in the *Memoir* (356), Mrs. Sharp omitted portions and mistakenly dated it “9th Jan” rather than “9th May.” According to Sharp’s diary he finished “The King’s Ring,” the work this letter describes, on Saturday, January 3rd, 1903.

Saturday, 9th May.

Dear Sir,

I have written a story somewhat distinct in kind from the work associated with my name, and think it is one that should appeal to a far larger public than most of my writings do: for it deals in a new way with a subject of unpassing interest, the personality of Flora Macdonald. "The King's Ring," however, is not concerned with the hackneyed Prince Charlie episode.¹¹ It is, in a word, so far as I know, the only narrative presentment of the remarkable but almost unknown late life experiences of Flora Macdonald: for few know that, long after her marriage, she went with her husband and some of her family and settled in South Carolina, just before the outbreak of the War of Independence: how her husband was captured and imprisoned, how two of her sons in the Navy were lost tragically at sea: and how she herself with one daughter with difficulty evaded interference, and set sail from a southern port for Scotland again, & on that voyage was wounded in an encounter with a French frigate. True, all these things are only indicated in "The King's Ring, for fundamentally the story is a love-story, that of Flora M.'s beautiful eldest daughter Anne and Major Macleod, with the tragical rivalry of Alasdair Stuart, bearer of the King's Ring.

Practically the facts of the story are authentic: save the central episode of Alasdair Stuart, which is of my own invention.

I think the story would appeal to many not only in Scotland and England but in America. Whether it may suit the 'Pall Mall Magazine,' or meet your requirements, is another matter, for you to decide.

I send you a typed copy, and perhaps you could let me hear at your early convenience, as I have an application from a Syndicate, of which however I know nothing. And, if you care to

¹¹ According to EAS, "The story was accepted and the first installment was printed in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in May, 1904; but after its appearance the author did not care sufficiently for it to republish it in book form" (*Memoir* 357). Flora Macdonald (1722-1790) aided Prince Charles of the House of Stuart in escaping the English forces after his army was defeated at Culloden in 1746. Flora dressed the Prince in women's clothes and passed him off as her maid during the escape. She spent a year in the Tower of London for her part in the escape.

have “The King’s Ring” will you kindly inform me what terms of payment you can offer (i.e. for British and American serial use).

Believe me | Yours very truly, | Fiona Macleod

ALS NLS

To Thomas Mosher, May 14, 1903

Thursday evening. 14th May, 1903

Thanks for your letter. Shall write by next mail, with “D. A”.¹² I sent word to Mrs. W. R.¹³ today with several directions — among them, to cable you “Proceed Adventure.” The alterations will be towards end only.

F. M.

P.S. Yes, “*Usna*” not “*Immortal*” (& *Deirdrê* not *Darthool*)

ACS NYPL, Berg

To Thomas Mosher, May 26, 1903

(Island of Bute) | 26th May. 1903

Dear Mr. Mosher

I hope you have duly received the revised ‘for press’ copy of “The Divine Adventure” I sent to you by last mail, from Bowness on Lake Windermere — where I was on a brief ‘passing’ visit to friends.

I now send you MS of the brief dedicatory introduction for this reprint.

As soon as I can, by next Wednesday’s mail I hope, I shall send you the ‘for press’ copy of *Deirdrê* with its several pages of “forward”: and either with it, or a week later, “The House of *Usna*” with Introduction. I am very glad about the reissue of “*Usna*.” Among my imaginative work it stands foremost in my own liking, I think: and though short, carries, I hope, much of old dream and emotion made new and near.

I am still not feeling well, and am suffering from severe nervous headaches, so excuse a brief note meanwhile.

¹² *The Divine Adventure*

¹³ Edith Wingate Rinder.

Most sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

P.S. I hope that you will be able to reprint *Usna* in the early rather than the late autumn. (Part of my new book is to appear, under title “The Sunset of Old Tales”, in the June *Fortnightly* I believe.) All three reprints are to come out in the autumn, I understand.¹⁴

P.S. I have intentionally kept the preliminary part of “The Divine Adventure” as brief as practicable so that the volume as it stands should not exceed the desired length for the particular format. “Usna” will have a longish introduction, and “Deirdrê” also has a fairly long dedicatory introduction.¹⁵ (I forgot to add that as I have not my typewriter with me or anyone here to whom I can dictate at the moment I have written out the ‘D. A.’ foreword in MS. but I think so clearly that with ordinary care in setting-up and proof-revision there can hardly be any room for mistakes. Please send word acknowledging safe receipt.

ALS NYPL, Berg

To Miss Moore, May 27, 1903

The Royal Route | David MacBrayne | R.M.S. Iona | May 27, 1903¹⁶

My dear Miss Moore.

I have received your letter while I am en route for the Hebrides — so, obviously, I cannot give myself the pleasure of seeing you. I recall with gratification your very kindly and

¹⁴ The three reprints are *The Divine Adventure* (an essay), *Deirdrê and the Sons of Usna* (a story), and *The House of Usna* (a drama).

¹⁵ The “dedicatory introduction” to “Deirdrê,” which Fiona hoped to send the following Wednesday, is entitled “To Esther Mona,” Edith Rinder’s baby daughter who was born on July 26, 1901.

¹⁶ Unable to identify Miss Moore. Since this letter is written on the stationery of a MacBrayne Royal Mail Steamer and Iona is handwritten following the printed masthead, Sharp may have taken the boat that sails out of Oban on Scotland’s west coast around the large Isle of Mull to Iona. At least he acquired copies of the stationery of that vessel and had Mary copy this Fiona letter on that stationery to convey the impression that she was visiting Iona. The series of correspondence implies that Fiona Macleod had traveled from the Lake District (Bowness on Lake Windermere) north to the Isle of Bute and then on to Iona. Sharp may have been taking this route at the time. If so he was back in London by June 23 when he went down to Box Hill to visit George Meredith.

sympathetic writings on my work, and am now glad cordially to thank the writer in person. I shall be away all summer and autumn, in the north and in Norway possibly, and then go to the south of Europe; so, you see, I shall not be in London this year.

Thanking you for your kind letter.

Believe me | Yours most truly | Fiona Macleod

ALS Private

To Thomas Mosher, June 3, 1903

The Royal Route | David MacBrayne | R.M.S. | Wednesday | 3rd June 1903

Dear Mr. Mosher

Herewith I send you the MS of my dedicatory foreword to *Deirdré*. Please take great care in comparison of the text in proof with this MS. Also, under separate cover, registered, I send the revised ‘copy’ of the text, to be carefully followed. (I have everywhere altered ‘Darthool’ into ‘Deirdré’.)

Except where obviously called for in the text, I have removed the few footnotes to the appendical Notes. [Kindly send me 3. unbound proof-sets of the book (after revision) as soon as ready — i.e., if materially before publication for a ‘birthday’ use.]¹⁷

I am working with these ‘reprints’ just now against difficulties of health and pressing exigencies so excuse a letter so baldly to the purpose.

By next Wednesday’s mail if possible (I shall then probably be with my friends at Windermere again, but not certain — and if I miss Wednesday’s mail then I hope to catch Saturday’s) I expect to send you “The House of Usna” with Introduction.

When you write next, perhaps you could kindly let me know when you can conveniently let me have the £50 agreed upon as health and heavy travelling expenses and restricted work have told seriously against income by the pen.

In great haste for the post

Believe me | Dear Mr. Mosher | Most sincerely yours | Fiona Macleod

ALS NYPL, Berg

¹⁷ Esther Mona Rinder Harvey, to whom the volume is dedicated, would be two years old on June 26, 1903, and Sharp wanted to be able to give her, through her mother Edith Rinder, a set of page proofs of the dedication.

To Thomas Mosher, June 6, 1903

6th June 1903

Dear Mr. Mosher

With this I send to you the text of "The House of Usna." The introduction I must send to you by a later mail — a week hence I expect.

The number of the "National Review" which contained this drama (after its production at the Strand Theater in London, by the Stage Society, in July 1900) is out of circulation, and so I have to send it in a single part, instead of (as I had wished) with the two parts so arranged that the printer would have one side only to follow. However, with careful attention there should be no room for any mistake. You will see that I have everywhere looped the name of the Person speaking, so that it should come *above* the words uttered. This is the only way tolerable to the reader — and in the magazine-form the names were prefixed to the utterances solely for editorial exigencies.

These names should be in Roman, not Italic type.

And please direct the printer to delete all the 'periods' following the names etc.

Certain interlusive words or phrases, and certain chanted words or refrains — as indicated — should be italicized. I am, however, not quite sure about the emphasized Roman of the final chorus-refrain in the "Macha" poem.

As the first page is so "cut-up" I have also written out the explanatory note to the drama which in any case the printers had better follow.

You, of course, know best as to what format to print "The House of Usna" in. For myself, I am sorry if it cannot be in either the same or some such format as "The Silence of Amor" or else "The Hills of Dream" (in which, I understand, the "Divine Adventure" is to be?) — as dramatic literature naturally looks best with a long page and ample spacing. However, it is as you will.

Both "Deirdrê" and "The House of Usna" will now reach you at the same time — so you can judge at once as to lengths, etc.

If it were only a question of a companion volume to "By Sundown Shores" that, doubtless, would be better obtained from one or other part of my new book (new in the sense of regatherings — for the most part) "For The Beauty of an Idea" — which, if too late to publish this summer, as almost certainly it now is, will appear I hope in the autumn.

From two sections in particular two small volumes could be drawn: imaginative narrative, from that called “The Sunset of Old Tales” [the main portion of which is published in the June number of the *Fortnightly Review*, a copy of which I suppose you can easily see in Portland] — and more explicative or critical, as in that called “Carmina Gadelica” (consisting of an essay on ‘The Gael and His Heritage’ reprinted from the “Nineteenth Century”: “The Four Winds of Eirinn” from the “Fortnightly”: ‘The Later Poetic and Dramatic work of Mr. Yeats’: and “A Triad.”)

Ill health, much “broken-upness” in sudden and inevitable as well as in sought change, and other more or less regrettable distractions, have not only thrown me back this year but will prevent my publishing my volume of verse till next Spring I fear — at any rate not this autumn.

Much to my annoyance I find that the temporary improvement in my neuritic or writer’s-cramp affliction has not been maintained, and I am again threatened with an absolute prohibition against any writing whatsoever except a needed signature, and even that to be avoided when feasible!

(At the moment, however, it is not convenient to dictate, and I have not my small typewriter with me)

With all friendly regards

Believe me, dear Mr. Mosher, | Sincerely Yours, | Fiona Macleod

ALS NYPL, Berg

*To William Butler Yeats, June 6, 1903*¹⁸

June 6th, 1903

Letter Address | Miss Macleod | C/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield | Midlothian

Dear Mr. Yeats,

I hear that you want to know from me any hint or clue to a Gaelic ‘Centaur’ from the notes on the subject you were told I had.

In a sense I cannot say that I do know anything of a Gaelic Centaur — for though I have twice at first hand come upon as it were the fragmentary crest or tail of an all but vanished legend, I have no reason to believe the latter to be authentically Gaelic. For example, one day

last summer an old man of the island of Skye told me a story he said was “an old ancient *seal* of the Gael, older than the grey brow of Ben More yonder that the minister’s brother The Professor was for telling us was once no more than a *machar* (i.e. a sandy plain) by the sea or maybe was a ledge below the sea itself, though I misdoubt me where he got that wisdom — too many books, too many books. . . . they get sore confused they who read owre many books.”

Well, to give it as briefly as I can, his story was of a woman named Alb — “because she was white, or because all her long hair was white, tho’ for sure I don’t see the why o’ that for I’ve never heard *alb* put upon any whiteness at all at all” — who came to the West out of the East, and had two sons born there and that near a great river. And she died there. And the heap of the cairn that was afterwards made upon her was like a cairn of mountains so big and high and great was it: and it could be seen from the three oceans and the two seas. But the two sons would have died, had not a grey wolf come to them, and suckled them, (and then certain strange phrases and allusions with which I needn’t trouble you): and when they were grown they were called Alpein and Crumein, “and they made the biggest Dun in the world and a great city and that no other than Dunedin (Edinburgh).” And nations came of them like to the tribe of the saran in the sea or the salmon in the river. And they called the land after their mother.”

Now this sounds Gaelic, but it is only familiar history gone through the sieve of men’s minds in days when there were no books, and since then handed on with Gaelic names and Gaelic colour and the ingenuity or mythopoeic fancy of the Gaelic teller. For it is just the tale of Rome and of Romulus and Remus. Alba or Albyn is the old gaelic (and Gaulish or European-Celtic) name for Scotland, the land of high hills or white (i.e. snow-capped) mountains — preserved in the familiar Alp — and the cairn of great rocky heights in Scotland itself, seen from the three oceans (on the east, on the north, and on the West) and from the two seas (the Moyle or Mull of Cantyre, or Irish Sea, and the Solway Firth dividing Scotland from England). As for the names, they are the two most ancient in gaelic Scotland — for no clan-names go back so far as MacAlpine and MacCrimmon (and the latter, curiously enough, is also in old Gaelic readable as Son of the Wolf . . . the house-name *Crimthann*, the Wolf, too, you will remember, was given to St. Columba in boyhood.)

¹⁸ This letter is written in the Fiona handwriting on the stationery of David MacBrayne’s Royal Mail Steamer.

And so, too, one may find the Tale of Troy with Gaelic names and colour, though it is not Gaelic but only like many other tales sucked along on the ebb from old history. So inevitable is this tendency that I would undertake (if among peasant Gaels unable to speak English) that a story told let me say of Charlemagne or the Cid would be retold among them a year or two thence with a gaelic colour, and say in seven years thence would be “an old ancient seal of the Gael” that had been told “to my mother’s mother by her that was old then and had all the old tales and poems.”

Well, this long preamble is to explain why I do not believe there is any authentic “Centaur” legend.

I have, however, gone into the matter in one of the sections [“The Sunset of Old Tales. . . of which a part appears in the *Fortnightly* of this month] in my forthcoming book of essays and studies in Gaelic literature and legend, which has been delayed for a year past by illness and other causes.

My essay in question is on the sculptured symbols of the Centaur and the Salmon, as found on a few of the most ancient Pagan stories [stones?] in Scotland. The ‘Centaur’ is so rare as to be practically unknown except to a few specialists. I have drawings and all particulars of the only three that exist: and of these one is remarkable — tho’ the concurrent secondary symbolism is difficult to determine. (W. S. has made a tracing — and could show you in London if you are to be there till after mid-June: he is getting there about the 14th.)¹⁹

The puzzling thing is that most of the sculptured symbols of which these are two are practically found only in Gaelic Scotland — which would seem to tell against their being solely derivative from Roman sources. But the whole thing was [has?] to be gone into very carefully. (I have also, I may add, a very curious tracing of an ancient symbol on a stone in the north of Scotland — of a horse-headed salmon, unique I suppose.)

However, W. S. will I am sure show you all the tracings and memda he has made, when you see him in London. (It is likely I may reproduce the remarkable forest-branch bearing Centaur to which I allude above.)

¹⁹ This statement suggests that Sharp, like the imaginary Fiona, was traveling in the west of Scotland and the Lake District from mid-May until mid-June.

It may interest you to hear that Mr. Mosher of Portland, Maine, is to reissue this autumn a revised edition of my version of “The Tale of Deirdrê and the Sons of Usna” (from the “Old Tales Retold” volume) and also of the drama of the close of the Deirdrê-cycle, “The House of Usna.”²⁰ I much wish the latter could be performed by the Irish Literary Theatre.

I have read your new book with deep interest, apart from its charm and beauty.²¹

Sincerely yours | Fiona Macleod

Transcribed from ALS Private. Printed in *LWBY*

To _____, June 22, 1903²²

Monday, June 22 1903

I am so glad I went down to see George Meredith to-day. It was goodbye,²³ I fear, though the end may not be for some time yet: not immediate, for he has recovered from his recent severe illness and painful accident, though still very weak, but able to be up, and to move about a little.

At first I was told he could see no one, but when he heard who the caller was I was bidden enter, he gave me a sweet cordial welcome, but was frail and weak and fallen into the blind alleys that so often await the most strenuous and vivid lives. But, in himself, in his mind, there is no change. I felt it was goodbye, and when I went, I think he felt it so also. When he goes it will be the passing of the last of the great Victorians. I could have (selfishly) wished that he had known a certain secret: but it is better not, and now is in every way as undesirable as

²⁰ *Deirdrê and the Sons of Usna*, 1903 (reprinted from the *Laughter of Peterkin: a retelling of Old Tales from the Celtic Wonderland*, London: Archibald, Constable and Co., 1897, with additional notes and a dedicatory Preface), and *The House of Usna: A Drama*, 1903 (reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, 1900, with a Foreword).

²¹ *Ideas of Good and Evil*, 1903.

²² In reproducing this letter in the *Memoir*, EAS said only it was written to a “friend.”

²³ Mrs. Sharp said of this letter: “Goodbye it was in truth; but it was the older poet who recovered hold on life and outlived the younger by four years” (*Memoir*, 368). Sharp died on December 12, 1905; Meredith on May 18, 1909.

indeed impossible. If there is in truth, as I believe, and as he believes, a life for us after this, he will know that his long-loving and admiring younger comrade has also striven towards the hard way that few can reach. What I *did* tell him before has absolutely passed from his mind: had, indeed, never taken root, and perhaps I had nurtured rather than denied what *had* taken root. If in some ways a little sad, I am glad otherwise. And I had one great reward, for at the end he spoke in a way he might not otherwise have done, and in words I shall never forget. I had risen, and was about to lean forward and take his hands in farewell, to prevent his half-rising, when suddenly he exclaimed “Tell me something of *her* — of Fiona. I call her so always, and think of her so, to myself. Is she well? Is she at work? Is she true to her work and her ideal? No, *that* I know!”

It was then he said the following words, which two minutes later, in the garden, I jotted down in pencil at once lest I should forget even a single word, or a single change in the sequence of the words. “She is a woman of genius. That is rare . . . so rare anywhere, anytime, in women or in men. Some few women ‘have genius,’ but she is more than that. Yes, she is a woman of genius: the genius too, that is rarest, that drives deep thoughts before it. Tell her I think often of her, and of the deep thought in all she has written of late. Tell her I hope great things of her yet. And now . . . we’ll go, since it must be so. Goodbye, my dear fellow, and God bless you.”

Outside, the great green slope of Box Hill rose against a cloudless sky, filled with a flowing south wind. The swifts and swallows were flying high. In the beech courts thrush and blackbird called continually, along, the hedgerows the wild-roses hung. But an infinite sadness was in it all. A prince among men had fallen into the lonely and dark way.

[William Sharp]

Memoir 367-8

To James Carleton Young²⁴, June 23, 1903

Murrayfield, Midlothian | Scotland | 23/June/03

²⁴ An American from Minneapolis, James Carleton Young (1856-1918) was president of the Western Mortgage Company, the James C. Young Land Company, the Imperial Investment Company, and the Central Trackage Company. In his spare time, he devoted himself to acquiring the “world’s best library” which would contain all the important books that had been written. When possible, each book was to be inscribed by the author.

Dear Mr. Carleton Young

You will pardon any seeming discourtesy in delayed response when you learn that your letter was forwarded to me abroad, thence returned to my London address, thence followed me to Scotland, and only a day or two ago found its way to me here in London again.

It will give me pleasure to inscribe the volumes you allude to, as it is already a pleasure to know that one so truly a book-lover cares to include, in what must be not only a most interesting and valuable but also unique collection anything of

Yours very cordially, | William Sharp

P. S. I find I have forgotten to add that, if the same to you, it will be much more convenient for me, if you will postpone dispatch of the vols till say about 21st, or between 20th and 30th September, *for my receipt in London early in October*, at | c/o | R. Farquharson Sharp Esq. | 56 St. Mary's Mansions | Paddington | London W. If for any reason expressly wished earlier, they could be sent in the first week of August (marked "Not to be forwarded"), for my receipt any time after August 15th till 25th, to | c/o Mrs. Glassford Bell | Kinloch-Meigle | Scotland. But, even thus, there is risk of delay & miscarriage.

ALS Pierpont Morgan

To Thomas Mosher, June 23, 1903

C/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield | Midlothian | June 23, 1903

Dear Mr Mosher,

On arriving in Edinburgh today for a flying visit I found your note forwarded from Mrs. Rinder, with the Cheque for £25 for which she signed receipt.²⁵ Many thanks for thus sending in advance half of the sum agreed upon for the three autumn-books.²⁶

When again remitting, please *if feasible* do not have the envelope stamped "Personal Receipt to be obtained" as in this instance. In the first place Mrs. Rinder was away from home the day the postman called and, later, he wanted 'the personal receipt of Miss Fiona Macleod'

²⁵ Sharp seems to have made this flying visit to Edinburgh the day after he visited Meredith since his June 23 letter to Carleton Young written in his own hand and from William Sharp carries the Murrayfield, Midlothian return address.

²⁶ *The Divine Adventure, Deirdr  and the Sons of Usna, and The House of Usna.*

and not of Mrs. Rinder — and delivered only on remonstrance. Does ordinary postal registration in America involve this “personal receipt demanded” stamp?

During August and September Mrs. Rinder will be away from London and house closed — so if posting after or about 20th July please, until end of September (from U. S. A.) post to me as follows,

(1) for my receipt up till end of August | Miss Macleod | Springhill | Kilcreggan | Argyll.
Scotland

(2) Till end of September to | Miss Macleod | C/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield.
Midlothian

In great haste, | Most sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod²⁷

P.S. My long introduction to “The House of Usna” is now being typed, and shall be posted I hope by either the first or second ensuing mail. (I hope you received the Deirdrê material, etc., all right.)

TLS NYPL, Berg

To Richard Garnett, [July 5?, 1903]

Sunday Evg²⁸

My dear Garnett

It is most good of you to give me your book.²⁹ [I have been worrying my library to get it, since I was it announced.] I am always deeply interested in all you write — for two things I know that always will be there, the expression of a fine critical & sympathetic mind, & distinction in that expression. What I have already read of the book interests me greatly: to reread all, and later to reread, will be a pleasure.

²⁷ The main body of this letter was typed, probably by Mary Sharp in Edinburgh. The signature and the postscript are in Mary’s Fiona Macleod hand.

²⁸ The letter was probably written on Sunday July 5.

²⁹ The new and augmented edition of Garnett’s *Twilight of the Gods* was published by Grant Richards in the spring of 1903. See letter to Garnet dated 28 July 1903.

Altho' late, I still hope (& believe) I may be able to say what I think of it, in print. I am glad we are to see you, & Mrs. Garnett I hope, at our literary "At Home" at the Grosvenor Club tomorrow.

Ever cordially yours William Sharp

ALS University of Texas, Austin

To Grant Richards, July 13, 1903

(Temporary) | 9 St. Mary's Terrace | Paddington | W. | 13/July/03

My dear Grant Richards

It was on my mind to speak to you on a matter of 'Shop' the other night, after the speechifying, but the occasion vanished in the rapid dispersal of our company. I am sending to you for your consideration a striking novel by Arthur Tomson. He sent it to me recently for my advice, & asking if I would send it to Macmillan's with a line of introduction (as they are the publishers of Hardy's novels, & as this book is of the Purbeck Hills & Wareham Flats, & chiefly as Hardy much likes Tomson's work & admires this story) — but I do not know any of Macmillan's now, except Mr. Craik who is only a "business" partner. So, on my own responsibility, I am now first sending "Many Waters" to you.

If, as I hope & believe, you will like it, & prefer to negotiate direct with Arthur Tomson his address is Yew Tree House | Wareham | Dorset Otherwise please see that the MS be sent back to *me*.

Kind regards | Yours faithfully | William Sharp

ALS SUNY, Buffalo

To Theodore Watts-Dunton, [July 14?, 1903]

9 St. Mary's Terrace | Paddington | W.

My Dear Watts-Dunton

I was most sorry to miss you yesterday as it is so long since we had a chat.³⁰

³⁰ A close family member must have died after Sharp's letter to Garnett and before he wrote this letter to Watts-Dunton since this letter and Sharp's July 13 letter to Grant Richards are written on black bordered mourning paper. Tuesday, July 14 is a probable date which would mean that he was inviting Watts-Dunton for tea at the Grosvenor Club on the 16th or 18th. The death must have occurred after the Sharps' "literary at-home" on July 6 and the July 13 letter to Richards.

You know how difficult it is to snatch a moment at this season, when there seems a mysterious social conspiracy against every hour of day and night.

But by postponing an engagement of a less exigent kind I find I can manage Thursday afternoon, if that will suit you. Failing Thursday I might be able to meet at my club on Saty about 4, as over: but it is uncertain.³¹

Were it at all feasible I w^d gladly go out to Putney, but that I simply cannot manage in the present pressure, along with arduous pressure of exigent literary work.

So could you manage, do you think, to come and have tea with me on Thursday at the | Grosvenor Club | Dover St. | East corner of Dover St. and Piccadilly) | at, say, 4:30.

The club, removed to new premises, is at present in the hands of the decorators — & there is but one small room available. Still, we can have tea there, & a chat.

Saw Rhys today.³² His wife is very unwell, I fear.

Please let me know soon as you can if this arrangement is feasible for you.

Yours sincerely | William Sharp

Read with interest the recent “Great Thoughts” article. How wide & deep Alwen has reached.³³

ALS University of Leeds, Brotherton Library

To Thomas Mosher, July 15, 1903³⁴

³¹ The last sentence is inserted with an asterisk.

³² Ernest Rhys, a long-time friend of Sharp and Watts-Dunton.

³³ A reminiscence by Watts-Dunton of his first encounter with Gypsies as a young boy was published in *Great Thoughts* in 1903. Sharp’s mention of this “recent” publication dates the letter as 1903, and it must have been written in late June or early July when he was in London and staying temporarily at 9 St. Mary’s Terrace, Paddington. Elizabeth’s brother Robert Farquharson Sharp lived nearby at 56 St. Mary’s Mansions, Paddington. Gypsies figure prominently W-D’s *Alwyn* and his other works of fiction. See James Douglas, *Theodore Watts-Dunton: Poet, Novelist, Critic*, John Lane: 1904, 61 ff.

³⁴ This letter was probably typed by Edith Rinder from Sharp’s dictation. They have put Fiona on a train to Edinburgh from London where she has been on an urgent visit involving an illness. This stratagem was to explain the fact that the letter does not contain the Fiona signature. They did not want to delay the letter by sending it to Edinburgh for Mary to sign. The dedicatory page for the Swan story (“The Tale of the Four White Swans”) is missing from the typed letter which

C/o Mrs. Wingate Rinder | 21 Woronzow Road | London N.W.

Dear Mr. Mosher,

Excuse a hurried dictated line, just as I am returning from London, where I have been on a matter of sudden urgency and illness.

It will be a disappointment to me if you do not use “The House of Usna,” apart from the trouble I took in preparing it for you and the Introduction over which I spent much time and care. It is, I think, the thing I care most for, of mime.³⁵

If however, you are unable to use it this autumn or before Christmas will you kindly do two things at once: first, telegraph “Rinder, 21 Woronzow Road, London.” “Returning Usna”: and, second, repost the copy and prefatory matter to me.

If you wish to use the Swan story, you are certainly welcome to do so. It is, unfortunately, now quite impracticable for me to send you at this late date any other matter from what will be my next volume to be published here.

If you do use the Swan story, it need have no introduction from me, as you say it is already long enough. Instead, will you print a dedicatory page as follows,³⁶

is among the Mosher papers at the New York Public Library (Berg Collection). The person who was ill and then died at this time was probably a London relative of Elizabeth Sharp, perhaps her mother who had been in poor health for some time.

³⁵ Mosher published *The House of Usna: A Drama by Fiona Macleod* in his Miscellaneous Series in 1903. An endnote reads: “Four hundred and fifty copies of this book have been printed on Van Gelder hand-made paper and the type distributed.” Fifty numbered copies were printed on Japanese vellum. “Both the Van Gelder and the Japan vellum copies are bound in green printed Japan vellum wraps over boards. Renaissance border on the cover is signed “CW” for Charlotte Whittingham, designer for the Chiswick Press of London (*Thomas Bird Mosher: Pirate Prince of Publishers*, a comprehensive bibliography of Mosher books by Philip R. Bishop (1998). *The House of Usna* is dedicated to Mona Caird, a well-known advocate of women’s rights, Elizabeth Sharp’s girlhood friend, and a life-long friend and supporter of the Sharps. A long “Foreward” by Fiona Macleod advocates a turn away from the realism of Ibsen to a spiritual drama. Mosher took of great deal of care over the printing of this volume, but it had a very limited distribution, and the play, unlike Fiona Macleod’s other drama, *The Immortal Hour*, passed into oblivion.

³⁶ A break occurs here in the typescript, and the dedication is absent. Fiona Macleod’s “The Tale of the Four White Swans” was first published in her *The Laughter of Peterkin: A Retelling of Old Tales of the Celtic Wonderworld*, a book intended for children which was published by Archibald Constable & Company in a beautiful edition with drawings by Sunderland Rollinson

I suppose of course you will publish “Deirdrê” this autumn as well as “The Divine Adventure”.

You will already have received my preceding note, about addresses etc., and also with particular request as to not sending by registered ‘personal receipt’ post. There was again a good deal of delay as well as trouble involved for Mrs. Rinder (as well as indirectly for myself, for seeing a specially registered letter Mrs. Rinder naturally thought it contained a remittance, and telegraphed to me as to what was to be done with the cheque . . . not noticing till later that there was none enclosed.)

Anything up to 27th or 30th July (if leaving New York by that date, that is) can be sent to her care, now: after that as advised.

I am very glad indeed to learn that you are the better for your holiday. You must now be on your guard against letting the fall put its spell of languor on you.

[Fiona Macleod]

TL NYPL, Berg

To Richard Garnett, July 28, 1903

South Bantaskine | by Falkirk | 28/July/03³⁷

My Dear Garnett,

A word of thanks for so kindly sending this delightful new book — for it is that rather than a new edition.³⁸ I had just given a copy of it to a friend as a birthday present, who writes to me “I am more than delighted with Richard Garnett’s book. It fulfills all you said of it — and I

(London, 1897). Mosher published *The Tale of the Four White Swans* as a separate volume in his Brocade Series in April 1904 and issued new editions in 1907 and 1911.

³⁷ Falkirk is located about half-way between Edinburgh and Glasgow on the northern route. The Sharps were staying with a family there while traveling in late July from London to spend the month of August with his mother and sisters near the western coast in Kilcreggan.

³⁸ The new and augmented edition of Garnett’s *Twilight of the Gods* which was published by Grant Edwards in the spring of 1903. Sharp thanked Garnett for the copy in late June before he had finished reading it and thanked him again here after reading several selections.

find in it, besides, a quality very different from almost any other modern English book I know. But that, however, I remember you did tell me before. And I am sure you are right in what you say of its unique quality of style.”

Tonight, if, as I anticipate, opportunity occurs, I intend to introduce it (probably by reading something) to our present hosts, a delightful family keenly interested in literature. Later, when I have read all the new & reread all the old contents I'll drop you another line on the subject: meanwhile I am delighted with the four new I have read, with recollection of having enjoyed one of them two or three years ago in some magazine or periodical.

Ever cordially yours | William Sharp

P.S. It goes almost without saying that if even at this late date I can (as I hope) write anything about it publicly I will do so.

ALS University of Texas, Austin

To Thomas Mosher, August 3, 1903

Springhill | Kilcreggan, Scotland | August 3, 1903

Dear Mr. Mosher,

Many thanks for so kindly sending the second cheque for Twenty-Five Pounds (£25), so promptly. I received it last night when the yacht on which I am spending this month lay off Kilcreggan for the week-end.

I am glad that you like the “Usna” introduction so well, as I gave much time and thought to it: and glad that you are going to issue it in a suitable format, though I hope that the extra outlay involved will soon or late be recovered.

Let me say at once that in view of this extra outlay, and your having already paid me what I asked for revised reissue of the three volumes, and for the presentation copies which I hope you will send me (say 10 of “*Divine Adventure*”, and 12 of “*Deirdre*”, and 12 of “*Usna*”) . . . in view of this, I propose that you hold over the “Four Swans” (with dedication-Ms. sent to you) and another volume to be selected from my forthcoming volume of essays (or otherwise as may be arranged), for issue in the Brocade series, without further honorarium. (I can send a brief foreword and a few textual amendments for the latter for copyright purposes.)

As to the title of the “Usna” volume, I prefer simply “*THE HOUSE OF USNA*”.

I am sure the correct lection of the Proofs with typed MS. may safely be left to your care, since you kindly undertake to see to the final revision yourself. (Please tell the printer to adhere

scrupulously to my spelling and punctuation: he and the proof reader will need to keep a careful eye on the Greek names, as I have not given these in the pseudo-Latin form commonly adopted but in their correct transliteration.)

From 20th August, and till I write to the contrary, please address letters and all else to me c/o 22 Ormidale Terrace, Murrayfield, (Midlothian).

I should much like if you would kindly let me have a copy of the June 'Bibelot' (I mean that with Yeats's little play³⁹) which, if sent, did not reach me.

I am now feeling better than I have done this past inclement spring and delayed summer, except for the recurrent neuritic trouble in my arm, which may again necessitate the disuse of all penmanship for a time, I fear (the doctor even threatens "from now till next summer"!). You, I hope, are well and happy both in work and leisure. And so, dear Mr. Mosher, believe me, with all kind regards and good wishes,

Yours most sincerely, | Fiona Macleod

P.S. The quotation about myself which I enclose is from a book by someone unknown to me, a Mr. George Eyre-Todd — "Byways of Scottish Literature,"⁴⁰ first published three or four years ago, but only now seen by me in a new cheap edition just issued — I thought you might care to see it.⁴¹

TLS NYPL Berg

*To Bliss Perry, August 4, 1903*⁴²

³⁹ W. B. Yeats's "Land of Heart's Desire" appeared in volume nine of *The Bibelot* (June, 1903, 183-214).

⁴⁰ Probably *Byways of Scottish Story* which appeared first in 1900. George Eyre-Todd (1862-1939) was a prolific writer and editor whose main interests were Scottish history and literature. The quotation about F.M. is not included with the letter in the NYPL collection.

⁴¹ The body of this letter is typed, but the signature and postscript are in the Fiona Macleod hand which means that Sharp's sister Mary, who provided the FM hand, was with or near the Sharps in Kilcreggan. Probably the Sharps were staying with his mother and sisters who rented a house in Argyll for the month of August each year.

⁴² The Editor Sharp addressed this letter was Bliss Perry (1860-1954). Although Sharp knew the previous editors (Scudder and Page), he had not met Perry. Born in Williamstown,

My Dear Sir,

It is now a long time since our last communications, and many things have interfered with the fulfillment of the project in part arranged by Mr. Scudder, and later broached again by Mr. Page.

For the last three winters & springs I have had to leave London for health's sake to go abroad, to the South. It was from Taormina in Sicily this spring that I wrote to you with enclosed — but, as I now find by its return, by some strange mischance, addressed to Australia instead of to U.S.A.

During these last three years I have become familiar not only with the visited regions of Sicily but also the all but unvisited remote and uncivilized interior and the wild Sicilian Highlands — starting generally from the inland Castle of Maniace, the residence of the Duke of Bronte (Nelson's descendent & representative, by the female side).

An editorial friend, for whom I was writing, kindly “set-up” the article for me — in its voyage to and from Australia instead of U.S.A. the back page of it got damaged, & so I have had the final 2 pp. typed.⁴³

I hope it is an article you will care to have for the *Atlantic Monthly*. Certainly every writer now sees hundreds more, year by year, of American & British visitors to Sicily, & though all of these hear much of the interior few penetrate it, or see much even of the relatively more accessible southern Highlands. So far as I know this is the first article on the subject which has appeared, topographical or archeological: nor have I heard of any who has visited remote Polizzi or the Petralias.

Massachusetts and educated at Williams College and abroad, Perry joined the Williams faculty in 1886 and moved to Princeton in 1893 where he taught until 1900. He was named Editor of the *Atlantic* in 1899 and held that position for ten years. He began teaching at Harvard in 1907 and remained on that faculty until 1930. He was a pioneering scholar in the developing field of American Literature.

⁴³ Sharp's “The Sicilian Highlands” appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in April 1904 (XCIII, 471-8). This essay was titled “Nelson's Duchy” when it appeared in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in 1903 and later in Sharp's *Literary Geography* which was published by Pall Mall Publications in November 1904. Sharp was sending the printed version of that article for consideration by the

Believe me, Dear Sir, | Yours faithfully | William Sharp

The Editor | “The Atlantic Monthly” | Boston: Mass.

ALS Harvard, Houghton

To Mr. Henry Mills Alden, August 25th, 1903

. . . in the *Pall Mall Magazine* you may have noticed a series of topographical papers (with as much or more of anecdotal and reminiscent and critical) contributed, under the title of “Literary Geography,” by myself. The first three were commissioned by the editor to see how they “took.” They were so widely liked, and those that followed, that this summer he commissioned me to write a fresh series, one each month till next March. Of these none has been more appreciated than the double article on the Literary Geography of the Lake of Geneva. Forthcoming issues are The English Lake Country, Meredith, Thackeray, The Thames, etc. In the current issue I deal with Stevenson.

. . . About my projected Greek book, to comprise Magna Grecia as well, i.e. Hellenic Calabria and Sicily, etc. . . . I want to make a book out of the material gathered, old and new, and to go freshly all over the ground. . . . I intend to call it *Greek Backgrounds* and to deal with the ancient (recreated) and modern backgrounds of some of the greatest of the Greeks — as they were and are as, for example, of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Empedocles, Theocritus, etc. — and of famous ancient cities, Sybaris, Corinth, etc.; and deal with the home or chief habitat or famous association. For instance:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------------------|
| (1) | Calabria (Crotan and Metapontum) with Pythagoras. | |
| (2) | Eleusis in Greece, | with life and death of Aeschylus. |
| | Syracuse and Gela in Sicily | |
| (3) | Colonos | Sophocles |
| (4) | Athens etc. | with Euripides. |
| (5) | Syracuse and Acragas (Girgente) | with Pindar etc etc. |

[William Sharp]

Memoir 369-70

editor of the Atlantic. It was George Halkett (1855-1918), editor of the *Pall Mall* and Sharp’s long-time friend, who “set up” the article.

W. S.

To Thomas Mosher, September 10, 1903

c/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield | Midlothian | 10: Sep^t: 1903

Dear Mr. Mosher

The copies of “The Divine Adventure” safely reached me, and the little book looks very well in its new raiment: a charming format in all ways. I have noticed no printer’s error save the use of kin with a capital K in the second page of prefatory dedication — in part my own fault, as I find I write words beginning with k with too large a letter.⁴⁴ This, and a slip of ‘logically’ for ‘logical’ in the Note at end. I suppose that, before long, copies of *Deirdrê* will be coming. I am very curious to see *The House of Usna*, and am sure it will be beautiful in its format.

I am afraid that several causes, chiefly broken health and the disintegrating effect of many interruptions this summer, will prevent my bringing out my announced volume this autumn-winter.⁴⁵ There is still a chance, but no more: and, if not, it will not be out till February. I have again to go abroad for the winter and early spring, but am not yet certain where it will be. I want much to join friends in Greece, but if that does not suit for me I may go to south of Spain or to Algiers. But I hope to get to Greece.

No more just now

Believe me, dear Mr. Mosher, | Sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

ALS NYPL, Berg

⁴⁴ This volume in Mosher’s “Old World Series” reprinted the title essay from Fiona’s *The Divine Adventure: Iona: By Sundown Shores: Studies in Spiritual History* which was published in England by Chapman & Hall in 1900. In an April 12 letter to Mosher, Fiona said the essay could appear in his Old World Series: “There is not much to revise, except a little deletion and dovetailing near the end. But I’ll go over it again carefully, and hope to see my way to add somewhat. And I shall write some prefatory matter.” The volume was dedicated “To Millicent,” but I have no idea who she may have been.

⁴⁵ Sharp must have written this letter for Mary to copy when he was recuperating with Elizabeth in Llandrindod Wells. The announced volume was probably “The House of Beauty” an anthology of poems Sharp hoped to publish as Fiona Macleod in the fall of 1903. This volume did not materialize, and “The Hour of Beauty” became a section of posthumous editions of Fiona Macleod’s poetry which were entitled *From the Hills of Dream* and arranged by Elizabeth Sharp in accord with her husband’s wishes.

To Mrs. Gilchrist⁴⁶ September 13, 1903

Dear Mrs. Gilchrist,

It is at all times a great pleasure to hear from you, and that pleasure is enhanced by hearing from you on my birthday and by your kind remembrance of the occasion. . . .

We look forward to Athens greatly, though it is not (as in Elizabeth's case) my first visit to that land of entrancing associations and still ever-present beauty. But as one grows older, one the more recognizes that 'climate' and 'country' belong to the geography of the soul rather than to that secondary physical geography of which we hear so much. The winds of heaven, the dreary blast of wilderness, the airs of hope and peace, the tragic storms and cold inclemencies these are not the property of our North or South or East, but are of the climes self-made or inherited or in some strange way become our 'atmosphere'. And the country we dream of, that we long for, is not yet reached by Cook nor even chartered by Baedeker. You and yours are often in our thought. In true friendship, distance means no more than that the sweet low music is far off: but it is there.

Your friend, | William Sharp

Memoir 372

To Ernest Rhys, Late September, 1903

Llandrindod Wells, | Sept., 1903

My Dear Ernest,

. . . I know that you will be sorry to learn that things have not gone well with me. All this summer I have been feeling vaguely unwell and, latterly, losing strength steadily. . . . However, the rigorous treatment, the potent Saline and Sulphur waters and baths, the not less potent and marvelously pure and regenerative Llandrindod air — and my own exceptional vitality and recuperative powers — have combined to work a wonderful change for the better; which may prove to be more "than a splendid rally," tho' I know I must not be too sanguine. Fortunately, the eventuality does not much trouble me, either way: I have lived, and am content, and it is only for what I don't want to leave undone that the sound of 'Farewell' has anything deeply perturbing.

⁴⁶ The mother of Sharp's friend R. Murray Gilchrist whom the Sharps had visited in Derbyshire.

W.S.

Memoir 368-9

To Edmund Clarence Stedman, September 29, [1903]

The Grosvenor Club | Piccadilly | London W. | 29th Sept for 8th Oct.

My ever dear Poet and Friend,

I hope this will reach you either (as I calculate it shd.) on your birthday morning or on the eve of that important event. And in any case, whenever it reach you, it will carry to you the affectionate & loyal greetings of one who ever bears you in loving remembrance & holds you in rare esteem. I had hoped the Fates would have haled me once more across the dividing seas ere this, or that you would have carried your youthful heart to this old land. But we can meet often in print, & in dear memories.

We may or may not meet again — I dare not now be over-sanguine: for a subtle malady has claimed me for a comrade. His name is Diabetes, but he's no enemy, & refrains as much as he can, & even promises to disappear for a time, & be content with psychical Marconigrams. At any rate, tho' a month ago a specialist thought I'd got well into Chapter Last, I have surprised him & all my friends (& even myself) by an apparent complete recovery. I know of course it is only a splendid rally — but then it is a rally that may last years. Any way, it's all in the order of the day, and 'I take it smiling,' as the lady said when she saw she 'couldn't help it,' when the amorous Brigand wooed her.

And I've work to do, & shall live to do it I believe. But to you, dear E. C. S., long long years, & green bays, & the love of men & women among whom none is more leal than your friend

William Sharp

All affectionate remembrances to your dear wife — & to other friends. (The Janviers are now here I'm glad to say. In 3 weeks or so my wife & I leave for Athens & Greece for the winter & spring.

ALS Private

To Catherine Ann Janvier, September 30, 1903

London, | Sept. 30, 1903.

. . . Thanks for your loving note. But you are not to worry yourself about me. I'm all right, and as cheerful as a lark — let us say as a lark with a rheumatic wheeze in its little song-box, or gout in its little off-claw. . . . Anyway, I'll laugh and be glad and take life as I find it, till the end. The best prayer for me is that I may live vividly till "Finis," and work up to the last hour. . . .

My love to you both, and know me ever your irrepressible,

Billy

Memoir 369

To Edmund Clarence Stedman, October 2, 1903

The Grosvenor Club, | Oct. 2, 1903.

My Dear E. C. S.,

Two days ago, on Wednesday's mail, I posted a letter to reach you, I hope, on the morning of your birthday — and today, to my very real joy, I safely received your long and delightful letter. It has been a true medicine — for, as I told you, I've been gravely ill. And it came just at the right moment, and warmed my heart with its true affection.

. . . I know you'll be truly glad to hear that the tidings about myself can be more and more modified by good news from my physician, a man in whom I have the utmost confidence and who knows every weakness as well as every resource and reserve of strength in me, and understands my temperament and nature as few doctors do understand complex personalities.

He said to me today "You look as if you were well contented with the world." I answered "Yes, of course I am. In the first place I'm every day feeling stronger, and in the next, and for this particular day, I've just had a letter of eight written pages from a friend whom I have ever dearly loved and whom I admire not less than I love." He knew you as a poet as well as the subtlest and finest interpreter of modern poetry — and indeed (tho' I had forgotten) I had given him a favourite volume and also lent your Baltimore addresses.

When I'm once more in the land of Theocritus (and oh how entrancing it is) I'll be quite strong and well again, he says. Indeed I'm already 'a live miracle'! We sail by the Orient liner "Orizaba" on the 23rd; reach Naples (via Gibraltar and Marseilles) 9 to 10 days later; and leave by the local mail-boat same evening for Messina — arrive there about 8 on Monday morning — catch the Syracuse mail about 10, change at 12 at Giarre, and ascend Mt. Etna by the little circular line to Maletto about 3,000 ft. high, and thence drive to the wonderful old Castle of Maniace to stay with our dear friend there, the Duke of Bronte — our third or fourth visit now.

We'll be there about a fortnight: then a week with friends at lovely and unique Taormina: and then sail once more, either from Messina or Naples direct to the Piraeus, for Athens, where we hope to spend the winter and spring.

How I wish you were to companion us. In Sicily, I often thought of you, far off Brother of Theocritus. You would so delight in it all, the Present that mirrors the magical Past; the Past that penetrates like stars the purple veils of the Present.

Yes, I know well how sincere is all you say as to the loving friend awaiting me — awaiting *us* — if ever we cross the Atlantic: but it is gladsome to hear it all the same.

All affectionate greetings to dear Mrs. Stedman, a true and dear friend,

Ever, dear Stedman, | Your loving friend, | William Sharp

Memoir 370-2

To Grant Richards, October 6, 1903

Letter address | Miss Macleod | C/o. 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield | Midlothian |
6th Octr. 1893.

My dear Sir

I have just written to my typist and secretary at Murrayfield with this letter to copy, which she will then at once forward to you.

I had no wish *myself* to relinquish “The Hour of Beauty” anthology: on the contrary.⁴⁷ But owing to the long delays, my uncertain health, and the difficulties involved in the slow and gradual achievement of the book along the lines thought out, made me think it fairer to you to suggest relinquishment of undertaking for whose fulfillment you have already been patient in disappointment. I shall, therefore, make a point of taking the work up again as soon as I am able to resume fresh literary work (a rest of some months at least I *must* have, save for some proof-correcting). Anything more definite than this I must not allow myself to consider just now. But, I can honestly hope that, at latest, I may be able to take up the anthology from where it now stands, at latest in May or June next (and earlier if practicable) and with intent to finish it as soon thereafter as at all possible. In this way, I do sincerely hope, both for your sake and my own, that I shall be able to place it in your hands for Autumn publication. My plans are very uncertain.

⁴⁷ See the note to the Fiona letter to Mosher dated September 10, 1903.

My doctors want me to take a voyage (India or Japan or Australia) but there are almost insuperable difficulties in the way.

My Kinsman Mr. William Sharp and his wife are going to Greece for the winter, and it is a great temptation to me to join them there later: but if that falls through, as climatic and other reasons may determine, then I may go to either Algiers or Madeira, preferably the former.

I trust this letter will, in the circumstances, be quite satisfactory to you (which, by the way, I ought not to be writing, as I'm told either to dictate or to use a typewriter for some months yet!)

Believe me | Yours very truly, | Fiona Macleod

ALS Private

To James Carleton Young, October 23, 1903

(Orient SS. Orizaba) | 23rd Oct

Dear Mr. Carleton Young

Just a line as leaving for Greece (first for 2 or 3 weeks in Sicily with friends, en route) to thank you most cordially for your very kind letter & friendly letter of introduction to your Athenian friend.

In greatest haste | Most sincerely yours | William Sharp

I shall write to you from Athens & thank you again for your most friendly courtesy & to "report."

ALS Private

To Catherine Ann Janvier, October 31, 1903

R.M.S. Orizaba | Oct. 31, 1903

It seems strange to write to you on the Festival of Samhain — the Celtic Summer-end, our Scottish Hallowe'en — here on these stormy waters between Sardinia and Italy. It is so strong a gale, and the air is so inclement and damp that it is a little difficult to realise we are approaching the shores of Italy. But wild as the night is I want to send you a line on it, on this end of the old year, this night of powers and thoughts and spiritual dominion.

It was a disappointment not to get ashore at Marseilles — but the fierce gale (a wild mistral) made it impossible. Indeed the steamer couldn't approach: we lay-to for 3 or 4 hours behind a great headland some 4 or 5 miles to S.W. of the city, and passengers and mails had to

be driven along the shore and embarked from a small quarry pier. . . . We had a very stormy and disagreeable passage all the way from Plymouth and through the Bay. . . . The first part of the voyage I was very unwell, partly from an annoying heart attack. You may be sure I am better again, or I could not have withstood the wild gale which met us far south in the Gulf of Lyons and became almost a hurricane near Marseilles. But I gloried in the superb magnificence of the lashed and tossed sport of the mistral, as we went before it like an arrow before a gigantic bow.

It is now near sunset and I am writing under the shelter of a windsail on the upper deck, blowing ‘great guns’ though I don’t think we are in for more than a passing gale. But for every reason I shall be glad to get ashore, not that I want to be in Naples, which I like least of any place in Italy, but to get on to Maniace . . . where I so much love to be, and where I can work and dream so well. . . .

[William Sharp]

Memoir 372-3

To Thomas Mosher, November 6, 1903⁴⁸

(Gibraltar) | 6th November, 1903

My dear Mr. Mosher

Just a brief note (for, as you know, I am not supposed to be using my hand in penmanship at present, for that annoying neuritic trouble has again made enforced rest from writing inevitable) to thank you cordially for the copies of ‘Usna’ safely delivered at Murrayfield. A copy has just reached me here *en passant*. It is a beautiful little book in format, and I think the red-ink lettering of the verses very effective. So far as I’ve seen, there are no misprints — and I thank you for all your careful supervision over what must have been a very difficult ‘copy’ to set up correctly, with so many Greek names in Greek spelling and unfamiliar Gaelic names and words. What a delight *all* your publications afford: and naturally I am deeply pleased with this beautiful version of ‘Usna’.

⁴⁸ Supposedly written while Fiona was supposedly in Algeciras, on the Spanish gulf, opposite Gibraltar, this letter is in the Fiona handwriting. Sharp must have received the copy of *The House of Usna*, forwarded from Edinburgh, when he reached Hood’s Castle Maniace in the first week of November. He then drafted this letter and sent it for Mary to copy and mail to Mosher from Edinburgh.

My plans are still uncertain. I shall probably remain near here (at Algeciras, on the Spanish gulf, opposite Gibraltar) for a week or so: then perhaps we sail to Algiers: then, possibly, may for a month or so join Mr. and Mrs. William Sharp, now in Athens. But health, weather, and other considerations must take precedence over inclination, so I cannot say yet. I'll write to you privately on this etc. later. Will you make me a present I should much like to have? . . . viz.: your edn of Pompilia, with A. Symons' introduction. I take you at your generous word, you see!

Ever most sincerely yours | Fiona Macleod

ALS NYPL, Berg

To Mrs. J. H. Philpot, November 11, 1903

11 November, 1903

. . . At this season of the year, beautiful and unique in its appeal and singular wild fascination as it is, this place does not suit me climactically, being for one thing too high between 2,000 and 3,000 ft. and also too much under the domination of Etna, who swings vast electric current, and tosses thunder charged cloud-masses to and fro like a Titan acolyte swinging mighty censers at the feet of the Sun.⁴⁹ We drive to Taormina on Tuesday and the divine beauty and not less divinely balmy and regenerative climate — sitting as she does like the beautiful goddess Falcone worshipped there of old, perched on her orange and olive-clad plateau, hundreds of feet above the peacock-hued Ionian Sea, with one hand as it were reaching back to Italy (Calabria ever like opal or amethyst to the North-east), with the other embracing all the lands of Etna to Syracuse and the Hyblaeon Mount, the lands of Empedocles and Theocritus, of Aeschylus and Pindar, of Stesichorus and Simonides, and so many other great names — and with her face ever turned across the Ionian Sea to that ancient Motherland of Hellas, where once your soul and mine surely sojourned.

We shall have a delightful “going” and one you would enjoy to the full. . . . Tomorrow if fine and radiant we start for that absolutely unsurpassable expedition to the great orange gardens a thousand feet lower at the S. W. end of the Duchy. We first drive some eight miles or so

⁴⁹ Sharp wrote this letter while staying at Alexander Nelson Hood's Castle Maniace on the northern slopes of Mt. Etna before going down to Taormina for a few days and then on to Greece.

through wild mountain land till we come to the gorges of the Simeto and there we mount our horses and mules and with ample escort before and behind ride in single file for about an hour and a half. Suddenly we come upon one of the greatest orange groves in Europe — 26,000 trees in full fruit, an estimated crop of 3,000,000! stretching between the rushing Simeto and great cliffs.⁵⁰ Then once more to the saddle and back a different way to barbaric Bronte and thence a ten mile drive back along the ancient Greek highway from Naxos to sacred Enna. And so, for the moment, à revedèr!a!

[William Sharp]

Memoir 374-5

To Thomas Mosher, December 6, [1903]

6th December.

Dear Mr. Mosher

I have just received (I write from the Ionian isles, off Greece) a copy of a short article that appeared in *Country Life* — (socially & otherwise) influential weekly periodical to which I occasionally contribute, and where by a special arrangement [including some such special indication of the source whence they come, as is afforded by the article now enclosed] the editor agreed to print, *after* your publication in U.S.A., my Dedicatory “Deirdrè” paper and the Dramatic prelude to “The House of Usna.” So, as you are not likely to see it, I send this copy to you. [If I cannot find it — it has mysteriously disappeared — I shall send this to Edinburgh or London to be posted and to await a copy to be got and enclosed.]⁵¹

I hope to send to you later that which you asked me for — if not quite what you asked, at any rate the best I can do, in the circumstances of which I wrote.

⁵⁰ Sharp assumed Mrs. Philpot as the author of *The Sacred Tree or the Tree in Religion and Myth* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1897) would be especially appreciative of this description of trees.

⁵¹ The sentence in brackets was written in the left margin of the letter to imply it was an afterthought. It was not; its purpose was to explain to Mosher why the letter was being mailed from Edinburgh, where Sharp’s sister Mary transposed a draft into the Fiona Macleod handwriting, rather than from Greece.

All my literary undertakings and hopes have been sadly interfered with this year, and particularly this past autumn. I am hopeful, however, that with the New Year may come not only more assured health but also better conditions for the sole life and the sole aims to which I wish to give all my thought and all my energies.

I hope you are in fortunate health, and happy in your work, and that all things go well with you.

Most sincerely yours and with all most earnest good wishes for Christmastide,

Fiona Macleod

P.S. As a Christmas-card I am sending you a Christmastide number of "*Country Life*" with a long poem of mine called "The Cross of the Dumb", and a shorter poem.

ALS NYPL, Berg

To Mrs. J. H. Philpot, [late December, 1903]⁵²

Maison Merlin, | Athens

Dear Friend,

This is mainly to tell you that I've come out of my severe feverish attack with erect (if dragged) colours and hope to march "cock-a-hoopishly" into 1904 and even further if the smiling enigmatical gods permit! . . . Today I heard a sound as of Pan piping, among the glens on Hymettos, whereon my eyes rest so often and often so long dream. Tomorrow I'll take Gilbert Murray's fine new version of Hippolytus or Bacchae as my pocket companion to the Theatre of Dionysus on the hither side of the Acropolis; possibly my favourite Oedipus at Kolonos and read sitting on Kolonos itself and imagine I hear on the wind the rise and fall of the lonely ancient lives, serene thought-tranced in deathless music. And in the going of the old and the coming of the new year, a friend's thoughts shall fare to you from far away Athens. . . . As far as practicable I am keeping myself to the closer study of the literature and philosophy and ethical concepts and ideals of ancient Hellas and of mythology in relation thereto, but you know how fascinating and perturbing much else is, from sculpture to vase paintings, from Doric and Ionic architecture to the beauty and complex interest of the almost inexhaustible field of ancient

⁵² EAS said this letter was written "at the New Year."

Greek coins, and those of Graecia Magna, — And then (both Eheu and Evoe!) I have so much else to do — besides “Life” the supreme and most exciting of the arts!

[William Sharp]

Memoir 375-6

To Richard Garnett, December 29, 1903

Maison Merlin | Athens | 29th/Dec/03

Σπιτα Μερλιν | Οδος Σεκερη | Αθηραι⁵³

My dear Garnett

May this bring you all cordial New Year Greetings and good wishes for 1904 for you and yours tho' it reach you just after the New Year has become a *fait accompli*.

We are very comfortably settled here in a pleasant large house — a kind of Hotel Garni, on an agreeable ‘suspension’ plan: on the S.E. slope of Lycabellus, and about 5 minutes walk down the . . . to the beautiful columns of the Temple of Olympian Zeus, and to the banks of the Ilissos (alas, usually as void of original matter as an Essay by Sir John Lubbock or a poem by Sir Lewis Morris⁵⁴). We hope to see something of the rest of Attica, of the nearer Isles, and of the Peloponnesus, in the Spring. Meanwhile Athens & its vicinage suffices. On fine days Kolonus

⁵³ “Maison Merlin | Seker Road | Athens.”

⁵⁴ Sir John Lubbock (1834-1913) was a banker, statesman, and naturalist. As a member of Parliament from 1870, he introduced many reform bills, especially in banking, including legislation establishing bank holidays. His scientific contributions were in entomology and anthropology and include his *Prehistoric Times* (1865), long used as a textbook in several languages; popular works include *Ants, Bees, and Wasps* (1882) and *The Pleasures of Life* (two volumes, 1887-9). He was created Baron Avebury in 1900.

Sir Lewis Morris (1833–1907) was a popular poet of the Anglo-Welsh school who was born in Carmarthen in southwest Wales. He studied classics at Oxford, graduating in 1856, where he was the first student in thirty years to obtain first-class honors in both his preliminary and final examinations. He became a lawyer and published multiple volumes of popular verse. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1895 and narrowly missed being appointed Poet Laureate, possibly because of his association with Oscar Wilde. One of his most famous poems is "Love's Suicide".

Sharp had a low opinion of the writings of both men.

is but a short walk, and Hymettos is close at hand, with its many deep-cloven valleys: or the high woodlands of Tafoi: or the vale of Daphnî & the Sacred Way: or the Bay of Salamis or the Shore with its lovely perspectives along by old Phaleron. We see much of Mr. & Mrs. Bosanquet at the British School — charming people. Among several Greek friends (one of whom, named Embiricos, claims unbroken descent from a friend & a pupil of Plato!) there is one whose name you will know, Demetrios Bikélas, in all ways a most interesting man. I wish I cd. do nothing but “idle” yet . . . as . . . *λλ_ γ_ρ_ νάπαυσις_ ν παντ_ γλυκε_ α etc down to κα_ μέλι etc and_ νθ Αφροδίτεια*, Pindar saith!⁵⁵

My wife joins with me in cordial messages, and I am ever, dear Poet, sincerely yours

William Sharp

ACS University of Texas, Austin

⁵⁵ Excerpted from lines 53-4 of Pindar’s 7th *Nemean Ode* which can be translated as “There is a sweet pause in every deed; even honey and the pleasant blossoms of Aphrodite have satiety.”