

SECTION XXV

1905: LIFE

In mid-January the Sharps left the Italian Riviera for Rome where they rented rooms in the Fisher's Park Hotel and intended to stay through March. Sharp described their location in a letter to William Dean Howells whom they had visited earlier in the month in San Remo:

We are settled here (instead of in rooms, or an apartment with a servant — which we found not to be had in accordance with our desires & needs & means) in a pleasant little suite of 3 or 4 rooms at the top of a sunny & charming new small hotel in the sunniest & healthiest part of Rome. Our rooms all face S.E. & S.W. — and so we have unbroken sunshine from sunrise till sunset: & from our windows & balconies of our Salotto we have superb views over Rome and to the hills & to the Campagna.

Despite the rooms and the views, the Sharps found Rome less compatible than expected. There were two problems: the climate was “treacherous,” and the many people they knew there, “Italian, English, Russian, American, & French — Society & Bohemia,” were in a perpetual league against work. Shortly after they arrived Elizabeth contacted the flu which soon spread to her husband with dire consequences for his diabetes. According to her, the main problem in Rome was her husband's health, not social obligations. As she recalled: “There we saw a few friends — in particular Mr. Hichens who was also wintering there; but my husband did not feel strong enough for any social effort.” By the time he wrote to Howells, they had decided to leave Rome at the end of February.

In a February 5 letter Sharp said he was “under exhausting pressure of accumulated work & correspondence.” It was impossible to do the writing he had promised various editors, and they needed the income. At the end of February they would go to the “The English Riviera,”

to Ventnor in the South of the Isle of Wight — where, indeed, we think of some day making a home. I am tired of so many years of continuous wandering, & I'm sure Mrs. Sharp is eager for a home, tho' she loves being in Italy also. For work's sake, too, (& I don't mean the financial side of the question) it is in all ways better for me to be more in touch with my own country.

For nearly six years, the Sharps had been without a permanent residence; their furniture had been in storage since 1899. That he was thinking about ceasing his constant travel and establishing a permanent home in Ventnor signaled his waning energy, but also his expectation of a longer life. Given its climate and his illness, the Isle of Wight seems an unlikely place to settle permanently, but Elizabeth was worried about his physical and mental condition and willing to accept any arrangements that appealed to him.

In a February 21 letter to Thomas Mosher, whom he met for the first time in Boston in December, Sharp said he and Elizabeth planned to leave Rome at the end of February, go first to Paris and then early in March to the Isle of Wight. In mid-April he would go to the West of Scotland for at least three weeks and then rejoin his wife in London for the summer. Before leaving Rome Sharp finished a two-part travel guide for Americans visiting Sicily and sent it to Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the *American Century Illustrated Magazine*. Gilder and his associate editor Richard Underwood Johnson accepted Sharp's proposal for this article when they met in New York in December. It was published posthumously in three parts in the March, April, and May 1906 issues of the *Century*. In a letter transmitting the article, Sharp asked for quick payment since he would need the money when he reached Ventnor. The Sicilian articles were preceded in the February 1906 issue of the *Century* by Sharp's "Portraits of Keats: With Special Reference to those by Severn," the article he wrote in London during the summer of 1905. These four articles helped allay Elizabeth's money worries which were considerable after he husband's death.

The Sharps left Rome on February 23 or 24 and spent March in Ventnor where Sharp worked on several articles that appeared in *Country Life* under his own name and several Fiona Macleod essays and stories for publication in the United States by Mosher. After leaving Ventnor and a brief stay in London he went on to Edinburgh to visit his mother. From there Sharp and his sister Mary went west to the small island of Lismore in Loch Linnhe just north of Oban in the west of Scotland where they spent about a week with an elderly Gaelic-speaking couple Sharp had known for years. On April 19, the day after they arrived on Lismore, he described to Elizabeth his pleasure in being there again and in hearing the stories of strange

apparitions his host told by the fire at night. But the weather was a drawback:

The cold is very great, & as it is damp cold you'd feel it hard. Even with a warm blanket below me, & six above I was cold — & when I got up and had a partial bath (for I scooted out of it to dress) my breath swarmed about the room like a clutch of phantom peewits. No wonder I had a dream I was a seal with my feet clammed on to an iceberg. You couldn't stand it. Even Mary said it was like mid-winter. A duck went past a little ago seemingly with one feather & that blown athwart its beak, so strong was the north wind blowing from the snowy mass of Ben Nevis.



Lismore from Port Appin
The MacCaskill cottage in the distance.



The MacCaskill Cottage Today

Despite the weather that required a large fire burning all day, he was able to put the finishing touches on a revision of his “Iona” essay and send it to Mosher with a letter Mary copied into the Fiona handwriting. Sharp was unsure about a title for the volume in which it would appear, but settled on *The Isle of Dreams* which Mosher published in his Old World Series before the close

of the year.

When they met in Boston Sharp, acting on behalf of Fiona, obtained Mosher's agreement to publish a book of previously unpublished Fiona Macleod poems. In the Lismore letter, Fiona told Mosher the volume would not be ready until late May as she had to go to Wales "to be near one dear to me" and who was seriously ill. Sharp did not want Mosher to believe Fiona herself was ill, as that would threaten the flow of money. The one dear to her was, of course, Sharp, and it was he who had taken the cure for diabetes at Llandrindod, Wales in September 1903. That he was proposing the *Runes of Women* as the title of the volume of new poems suggests it would contain at least some of the Runes, perhaps altered, that were in Fiona's first book of poems, *From the Hills of Dream*, which was published by Patrick Geddes and Colleagues in Edinburgh in 1896 and which Mosher, through arrangements with the Geddes firm, published in America in 1901 with new editions in 1904, 1907, 1910, and 1917. The volume of new poems discussed in his letter to Mosher never materialized. Mosher did publish another collection of Fiona Macleod poems called *The Hour of Beauty: Songs and Poems* in 1907, a volume that contained, according to Elizabeth, Fiona poems written between 1901 and 1905.

Sharp told Elizabeth in an April 20 letter that Fiona had been made an honorary member of a French league of writers and on the twenty-third he wrote that he had given up the idea of going to Mull and crossing to the tiny island of Iona, the subject of the Fiona essay he was sending to Mosher. The cold weather and Iona's isolation were factors, and he had heard his presence there would be noticed since its inhabitants were on the lookout for F. M. and W.S. Anything he wrote about the visit as Fiona would be tied to his recent visit, and it was essential to preserve the fiction of Fiona's separate identity. After a week on Lismore, Sharp and Mary crossed to the mainland on April 24, spent the night in Oban, and took the train back to Glasgow and on to Edinburgh. He was sorry to leave Lismore, Sharp wrote to Elizabeth, as it might be his last time in the Gaelic west. His friend and host was equally sad as he sensed correctly it would be their last meeting. After dropping them off on the mainland, MacCaskill "suddenly said 'My blessing on you — and goodbye now!' and turned away and went down the pier-side and hoisted the brown sail and went away across the water, waving a last farewell."

During the train ride between Oban and Glasgow, Sharp penciled a note to Elizabeth that humorously echoed MacCaskill's speech: "Tarling | It will be very difficult to write in this unusually shaky train, which to use a slight hyperbole will almost be hitting the horizon on each side in its ferry pad swayings." He went on to marvel at the isolation of the MacCaskills's life. Mrs. M had not made the brief trip across the water to Appin for six years.

From year end to year end, life is the same, save for the slow change of the seasons, & the slower invisible movements of the tides of life. It is restful for a time, but would be crushing after a spell, & mean stagnation for any not accustomed to daily manual toil or without local engrossing work. They on the other hand look with mingled awe & amusement at the to them inexplicable longing to get away from such conditions, & for the already strong desire to leave this gloomy & dull climate for abroad, where life is (for us) so far far easier as well as happier now. But even when I told MacC. that it was a matter of prolonged life & energy & 'youth' for me, & that I invariably recede on an ebbing tide over here, & go high on a strong flowing tide over yonder, he'd only shake his head & say *Ishe miann na lach an loch air nach bi I* [i.e., in effect, the duck's desire is to be on some other loch than that on which she happens to find herself!]

But he was glad to have stayed with the MacCaskills on Lismore again. He heard and learned a good deal, but nothing about his current interest in Gaelic astronomy. As it turned out the man opposite him on the train was the Astronomer of the Edinburgh Observatory, Ralph Copeland. He was surprised by what Sharp did know: "When I told him about certain groups & constellations & said I had lists of many Gaelic star-names, gathered at long intervals, & through a hundred sources, he hinted he would like to know who I was, for, as he said, he hardly ever met anyone away from astronomical sets interested in these things." The two men lunched together and enjoyed each other's company. As it turned out, both would be dead by year's end: Copeland in October and Sharp in December.

When Sharp returned to London at the end of April, his health was in decline. Elizabeth attributed it to the cold weather on Lismore and said he was ordered to Bad Neuenahr in Germany for treatment of his diabetes. That order was not carried out until early June. Sharp felt compelled to spend May in London writing an article on Joseph Severn's portraits of John

Keats. He had proposed the article to the editors of the *Century* when they met in New York the previous December, and he needed the money. He sent the article to New York on May 27 along with copies of Joseph Severn's portrait of Keats and a rendition of that portrait by William Hilton which, according to Sharp, many thought the better [Both portraits are in the National Portrait Gallery.]



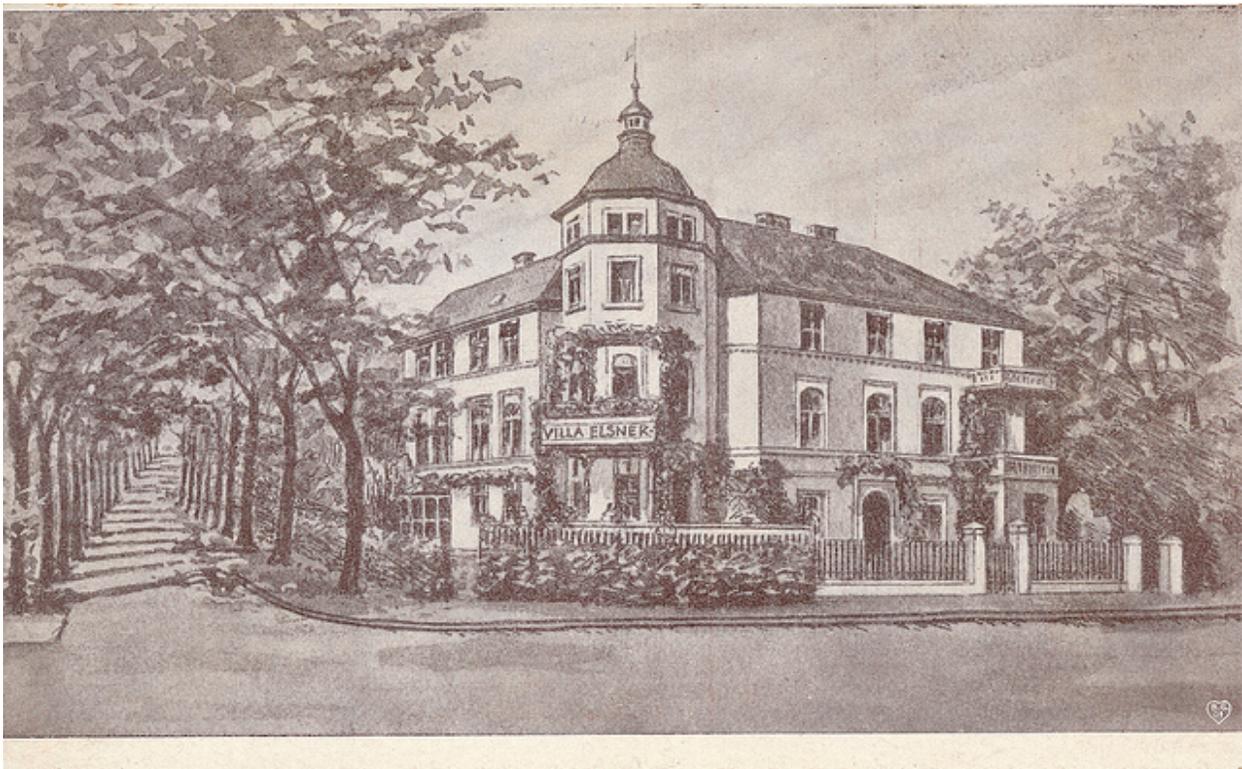
John Keats by Joseph Severn (1819)



John Keats by William Hilton (c1822)

Sharp left London on June 10 or 11 to spend four weeks of cure at the Villa Elsner in Bad Neuenahr. The warmth and beauty of the Villa and its gardens and the strict diet produced a dramatic improvement in his emotional and physical health. While there and on his way home he wrote a series of letters to his wife which she exempted from the mass of Sharp's papers she destroyed before her death in 1932. In preserving these letters [now in the National Library of Scotland] and printing portions in her *Memoir*, Elizabeth emphasized the happy times of her husband's last year and demonstrated his continuing love and affection for her as a counterbalance to knowledge of his relationships with others that would emerge in coming years. In one of these letters Sharp recorded a conversation with birds and flowers for Elisabeth to read to the young daughter of friends. Following the playful fantasy, he wrote: "Don't think I don't realize how ill I have been and in a small way still am: but I don't think about it, and am quite glad and happy in this lovely June-glory." A doctor had asked "Don't you know how serious your condition may become at any moment, if you got a bad chill or setback, or don't soon get

better?” Sharp responded “Certainly, but what then? Why would I bother about either living or dying? I shall not die before the hour of my unloosening comes!” His improvement, he wrote to his friend Alexander Nelson Hood, was only “a *reprieve*, not a lifetime-discharge.” He knew his diabetes and weak heart could end his life at any moment; early death was inevitable. But he took what cures he could, and he was determined to enjoy the world and his life until the end. The letters to Elizabeth also show he had not ceased planning their future as though he had a long life ahead.



The Villa Elsner, Bad Neuenahr, Germany
(Now the Villa Sibilla, a luxurious retirement home)

The positive effects of the Villa Elsner cure were dimmed in his final week by the excruciating pain of passing of a kidney stone. He did not want Elisabeth to know about the incident, but someone at the Villa sent her a telegram. The stone passed shortly before he left Neuenahr on Saturday, July eighth. That day he traveled by train to Doorn in Holland where he

stopped to visit the Grandmonts, a couple the Sharps had come to know in Sicily. The next morning he told Elizabeth he had “a beautiful & restful afternoon and evening in this most charming and simpatica home of dear and good friends — and a long sleep from about 9:30 p.m. till about 8 this morning, I feel perfectly well again.” He regretted she had known about the kidney stone before it was a thing of the past. It troubled him to think of the distress of her dear tender heart. He hoped his telegrams from Neuenahr and yesterday afternoon from Doorn had reassured her. After a good breakfast, he was feeling fine.

Today there is not a trace of any kind of trouble. As I told you [in the telegrams] the stone penetrated no intestinal or other complications -- & I am now of course ever so much better for having got rid of it & all the allied uric acid poison. Last night there was naturally the diabetic symptom of continuous thirst — but that was natural after the longish journey in great heat & in the vibration of a train. Today, despite that I woke to 75 degrees in my room (with both front and side French-windows wide open all night, and a large shadowy spacious room outlooking on sunlit green forest-glades a stone’s throw away) I have had no thirst, no symptoms of any kind. The heat is very great, but to me most welcome and regenerative and strengthening.

Having survived another episode of the illness that would result in his death at year’s end, Sharp pivoted quickly to a description of the beauty of his surroundings and how well he was being treated by his hosts.

An established Dutch family, the Grandmont’s home, Witte Huis, was a large white structure in a park-like setting. His hostess was a well-known painter with a very long name: (Abrahamina Arnolda Louise) 'Bramine' Hubrecht (Donders) (Grandmont) (1855-1913). In 1888 Bramine Hubrecht, as she was known, had married Professor Franciscus Donders (1818-1889) an ophthalmologist, a professor of physiology at the University of Utrecht, and a highly-regarded authority on eye diseases. He died within the year, but not before she had painted his portrait. In 1902 Bramine Hubrecht Donders married Dr. Alphons Marie Antoine Joseph Grandmont (1837-1909) who was sixty-five (she was forty-seven). He died seven years later, but not before Bramine painted him reading to two young women.



Professor Franciscus Donders
by
Bramine Hubrecht Donders (1888)



Dr. Alphons Marie Antoine Joseph Grandmont
by
Bramine Hubrecht Grandmont (1909)

Cicco, a servant boy who brought Sharp his breakfasts, was hired by the Grandmonts in Taormina where they were among the wealthy northern Europeans who made the town and its surroundings their winter home. Bramine's paintings of her two husbands demonstrate her considerable skill as an artist. Writing to Elizabeth in the morning of July third, Sharp praised his hosts: "How good & dear the Grandmonts are. She is so thoughtful & tender, too; & so good when I was tired after my journey and yesterday in bringing cushions when I was lying in a chair outside — and seeing to everything about food, often at no little trouble here." In addition to executing over a hundred well-regarded paintings, Bramine seems to have had a special regard for elderly, infirm men. Sharp planned to stay until the following Saturday, but in a Monday letter to Elizabeth — addressed to "Linky Blue Dear, | How you'd love to be here!" — he said he would be leaving Wednesday since the Grandmonts had to go to Utrecht. After four days with the Grandmonts, Sharp took a train north to Hook on the twelfth and from there on the thirteenth a ferry to England.

Upon his return to London Sharp found a letter from Richard Underwood Johnson requesting revisions in in the Severn article and asking if Sharp could obtain photographs of another Severn portrait of Keats mentioned in the article. Coincidentally, Sharp also had a letter from Nigel Severn — son of Walter Severn and grandson of Keats’ friend Joseph Severn— asking him to examine and authenticate a death mask — presumably of Joseph Severn. On Sunday, July 16 Sharp said he could call on Tuesday and asked Severn if he had any other Keats-Severn portraits. As it turned out, Severn had two other portraits of Keats by his grandfather — one a miniature that resembled his portrait of Keats in the National Portrait Gallery and the other a painting now well-known “Keats and the Nightingale (the Spaniards, Hampstead Heath).” Writing to Severn that evening, Sharp said Frederick Hollyer had agreed to photograph the panel and the Nightingale painting on Thursday or Friday and return them to Severn immediately. By Thursday, the twenty-seventh, Sharp had left London and arrived in Yorkshire where he was visiting friends, probably Gilchrist and Garfitt, on his way to Edinburgh. He had mailed the revised manuscript of the Severn/Keats article before he left London on Tuesday. The two Hollyer photographs caught up with him in Yorkshire where he sent them on to Johnson to appear with the article. Sharp had been in London only ten days, but he told Johnson he was glad to be out again. “With rest & fresh air & early hours” he would soon be well again. The rest and recuperation in Germany was short-lived.

By July 30, Sharp was in Edinburgh writing apocalyptic nonsense to Dr. John Goodchild, his friend in all things mystical: “Between now and September-end (perhaps longer) many of the Dark Powers are going to make a great effort. We must all be on guard — for there will be individual as well as racial and general attack. But a Great Unloosening is at hand.” Having stayed on in London, Elizabeth arrived in Edinburgh on the thirtieth where Sharp boarded her train, and they proceeded north to Nairn near Inverness where they had taken a cottage on the shore of the North Sea. Before leaving Edinburgh Sharp received a letter from Thomas Janvier informing him of the death of Mrs. E. C. Stedman who had entertained the Sharps in her home north of New York City the previous December. He wrote a deeply moving letter of sympathy to Stedman from the North British Station Hotel while waiting for Elizabeth’s train.

I cannot let the first available mail go without sending you my deep and loving

sympathy — to you and Laretta and your daughter-in-law, but to you most who have lost a tender and loving and life-long companion. Nor is it only deep regret for you, dear friend, but on my own account, for I have ever had the truest affection for dear Mrs. Stedman. I know too, how sorry my wife will be when she hears (I join her Mail Train for the North tonight) — for she drew closely to your dear wife during our recent visit.

Sharp had a deep and genuine affection for Stedman who had introduced him to American editors and writers and paved the way for his American publications. But the perilous state of his own health weighed heavily on his mind: “I am here in Edinburgh enroute for the North (after a narrow squeak for my life, with two distinct illnesses, & treatment for a month in Germany).”

In Nairn Sharp found time to read a collection of John Galsworthy’s stories, *A Mainsail Haul*, to thank Galsworthy for sending him a copy of the book which gave him great pleasure. It was written with “delicate art,” and it was “rich in atmosphere — a much rarer thing.” Sharp then moved to some suggestions for improvement: “Is it not a mistake to introduce in “Sea Superstition” words such as ‘august’ and ‘wrought’ in a sailor’s mouth?” On August 19, Masfield replied to Sharp from Greenwich that he would make use of his suggestions if the book went to a second edition. It was, he said, a product of his youth, and he had now passed into manhood. “Between those two times (forgive me for echoing Keats) one has little save a tag or two of cynicism, a little crude experience, much weariness, much regret, and a vision blurred by all four faults. One is weakened too by one’s hatreds.” In 1905 Masfield (1878-1967) was twenty-seven — half Sharp’s age — and willing to accept help from an older writer. Named Britain’s Poet Laureate in 1930, Masfield held that position until he died thirty-seven years later. He had written of Fiona Macleod “I think the genius of a dead people has found re-incarnation in her,” but he had no idea she was Sharp. His life and work spanned the great divide between the late romanticism of the 1890s and the post-wars modernism of the twentieth century though some would say he failed to attain the latter.

After two weeks in Nairn, the Sharps returned to Edinburgh to see his mother and sisters in Murrayfield. From there, according to EAS, they visited among other wealthy and influential

friends, Mary Wilson, D. Y. Cameron, and David Erskine. Mary Georgina Wade Wilson (1856-1936) was an accomplished artist who specialized in garden scenes and whose paintings, some of Venice and other locations in Italy, are valued by collectors and museums. She was a daughter of John Wilson (1815-1881) who had at the age of twenty-one inherited his father's coal mining business and turned it into one of the most profitable companies in Scotland. In 1860 he built South Bantaskine House on the field of the Battle of Falkirk to house his family of eight girls and one boy. Mary was about Elizabeth Sharp's age, and, herself unmarried, lived on the family estate with several sisters, also unmarried. If she and Elizabeth had not met when they were young, Elizabeth's position as art critic for the *Glasgow Herald* would have brought them together. They must have been close friends since Mary, in October, accompanied the Sharps to Italy, and she was probably with Elizabeth at the Castle Maniace when Sharp died. D. Y. Cameron was at the time one of Scotland's most accomplished painters and a close friend of the Sharps. They had come together in the mid-nineties around Patrick Geddes' effort to foster a Celtic revival in Edinburgh. How the Sharps became friends with David Erskine is unclear, but his family and their estate in Linlathen near Dundee reached deeply into Scottish history.

At the end of August the Sharps returned to London and began preparing for Italy in the early fall. For the twelfth of September, his birthday, Sharp posted two letters, one from W. S. to Fiona and another from Fiona to Will. He sent these letters every year, but only one other seems to have survived — a letter to W.S. from F.M. dated September 12, 1897. The letters, according to Elizabeth, helped him retain the separate identity of Fiona and take stock of the year's literary output. The 1897 Fiona letter was hard on "dear Billy":

I am very disappointed with you this past year. You have not been well, it is true: but you have also been idle to a painful degree, and your lack of method makes me seriously anxious. ... But do for heaven's sake put your shoulder to the wheel, and get soon in good working trim at something worth doing. You ever put pleasure first, and think so much of youth that you don't like billiards merely because the balls are bald. This is sad, Billy.

The 1905 Fiona letter is hard but also accepting of the inevitable:

I note not only an extraordinarily indolence in effort as well as unmistakable laziness in achievement. Now, either you are growing old (in which case admit dotage, and be done with it) or else you are permitting yourself to remain weakly

in futile havens of ignoble repose or fretful pseudo rest. You have much to do, or that you ought to do, yourself: and as to our collaboration I see no way for its continuance unless you will abrogate much of what is superfluous, curtail much that can quite well be curtailed, and generally serve me loyally as I in my turn allow for and serve *you*.

Unless he can summon the strength to persevere in the face of declining health and attendant indolence, his own writing will suffer and that of Fiona disappear.

Sharp's 1905 letter to Fiona projects a stronger sense of declining powers and a tone of regret that verges on the elegiac:

All that is best in this past year is due to *you*. ... I have not helped you nearly as much as I could: in this coming year I pray, and hope, it may be otherwise. And this none the less tho' I have much else I want to do apart from *our* work. But we'll be one and the same *au fond* even then, shall we not, Fiona dear? ... You say I can give you what you have not: well, I am glad indeed. Together we shall be good *Sowers* ... I wish you Joy and Sorrow, Peace, and Unrest, and Leisure, Sun, and Wind, and Rain, all of Earth and Sea and Sky in this coming year. And inwardly swell with me, so that less and less I may fall short of your need as well as your ideal. And may our "Mystic's Prayer" be true for us both, who are one.

Sharp wanted to do more of his own work apart from the Fiona Macleod writings which he calls "our" work, but "our" implies Fiona also participates in the Sharp writings? Will they become "one in the same"? But probably not, so Sharp will try to give Fiona more of what she lacks. He hopes she will swell with him so he will not fall short of her need, her ideal. Near the end of his life Sharp was trying, encouraged by his wife, to resolve the contradictions he created when he decided to turn a pseudonym into a real human being. He was struggling to merge the two sides of his personality, to bring the two separate people he had created into a single being who could continue producing writings by both William Sharp and Fiona Macleod.

"The Mystics Prayer," which belongs to both William Sharp and Fiona Macleod ("our") and which he prays will be true "for both, who are one," contains eight brief lines:

Lay me to sleep in sheltering flame
O Master of the Hidden Fire!
Wash pure my heart, and cleanse for me
My soul's desire.

In flame of sunrise bathe my mind,
O Master of the Hidden Fire,
That, when I wake, clear-eyed may be
My soul's desire.

This poem appeared posthumously in *The House of Beauty: Song and Poems* which Thomas Mosher published in 1907. Fittingly, Elizabeth placed it at the end of the Uniform Edition of Sharp's Fiona Macleod poems in 1910. A final testimony to the failure of integration in this world, the poem prays that both William Sharp and Fiona Macleod will attain their soul's desire in the afterlife. That desire, for Sharp, was a marriage of souls, a blending with the woman who was known to the world as Fiona Macleod.

In a letter dated September 15, Sharp, writing as Fiona, responded to an unknown correspondent who sensed there was a great deal of Fiona's own life in her writings and asked to meet her. A meeting is not possible — at least this year — but they may meet on the Isles of “Dream, Forgetfulness, and Hope.” Again Sharp was contemplating imminent death, finding himself in the Isles of Peace, “quiet isles beyond the foam where no memories could follow ... and where old thoughts, if they came, were like phantoms on the wind, in a moment come, in a moment gone.” In the last of his many letters for his American friend E. C. Stedman to receive on his birthday, Sharp was more frank than elsewhere in describing the failing state of his health: “I all but ‘went under’ this summer from a severe access of my Diabetes malady — but a month's special treatment at Neuenahr in Germany tided me over — & in July & August I was not only convalescent but (in August) became wonderfully well.” Now he has known “the ebb-tide” again and must leave Britain's dampness for the warmth of Italy and then, after Christmas, for three 3 months in “Algeria (mostly Biskra in the Sahara) for a thorough ‘warming’ & ‘drying’, for my chest is menaced.”

Before leaving for Italy, Sharp wrote as Fiona a letter to the Duchess of Sutherland (1867-1955) which describes in the guise of advice what he has attempted to achieve in the Fiona Macleod writings:

Style (that is, the outer emotion that compels and the hidden life of the imagination that impels and the brooding thought that shapes and colours) should,

spiritually, reflect a soul's lineaments as faithfully as the lens of the photographer reflects the physiognomy of a man or woman. It is because I feel in you a deep instinct for beauty, a deep longing for beautiful expression and because I believe you have it in you to achieve highly in worth and beauty, that I write to you thus. ... There is that Lady of Silence, the Madonna of Enigma, who lives in the heart of many women. Could you not shape something under *Her* eyes — shape it and colour it with your own inward life, and give it all the nobler help of austere discipline and control which is called art?

This letter was probably a response to a volume of stories the Duchess published as simply Millicent Sutherland in 1902, *The Wind of the World: Seven Love Stories*. Despite her elevated social position and attendant obligations, the Duchess was an aspiring writer and, as a fellow Scot, a devotee of the writings of Fiona Macleod. Through that interest Sharp had come to know her, though she did not know he was Fiona, to the point that he included her among possible advocates when he sought (unsuccessfully) a Civil List Pension in the summer of 1902.



This portrait of The Duchess of Sutherland in 1904 by John Singer Sargent was sold at auction by Sotheby's in 1979 for \$210,000, setting a record for the artist's work

Writing here as one woman writer to another, Sharp encouraged the Duchess to aspire higher than she had in the 1902 volume. He sensed in her work

An instinct for beauty, a deep longing for beautiful expression and because I believe you have it in you to achieve highly in worth and beauty that I write to you thus. ... There is that Lady of Silence, the Madonna of Enigma, who lives in the heart of many women. Could you not shape something

under *Her* eyes — shape it and colour it with your own inward life, and give it all the nobler help of austere discipline and control which is called art?

Insights unique to the hearts of women — shaped, disciplined, controlled — may produce beautiful expressions that attain the status of art. It is tempting to believe Elizabeth included a portion of this letter in the *Memoir* to demonstrate her husband's connections with the paragons of British aristocracy, but that was not Elizabeth's nature. Her aim was to show the ideal to which her husband aspired in the poetry and fiction of Fiona Macleod. The revelation that Fiona was, in fact, Sharp and the attendant prejudices obscured, still obscures, the fine quality, the "worth and beauty," of much of the writing, especially the lyric poetry, Sharp published under the female pseudonym.

In early October the Sharps left London, accompanied by Mary Wilson, their painter friend from South Bantaskine, and travelled by train to Zurich, then to Innsbruck, and then to Venice. While in transit, Sharp drafted another letter to the American pianist/composer Helen Hopekirk and sent it to Edinburgh for Mary to copy into the Fiona script. Hopekirk had written to ask if she could rearrange the verses of Macleod's "The Lonely Hunter" in setting the poem to music. Fiona gave her permission to make whatever changes she wished: "I do not think the needs or nuances of one art should ever be imposed upon the free movement of another in alliance." She would soon be going to "Italy, and to friends, and to beautiful places in the sun, there and in Sicily and perhaps in Algeria." This was the itinerary the Sharps followed, though they didn't make it as far as Algeria. Usually careful to place Fiona in places other than those he planned to visit, Sharp must have decided Hopekirk in America was too far away to matter. Then, as Fiona, Sharp conveyed his sense of a foreshortened life:

I think outward change matters less and less as the imagination deepens and as the spirit more and more "turns westward." I love the South; and in much, and for much, am happy there: but as the fatally swift months slip into the dark I realize more and more that it is better to live a briefer while at a high reach of the spirit and the uplifted if overwrought physical part of one than to save the body and soothe the mind by the illusions of physical indolence and mental leisure afforded by long sojourns in the sun lands of the South.

Moving on to describe her love of contemporary French poetry and music, loves that reflected those of William Sharp, Fiona was pleased to have Hopekirk setting her poems to music.

From Venice, the Sharps went to Florence where they stayed with the Eugene Lee-Hamiltons. In 1881, Lee-Hamilton's half-sister Violet Paget (who wrote under the masculine pseudonym Vernon Lee) had engaged Sharp in a lively epistolary debate about the "propriety" of Sharp's early poem "Motherhood." Sharp and Lee-Hamilton (1845-1907) met in Florence in 1883 and remained friends through the years. A decade earlier, in 1873, Lee-Hamilton had become incapacitated by a nervous disease that kept him bed-ridden or in a specially designed wheel chair that enabled him to lie flat on his back. He was completely dependent on his mother and half-sister until, in 1893-94 when his mother died, he made a miraculous recovery. Fully mobile by 1898, he took off by himself for the United States and married an American novelist, Annie E. Holdsworth. They settled in Florence where they continued to write and entertained guests from Britain and the United States, including the Sharps. In 1903 Sharp edited a collection of Lee-Hamilton's poems, *Dramatic Sonnets, Poems, and Ballads*, for Walter Scott's Canterbury Poets series. During this last visit with the Lee-Hamiltons in their Villa Palmerino a few miles outside Florence, the Sharps found him again quite ill and very frail. Sharp would die before year's end, and Lee-Hamilton, after suffering a debilitating stroke, would die in 1907.

From Florence, the Sharps went south to Rome and then to Sicily where they spent the remainder of November among friends in the warmth of Taormina. On November twenty-seventh, they left their hotel to spend December with Alexander Nelson Hood at his Castello Maniace near Bronte high on the slopes of Etna. Sharp described their journey that day in a letter he wrote to Roselle Lathrop Shields on December fourth:

We left Taormina in a glory of mid-summerlike warmth and beauty — and we drove down the three miles of winding road from Taormina to the sea at Giardini; thence past the bay and promontory of Naxos, and at the site of the ancient famous fane of Apollo Archagêtês turned inland. Then through the myriad lemon-groves of Al Cantara, till we crossed the gorges of the Fiumefreddo, and then began the long ascent, in blazing heat, by the beautiful hill road to the picturesque mountain-town of Piedemonte. There we caught the little circum-

Ætnean mountain loop-line, and ascended the wild and beautiful slopes of Etna. Last time we went we travelled mostly above the clouds, but this time there was not a vestige of vapour in the radiant air, save for the outriders' trail of white occasionally flare-coloured, smoke from the vast 4-mile wide mouth of snow-white and gigantically-looming cone of Etna. At the lofty mediaeval and semi-barbaric town of Randazzo we were delayed by an excited crowd at the station, on account of the arrest and bringing in by the carabinieri of three chained and heavily manacled brigands, one of them a murderer, who evidently had the sympathy of the populace. A woman, the wife of one of the captured men, outdid any lamenting Irish woman I ever saw: her frenzy was terrible — and of course the poor soul was life-desolate and probably punished and would likely never see her man again. Finally she became distracted with despair and fury, and between her appeals and furious curses and almost maniacal lamentations, the small station was anything but an agreeable stopping place. The captive brigands were absolutely impassive: not a glance: only, as the small train puffed onward, one of them lifted a manacled arm behind one of the carabinieri and made a singular sign to someone.

Thereafter we passed into the wild and terrible lava-lands of the last frightful eruption, between Randazzo and the frontier of the Duchy of Bronte: a region as wild and fantastic as anything imagined by Doré, and almost terrifying in its somber deathfulness. The great and broad and sweeping mountains, and a mightily strath — and we came under the peaked rocks of Maletto, a little town standing 3000 feet high. Then the carriage, and the armed escort, and we had that wonderful drive thro' wild and beautiful lands of which I have heretofore written you. Then about four we drove up to the gates of the Castle, and passed into the great court just within the gates, and had the cordial and affectionate welcome of our dear host.

A few minutes later we were no longer at an ancient castle in the wilds of Sicily, but in a luxurious English country house at afternoon tea.

A few days later, December eighth according to his diary as printed in the *Memoir*, Sharp wrote a second letter to Roselle Lathrop Shields that signaled his rapidly fading health. When he tried to sit down to his writing a “mental nausea seized” him and even writing a letter was “exhausting.” His need to continue writing was terribly pressing, but “I simply can't.”

He did manage, in addition to his letter to Shields, a long letter to Robert Hichens on the eighth. It was a response to a letter from Hichens expressing his regret that Sharp's physical condition would prevent him from going to North Africa in January. Elizabeth explained in the *Memoir* “It had been planned that after the New Year Mr. Hood, Mr. Hichens, my husband and I should go together to Biskra. But as the autumn waned, we realized the unwisdom of making

any such plans.” Sharp described the changed plans in a letter to W. B. Yeats on December seventh: they expected to remain at Maniace until after Christmas and then go to the French Riviera for three months. In this letter, his last to Yeats, he was responding to a letter Yeats wrote to him on November fourth. Hurt by Yeats’ “continuous and apparently systematic ignoring of any communication,” Sharp had made up his mind “to keep silence henceforth.” After writing frequently to Sharp and Fiona Macleod for many years about rituals for his Celtic Mystical Order, Yeats had become distracted by his involvement in the creation of a theater in Dublin. He seems not to have communicated with Sharp since April, 1904, when he said he had found many admirers of Fiona Macleod during his trip to America. Now he wrote to ask what messages Sharp had been receiving from the spirit world and to probe further his relationship with Fiona.

Sharp said he could not write about any visitations or about Fiona, but would discuss those matters with Yeats when they met.

I may add, however, that neither I nor any person personally known to me “sent” any one to you on a veiled mission. [At the same time — that a certain person sought you and that you did not recognize the person, the occasion, or the significance.] As you know, we are in a crucial period of change in many ways, and there are circles within circles, veiled influences and good and evil (and non-good and non-evil) formative and disformative forces everywhere at work. Obscure summons, obscure warnings, meetings & partings, veiled messages, come to us all. All which sounds very absurd, or mysterious, or conveniently vague. However, you’ll understand. Also my present silence. [*The bracketed words are crossed out in the manuscript.*]

It is quite amazing that less than a week before he died Sharp was able to revert so easily to his spiritualist exchanges with Yeats. He concluded by asking about the meaning of a dream he may or may not have had:

I dreamt of you some time ago as going thro’ a dark wood and plucking here and there in the darkness seven apples (as you thought) — but they were stars. And you came to the edge or cliff and threw three away, & listened, and then hearing nothing threw three more idly away. But you kept, or forgot, one — & it trickled thro’ your body and came out at your feet, and you kicked it before you as you walked, & it gave light, but I do not think you saw the light, or the star. What is your star, here, — do you know? Or can you interpret the dream?

In describing this dream, Sharp may have been prompted by the ending of Yeats's "The Song of Wandering Aengus": "And pluck till time and times are done | The silver apples of the moon, the golden apples of the sun." This poem appeared first in *The Sketch* on August 4, 1897 where it was called "A Mad Song" and more recently in Yeats' *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899).

Given the immanence of his death, one paragraph of the letter is particularly moving as it refers to both his physical and his mental illness, the latter probably severe depression:

For many months this year I was ill — dying — but there were other than physical reasons for this, & I survived thing after thing and shock after shock like a swimmer rising to successive waves — & then suddenly to every one's amazement swam into havens of relative well-being once more. But the game is not over, of course: and equally of course is a losing game. Nevertheless I'm well content with things as they are, all things considered.

In his diary on December eighth, Sharp said he and Elizabeth had that afternoon "a lovely drive," and she described that drive in the *Memoir*:

We drove far along a mountain pass and at the furthest point stopped to let him look at the superb sunset over against the hillset town of Cesaro. He seemed wrapt in thought and looked long and steadfastly at the wonderful glowing light; it was with difficulty that I persuaded him to let us return. On the way back, a sudden turn of the road brought us in face to the snow covered cone of Aetna. The wind had changed and blew with cutting cold straight off the snow. It struck him, chilling him through and through. Half way back he got out of the carriage to walk and get warm. But the harm was done.

When they returned to Maniace, he told Elizabeth he planned to talk a great deal that evening in an effort to "amuse" Alec Hood who seemed rather depressed. And Hood, as he said goodnight to Elizabeth, said "I have never heard Will more brilliant than he has been tonight." The next morning Sharp had a severe pain -- perhaps a diabetic attack, perhaps a heart attack, perhaps both -- that Elizabeth thought caused by the chill during their drive. A doctor was summoned, but he could only relieve the pain; he died in his wife's arms with his friend Alec Hood by his side in the afternoon of December twelfth.

Sharp was buried in the English Cemetery on the estate two days later. Ernest Rhys, wrote in his *Letters from Limbo*: "A pity he did not live to see his own superb funeral when he

was carried by torchlight up the mountain after his death at the Duke of Bronte's Castle Maniace in Sicily. . . . He was a great romancer and died as he had lived, romancing." Rhys himself was not immune to romancing since the cemetery is not on a hill and not far from the Castle. If there was a procession from the residence to the cemetery it made its way along a dusty road in sunlight. According to Elizabeth he was "laid in a little woodland burial-ground on the hillside within sound of the Simeto," a river that runs through the grounds of the estate. His poem, "Invocation to Peace," from the *Dominion of Dreams* was read over the grave by Alec Hood who commissioned a large Celtic cross carved from the lava of Mount Etna to mark the grave. On the cross, in accord with Sharp's instructions, is the double inscription: "Farewell to the known and exhausted/ Welcome to the unknown and illimitable" and "Love is more great than we conceive,| And death is the keeper of unknown redemptions."



Courtyard, Castello Maniace, Bronte, Sicily



Celtic Cross Marking William Sharp's
Grave

AFTERWORD

News of Sharp's death was wired to Edith Rinder in London, and she passed it to the papers, in accord with Sharp's instructions, with the information that Sharp was the author of the writings of Fiona Macleod. Six years before he died, in the fall of 1899 when he was in rented rooms outside London in Chorleywood, Sharp had written a message on small white cards and instructed Elizabeth to send them to a few friends when he died. She sent one to W. B. Yeats on December twenty-eighth:

Dear Mr. Yeats

My husband wished that you should receive the enclosed immediately on his death. Unfortunately I found it today only.

As you will see, he and he only was, and wrote as, Fiona Macleod.

Sincerely yours | Elizabeth A. Sharp

Chorleywood

This will reach you after my death. You will think I have deceived you about Fiona Macleod. But, in absolute privacy, I tell you that I have not, however in certain details I have (inevitably) misled you. Only, it is a mystery. Perhaps you will intuitively understand, or may come to understand. "The rest is silence."

William Sharp

It is only right, however, to add that I, and I only, am the author — in the *literal* and literary sense — of all written under the name of Fiona Macleod.

Yeats replied to Elizabeth on January sixth (*Collected Letters*, IV, 302-3):

I want to tell you how much I sympathize with you in your great trouble. Your husband was a man of genius who brought something wholly new into letters & thousands will feel his loss with a curious personal regret. To me he was that, & a strange mystery too & also a dear friend. To talk with him was to feel the presence of that mystery, he was very near always to the world where he now is & often seemed to me to deliver its messages. He often spoke to me of things of my personal life that were unknown to him by the common channels of sense. I knew he was ill — but never knew how ill. I had a letter from him only two days before I saw his death in the paper. I had been looking forward to seeing him again very shortly. O feel now that one of the Gates of Wisdom has been closed for much as I admire his writing he was, as a man should be, more than his writing. What must you feel at so great a loss. You must however know that one who was so often as

it seemed out of the body which he had cannot have undergone any unrecognizable change or gone very far away. Blake said of death that it was but going into another room. He was certainly the most imaginative man — I use the word in its old & literal sense of image making — I have ever known, not like a man of this age at all.

Read in the context of Sharp's remonstrance for Yeats' long silence, this letter may have been partially motivated by guilt, but it stands nonetheless as heartfelt admiration for the work and life of a fellow writer and psychic.

Elizabeth Sharp began planning a book about the life and work of her husband shortly after his death. She asked many of his correspondents if she could see and use some of the letters he had written in what became her *Memoir*. Yeats was one of those correspondents, but Elizabeth had a special request of Yeats. She had come upon what looked to her like a Masonic rites among Sharp's papers, and she asked Yeats if he could cast some light on it. She was also curious to know if her husband had written or spoken to Yeats about any visions. Convinced herself of a realm of spirits that could be contacted by invoked or spontaneous visions, she was beginning to search for means of contacting the spirit of her deceased husband. Writing from Coole Park, Lady Gregory's estate in County Galway on July twenty-first, Yeats said he had intended to call on Elizabeth when he was in London in the Spring, but other matters intervened (TLS, private). He will see her in the fall, and by then he will have found and sorted out the letters he received from Sharp and Fiona: "I think there are one or two visions recorded amongst them," he wrote, "but I am not sure."

I think too that I have some notes of a vision of your husband's, but it took place five or six years ago, and I am not certain that I should be able to understand the notes. I made a search through my papers when I was in London but I have not yet found a bundle of rather interesting letters which your husband wrote me at the outset of the Fiona Macleod books. "The Masonic Rite" you speak of was made in the first instance by me, and I would be very much obliged if you would let me see it. There are a good many things I can tell you about this rite and others of the same sort, and there are still more matters which I am most anxious to ask you about.

He went on to say his "absorption in the theatre" had caused "many interests that I shared with

your husband” to drift farther apart from him than he liked. He hoped to return “to what are still to me the supreme interests” once his work in and for the theatre became “instinctive.” In other words, the effort to establish a Celtic Mystical Order in the West of Ireland and obtain its rites through dream and vision, an effort in which he had enlisted Sharp, Macleod, George Russell (AE), Maud Gonne and a few others, was still a matter of supreme interest, but the cause of Irish Nationalism that lay behind his efforts to establish and write plays for an Irish National Theatre had intervened.

Yeats called on Elizabeth Sharp in London not in the fall but in the first week of January 1907. He described their meeting in a letter to Maud Gonne dated January 14 (*Collected Letters*, IV, 591-4). He now knew a great deal more about the Fiona Macleod mystery; it was as he thought:

Fiona Macleod was so far as external perception could say a secondary personality induced in Sharp by the presence of a very beautiful unknown woman whom he fell in love with. She, alas! has disappeared from everyone’s sight, no one having set eyes on her except George Meredith who says she was the most beautiful woman he ever saw. Whether there was more than this I do not know but poor Mrs. Sharp, though generous and self-sacrificing as I can see does not want to enlarge that unknown woman’s share. A great deal, however, which Sharp used to give in letters as an account of Fiona’s doings were she insists a kind of semi-allegorical description of the adventures of his own secondary personality and its relation with the primary self.

Yeats then recounts an instance in which Sharp wrote that he would leave Yeats’ letter for Fiona to read when she woke up [Sharp to Yeats, May 5, 1898]. According to Elizabeth this meant that the secondary personality would read it and respond when it awoke. That response from Fiona, Yeats said, though written for her by Sharp, was “much more impassioned” than the rest of the letter. Yeats doubted there would be much of this in the biography Elizabeth intended to write because when he suggested she tell the whole story, she said “How can I! Other people are so much involved.”

It is clear that Yeats thought the “beautiful unknown woman” Sharp loved was playing a much larger role than Elizabeth professed in Fiona’s sleeping and waking when Sharp was

writing that letter from St. Margaret's Bay near Dover where Fiona Macleod's illness suddenly prevented her and Sharp from crossing the channel to meet Yeats in Paris as planned (Sharp to Yeats, May 5, 1898]. Yeats went on to tell Maud Gonne "She never talked quite openly about things, except it being a secondary personality, but told things in a series of hints and yet, at the same time quite clearly. I noticed that each time she said this personality was awakened in him by a beautiful person she would add as if to lessen the effect, "and by beautiful scenery. Elizabeth was attempting to be truthful as far as she felt she could without revealing that Edith Wingate Rinder was the beautiful woman who induced Fiona Macleod in her husband, the beautiful woman Sharp introduced to George Meredith as Fiona Macleod, the beautiful woman who, alas, has disappeared from everyone's sight.

Yeats must have met Edith Rinder several times, as did other friends of Sharp, since she and her husband Frank Rinder, who was a cousin of the well-known feminist and close friend of the Sharps Mona Caird, were present at many parties and "at homes" given by Mrs. Caird and by the Sharp's, parties Yeats attended. Yet Elizabeth succeeded both in her private conversations and in her writings about her husband in preventing Edith Rinder from being identified overtly as the woman her husband loved, the woman behind the creation and writings of Fiona Macleod. Moreover, she preserved that secret long after her death by burning most of her husband's papers before she died and eliminating any overt references to Edith Rinder in those of her husband's papers she preserved from the fire. Yeats concluded his description of his January 1906 meeting with Elizabeth Sharp by saying to Maud Gonne: "I would be rather glad if you would keep this letter. For I am fresh from seeing Mrs. Sharp (I saw her a week ago) and this will be a record. Put it in some safe place and I may ask you for it again some day for it is a fragment of history."

Though his meeting with Elizabeth did not entirely unravel the mystery of Fiona Macleod for Yeats, though he continued perplexed by the extent Fiona was a second personality or a spirit of some sort speaking through Sharp, he came away with the impression that a real woman was intimately involved in the personality Sharp projected as that of Fiona Macleod and in the creation of the writings Sharp published under the feminine pseudonym. For all the questions Yeats's meeting with Elizabeth left unanswered, his description of the meeting in the letter to

Maud Gonne is the most intimate picture that survives of Elizabeth Sharp's attitude toward and feelings about her husband's relationship with Edith Rinder and the role she played in the creation of Fiona Macleod. In reading Yeats's account of the meeting, which he saw as a fragment of history, it is impossible not to share the sympathy for Elizabeth Sharp that breaths through his words. Through her own writings and what others have said about her, Elizabeth emerges as an intelligent and accomplished woman who retained her patience and enthusiasm for life and her love for the cousin she met as a girl during summer vacations in Scotland, the cousin who proposed to her in an Edinburgh cemetery, the cousin she eventually married despite the concerns of their families, the cousin she followed all over Britain and continental Europe, Northern Africa, and the United States, and the cousin mediums brought to life for her many years after she buried him on the slopes of Etna in the Sicilian wilds.

1905: LETTERS

To Thomas Hardy, January 4, 1905

Bordighera | Casa Viale 20 | 4th Jany/04¹

Dear Mr. Hardy²

I have just returned from a visit to W. D. Howells³ at San Remo — and I feel sure you will like to know how highly he, one of the foremost or as some think the foremost of living American authors, rates your work. He spoke of it with the greatest admiration, & ranked it foremost of all contemporary work in fiction. He was greatly pleased when I told him I had heard you speak highly of the faithful realism of his own books, & your enjoyment of them. He goes in a few weeks now to America which he will not leave again he says, as years & sorrows & the need of rest for mind & body make him eager to get back for good to his own home in Maine.

My wife & I have only a short time ago returned from a visit to New York & Boston, and are thankful to be ‘on this side’ again, & in Italy in particular, though we had a delightful time in the States in all respects.

We go to Rome about the middle of the month for two or three months. Is there no chance of you & Mrs. Hardy’s coming there? It is a lovely Spring climate, & England seems in for a spell of cold & damp. I fear from a letter I’ve just had from Arthur Tomson that he is in worse health than he has been for long, & that he must leave Dorset.

¹ Sharp’s “04” date was a mistake not uncommon in early Januarys.

² Sharp made a “flying visit” to Dorset to see Thomas Hardy in March, 1892 and published an appreciation of his novels in the *Forum* that July. In a note of appreciation to Sharp, Hardy said he was particularly struck by his “power of grasping the characteristics of this district and people in a few hours visit, during which, as far as I could see, you were not observing anything” (*Memoir*, 199).

³ William Dean Howells (1837-1920) was a prolific and highly-regarded American man of letters who is best known for his realist novels *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890). Poems he wrote between 1873 and 1886 were published in a volume called *Stops of Various Quills* in 1895. Sharp first met Howells in Venice in 1883.

I hope you are well, & that you are soon to relent and give the thousands who look for it the pleasure of another novel from your pen.

With Mrs. Sharp's & my own best wishes for the New Year to Mrs. Hardy & yourself

Believe me dear Mr. Hardy | Most Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

I saw our common friend Mrs. Moulton,¹ who in common with many others in New York & Boston, spoke of you.

ALS Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, Dorset County Museum

To William Dean Howells, [mid-January, 1905]

Albergo Parco | Via Sallustiana | Roma

Dear Mr. Howells

We are settled here (instead of in rooms, or an apartment with a servant — which we found not to be had in accordance with our desires & needs & means) in a pleasant little suite of 3 or 4 rooms at the top of a sunny & charming new small hotel in the sunniest & healthiest part of Rome. Our rooms all face S.E. & S.W. — and so we have unbroken sunshine from sunrise till sunset: & from our windows & balconies of our *Salotto* we have superb views over Rome and to the hills & to the Campagna. Rome, however, has a treacherous climate: and, again, we know too many people here, Italian, English, Russian, American, & French — Society & Bohemia in a perpetual league against work — so for these two reasons it is doubtful if we'll remain beyond the end of February.² I'm afraid Italy is not a good place for work: I think we of the Anglo-Celtic stock need the northern bite of Great Britain or North America to do our best in the best way.

¹ Louis Chandler Moulton (1835-1908) occupied a prominent place in American literary society. She published several volumes of poetry and short fiction and wrote regular columns on literature in the *New York Tribune* (1870-1876) and a weekly literary letter in the *Sunday Boston Herald* (1886-1892). Starting in the mid-1870s she spent summers in London and the rest of the year in Boston. She developed close friendships with leading literary figures in the United States, in Great Britain, and on the continent.

² The Sharps left Rome at the end of February. According to EAS the main reason for shortening their stay was not social distractions, but her husband's health: "There we saw a few friends — in particular Robert Hichens who was also wintering there; but my husband did not feel strong enough for any social effort (*Memoir*, 393-4).

I have tried in vain to get your ‘Italian poets’¹ book — & my hope to find an old copy at Piale’s library has not been fulfilled. So if within the next month or two (or anytime) you perchance hear of any copy to be had, & do not wish to secure it yourself, I wd. be glad if you wd. let me know. I am sure it wd. be most useful to me in the work I have on hand, apart from its own charm.

Hoping that you and yours are well, & that Spring is with you,

Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS Harvard, Houghton

To William Dean Howells, [late-January, 1905]

Hotel del Parco | Via Sallustiana | Roma

Dear Mr. Howells,

It is most kind of you to say that you will try to get a copy of “Italian Poets” and send to me. I need not say how grateful I shall be. As our movements after we leave here are very uncertain, and as we do not expect (at any rate I do not expect) to be in London (where my address is | The Grosvenor Club | Piccadilly) until early in May, my best address is that of my home in Scotland, whence everything addressed to me reaches me promptly and safely — namely | Murrayfield | Midlothian | Scotland | and there I shall be much obliged if you will kindly direct the most welcome book to be sent.

I wish you had been here today. We had a Russian gentleman visiting us who knows English literature well, &, seeing one of your books on the table, spoke of his great liking for your work, & how he had read all or nearly all you had written. I liked his summing up — “I feel thus because he sees truly, and utters truth, and does so graciously.”

I shall be very sorry to leave Rome at the end of February — but, alas, I can’t afford to be anywhere I can’t work — & in every way Rome is about the last place for that.

With all cordial regards from Mrs. Sharp & myself. Believe me, dear Mr. Howells,

Sincerely Yours, | William Sharp

ALS Harvard Houghton

¹ *Modern Italian Poets: Essays and Versions* (1887).

To Laretta Stedman,¹ February 5, [1905]

Albergo del Garco | Via Sallustiana | Rome | 5th Feby for (18th)

Dear Laretta,

I hope this will reach you on your birthday morning — if I am right in remembering that to be the 18th and that it will carry to you all affectionate greetings and good wishes from us both. I hope that in all ways it will be a happy year for you.

We have charming rooms here — & from the windows and balconies of our *Salotta* or sitting room, high-set on the highest & sunniest part of Rome, we overlook the Eternal City, with glimpses of the Sabine Hills & of the dim sea-like Campagna. But I've not been well, nor has Mrs. Sharp: for one thing, each in turn was attacked by severe influenza. For reasons of health (for my perilous diabetic ailment has been seriously touched up again, in consequence I suppose) & also for work-conditions, & other reasons, we have decided to leave Italy at the end of February for "The English Riviera," in other words for Ventnor in the South of the Isle of Wight — where, indeed, we think of some day making a home. I am tired of so many years of continuous wandering, & I'm sure Mrs. Sharp is eager for a home, tho' she loves being in Italy also. For work's sake, too, (& I don't mean the financial side of the question) it is in all ways better for me to be more in touch with my own country. So, early in March, think of us in that beautiful place overlooking the sea to the S. & S.W. (In mid-April I'll be in the Highlands of Scotland for a few weeks). I think I gave you my best letter-address (at all times) namely, Murrayfield | Midlothian | Scotland (tho' in May & June, The Grosvenor Club, Piccadilly, London w^d do as well).

We both eagerly hope all goes well with E. C. S. and Mrs. Stedman. Our loving greetings to them both, as also to your mother.

Forgive, dear Laretta, so bald a letter — but I'm not quite well yet, & am under exhausting pressure of accumulated work & correspondence. Only I want to send you even the briefest line in birthday remembrance, and a breath from the beautiful & wonderful Italy you too love so well, tho' as yet only in longing and the heart's dream.

Ever affectionately your friend, | William Sharp

¹ Laretta Stedman was the granddaughter of E. C. Stedman.

To Robert Underwood Johnson¹, February 5, [1905]

Hotel du Parc | Via Sallustiana, Rome | 5th February

A card to say that after arrival in Rome my wife became seriously ill with influenza, & that subsequently I was also attacked & with the serious result of touching up my old ailment to an extent to paralyze all work. I am now up & about again, and am well into the Sicily article, but it will be a week or 10 days yet before I can despatch it I fear². I forget when you said you w^d be in Rome: — if March, then we shall not meet, for the doctor says Rome is bad for me now, since the recrudescence of this ailment (of a Diabetes nature) and so at the end of February we leave, as advised, for Ventnor in the Isle of Wight. (After Feby end, my best address Murrayfield | (Midlothian) | Scotland).

William Sharp

To Richard Watson Gilder, February 5, 1905

Hotel du Parc | Via Sallustiana, Rome | 5: February :05

Dear Mr. Gilder,

In case Mr. Johnson has already left I send this to say I have just written to him to tell how after coming to Rome my wife became ill with a serious attack of influenza, and how, later, I myself had a bad *repeated* bout of it, with the result that my insidious diabetic ailment has been

¹ Robert Underwood Johnson (1853-1937) was associate editor of *The Century Illustrated Magazine* from 1881-1909 and editor from 1909-1913. Sharp had proposed several articles to him and the magazine's editor, Richard Watson Gilder, when they met in New York in December. Johnson was also a poet [*The Winter Hoar and Other Poems* (1892); *Songs of Liberty and Other Poems* (1902); *Poems of War and Peace* (1916); *Poems of the Lighter Touch* (1930)], and he served as American Ambassador to Rome in 1920 and 1921. For more on Gilder, see Sharp's earlier letters to him.

² Sharp's Sicily articles appeared posthumously in the *Century* as follows: "The Garden of the Sun," Part I in March, 1906, Part II in April, 1906, and "Route-Notes in Sicily" (illustrated) in May, 1906. These three articles and a fourth ("The Portraits of Keats: With Special Reference to Those by Severn," February, 1906) resulted from Sharp's meeting with Gilder and Johnson.

touched up again, tho' I hope not gravely. I am now up and about again, and feeling right enough, but we have to leave Rome at the end of February the doctor advises, and we go straight back to Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight, where climate and general conditions of life and work are particularly suitable for me. All this made work on "Sicily" or anything else out of the question, alas. I am now, however, well into the "Sicily" double article, but it will be at least a week or 10 days yet before I can despatch it, tho' I will do my utmost to do so by then.

So after the end of February note that I shall not be in Rome or Italy. My best letter-address for the next month or two (i. e., till May, when the Grosvenor Club, Piccadilly, London) will be Murrayfield, Midlothian, Scotland.

Sincerely yours, | William Sharp

ACS Huntington

To Thomas Mosher, February 11, [1905]¹

Address: Miss Macleod | 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield | Midlothian | Scotland |

11th February

Dear Mr. Mosher

Dubious and ever varying health, with much going to and fro in quest of what is perhaps not to be found (for mere change of climate will not give health unless other conditions combine to bring about the miracle) have, among other causes, prevented my writing to you as I had intended, or, indeed, from doing much writing of any kind. I have written a few articles for *Country Life* — and little else, published or unpublished. The days go by and I say "at night" — and every night I am too tired or listless, and say "tomorrow": and so both nights and the morrows go to become thistles in the Valley of Oblivion. But with the advancing Spring I am regathering somewhat of lost energy, and if only I were back in Scotland I believe I should be hard at work! Well, I shall be there soon, though I may be away again, in the remote isles or in Scandinavia for the late spring and summer.

What pleasure I have had in the books you sent me. In every way I much prefer these charming leather-bound volumes to the parchment ones. They are delightful both to see and to

¹Mrs. Sharp reprinted the first paragraph of this letter in the *Memoir* (394).

feel. Will you very kindly let me have another copy of the leather-bound 2nd edit. of *From the Hills of Dream*. You are so kind always, that it seems like presumption to ask also for another book, but I want very much to have another copy of the leather-bound *Blake's Songs of Innocence*,¹ for I gave away the "Songs" I had to a friend who has since I believe got many of your publications.

And now as to publication-proposals.

First, there is that condensed, selected, and rearranged edition of the personal and autobiographical part of *Iona* (in *The Divine Adventure* volume), with some added reminiscent material. It might be called "The Isle of Voices," or "On the Grey Wind," or "The Island of Dreams," or the originally proposed title "In a Kingdom by the Sea."² It would take me some time to rewrite and rearrange, and to write the new part, and prepare the whole ready for you to reprint. So, if you still care for the idea (and I want to do it) will you let me know what you can afford to [pay] the at present impecunious as well as (alas too often now) indolent author?

Second, there is the volume of verse spoken about to you by my friend when in Boston. This would be a small volume, and would be called *Runes of Women*, and, despite the "Rune of Woman" and the "Rune of the Passion of Women" being already so well-known and in the *Hills of Dream* volume, I think the book would be incomplete without them. What is your opinion about this? It is all but certain, I may add, that there would be no English edition of this book. It is too personal, and if I publish it at all it could only be through you, and with the relative remoteness of publication in America (and of course any one on this side wanting it could get it from you). Judging from the way *Hills of Dream* has been received, and especially the two poems named, the book would be bought by many. (It might or might not include some of the lyrical poems in my next book of verse — probably would: but I can't say yet.) I understand that you yourself favor this volume. So please let me hear what you can suggest.³

¹ William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (Portland, Maine: Thomas Mosher, 1903).

² Mosher chose *The Isle of Dreams* as the title of this book which he published later in 1905.

³ The next volume of Fiona Macleod poems Mosher published was *The Hour of Beauty* in 1907. Its contents are the same as the section entitled "The Hour of Beauty" in the 1907 edition of *From the Hills of Dream* published by William Heinemann in London.

Finally, there is the suitable republishable matter in *The Winged Destiny* (notably “The Sunset of Old Tales”). I would suggest a vol. called *The Sunset of Old Tales*, and comprising (1) the titular piece; (2) “The Treud nan Ron”; (3) “The Man on the Moor”; (4) “The Woman at the Cross Ways”; (5) “Orpheus and Oisin”.¹ Or, if you would prefer two smaller vols, I would suggest one called “The Sunset of Old Tales,” and giving only the titular piece and the “Treud nan Ron” and “Orpheus and Oisin” (or only, with the titular piece, “Orpheus and Oisin”).

“The Wayfarer” and “Orpheus and Oisin” are the only two that would go well by themselves, as single publications.²

Please let me hear from you at your early convenience, and hoping that all is well with you in all ways,

Believe me, | Dear Mr. Mosher, | Ever sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

TLS NYPL, Berg

To Thomas Mosher, February 20, 1905

20: Feb.: 1905

Dear Mr. Mosher,

I have just returned from abroad, having to go to the West for some time, and find that your letter of Feb. 3rd has just crossed one I sent you from Italy on the 11th. As this letter answers yours, I shall now await your reply. Excuse a P. C. written en route.

F. M.

ACS NYPL, Berg

To Richard Watson Gilder, February 20, [1905]

¹ Although Mosher did not publish a volume entitled *The Sunset of Old Tales* or *Orpheus and Oisin*, the volume of Fiona Macleod tales published by Tauchnitz in Leipzig in 1905 was titled *The Sunset of Old Tales*.

² Mosher published *The Wayfarer* as a separate volume in 1906. It was part of a three volume set (along with *The Distant Country & Other Prose Poems*, 1907, and *Three Legends of the Christ Child*, 1908) that Mosher called the “Ideal Series of Little Masterpieces” which were designed to be brought together in a cabinet style box.

Rome | 20th February

Just a P. C. to say that the Sicily article (in two parts, as wished) is now completed (after having been twice rewritten, on account of the difficulties of condensation with such a mass of material) and is being typed, and should go to you by the ensuing U. S. A. mail from here, Rome, some 3 days hence. Please note as to my letter address now that it is Murrayfield | (Midlothian) | Scotland. Neither my wife nor myself has been at all well here, & we leave on the last day of February: & about a fortnight later, or sooner, shall be in Ventnor in the Isle of Wight.

William Sharp

ACS Huntington

To Thomas Mosher, February 21, 1905

Fischer's Park Hotel | Rome | 21st. February /05

My Dear Mr. Mosher,

I ought to have written to you some time ago to thank you for the beautiful little books you so kindly sent to me. I am delighted to have them, and (as I know our friend the author does) I much prefer them, both to handle and to look at, to the parchment-bound copies. What beautiful reprints yours are. They have been much admired here by the many English, American, and foreign friends who come to see us, & again & again I have been asked (or have volunteered) your address & other particulars. I am glad, too, to have them as a reminder of our pleasant meeting. I am very glad we had time for that confidential chat, too, and I think you will now better understand certain reserves & puzzling things, & the more readily see, or at any rate *feel*, how they are not all by any means arbitrary or foolish, but more or less inevitable. I have of course seen a good deal of my friend since I came to Italy, and before she left Rome the other day I explained to her about our talk, & how that whatever she wrote to you at any time in privacy would be kept absolutely private by you. I dare say now, too, you understand a good deal more than what was said, by inference. When we meet again, or someday, things may be made still clearer to you.¹

¹ When he met Mosher in Boston Sharp must have told him he and Fiona were lovers since that would explain their frequent, furtive meetings and her allusiveness. What might someday be made "still clearer" to Mosher was simply that Sharp was the woman he claimed to love.

My friend has written to you, I know, about some of the literary projects you and I spoke of, notably the book that will doubtless reach more people than anything else of a remoter kind, because of its personal note and its ‘modernity.’ . . . the “Runes of Women,” though it is not likely that (for the same personal reason) it will be published in England. It might be disagreeable to have it much discussed, especially in Scotland

I leave Rome next week and go to Paris, and early in March cross to the south of England (Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight) — where it is possible I may see our friend again: if not, then in the West Highlands or Isles about mid-April. I shall be in the W. of Scotland 3 weeks at least then, & then rejoin my wife in London for the summer. (Our friend, (health & the difficult question of means permitting) may probably be away in a yacht and with friends a good deal this late spring and summer, in the far North — primarily for health, tho’ now much better I am glad to say: but, as ever, movements very uncertain.)

My best address henceforth will be The Grosvenor Club | Dover St. | London W.

With all cordial greetings & regards | Sincerely yours | William Sharp

ALS NYPL, Berg

To Richard Watson Gilder, February 22, 1905

Rome | 22nd February /05

Murrayfield | (Midlothian) Scotland

Dear Mr. Gilder,

I suppose Mr. Johnson is now on the seas, if not actually in Italy, so that we cannot hope to see him, as we leave Rome and Italy in a day or two, as my continued ill health here, along with exigencies of work, take me elsewhere. We go for a month or two to Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight, which climatically and otherwise suits us both. I put the above address as my best letter-address from now, or at any time (save from May till end July, when the Grosvenor Club, Piccadilly, London, W. is best).

Herewith I am sending you, by Registered MSS. post, the completed MS. (typed, and corrected for press) of my “In Sicily” article, in two suitably divided parts as wished, the first rather longer, & both perhaps longer than the mentioned length as about the right thing. It was,

however, as I found even after a third rewriting it from the mass of available material, and continual deletion, practically infeasible to make the double-article shorter, if anything like “an article of practical use and suggestion, readably put,” as Mr. Johnson expressed it to me, were desired. This I have striven to do, bearing in mind that the vast majority of travellers to or intending travellers to Sicily want to know beforehand something of the main routes, & where & how to see what is best worth seeing. As to the title I thought it would be as well to indicate the limited scope of the article by the use of the subtitled “Route-Notes” — and as to the general title, either “In Sicily” if you prefer it, or, as I have put it, from an old writer,

“In the Old Garden of the Sun.”

I hope the article may prove what you want, an article of routes and ways & means, made readable & I hope interesting for all.

I am not quite sure if it was specified that payment was to be made after receipt of completed MS., but in any case I hope it may be convenient, as illness & delayed work & enforced travel expenses will leave me somewhat embarrassed by the time we reach Ventnor about mid-March.

With cordial regards (in which Mrs. Sharp begs to join, with all friendly remembrances to Mrs. Gilder) — with a similar greeting to Mr. Johnson if perchance after all he has not yet left —

Sincerely yours, | William Sharp

ALS Huntington

To Thomas Mosher, March 21, [1905]

Dictated

C/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield, Midlothian | Scotland | Tuesday evening 21st March.

Dear Mr. Mosher,

There has been delay in getting your letter, for I returned by sea from Italy, and then changed my plans before arrival and went to see friends in France. I am now in Edinburgh en route for the west, and have received all my delayed and reforwarded correspondence. I cannot write to you in detail yet, nor is it likely I shall be able to do so for some days to come at earliest, but meanwhile I must send you this line of acknowledgment.

I can, however, at once express my general agreement with what you write. Neither the

reminiscent volume (rearranged and augmented from *Iona*) or *Runes of Woman*, however, can be sent to you for Spring publication — though in good time I hope for the Autumn. I do not think you can depend on my sending these “MSS” for your earlier receipt than the middle of May. The date may be later: if at all practicable, it may even be a little earlier. But if you can count on receipt of both before the summer is not that sufficient to go upon?

The “Iona” MS. I can certainly manage to despatch by the end of April I think I may safely say.¹

In great haste, or I shall miss both this mail and my own train,

Yours ever sincerely | Fiona Macleod

TLS NYPL, Berg

To William John Robertson², [early April, 1905]

Edinburgh³

Dear Mr. Robertson,

¹ Sharp composed this letter in Ventnor and sent it to London for Edith Rinder to type since it is typed on a single sheet above “In great haste ...” and the Fiona signature in the Fiona hand. Had it gone to Mary in Edinburgh, she would have written its entirety in the Fiona hand. Either Edith had mastered the Fiona signature or Sharp had Mary sign several blank sheets to be typed in London to save time, probably the latter. Sharp himself was not in Edinburgh about to leave for the West of Scotland until mid-April.

² Born in 1846, William John Robertson was best known for his *A Century of French Verse: Brief Biographical and Critical Notices of Thirty-three French Poets of the Nineteenth Century with Experimental Translations from their Poems* (London: A. D. Innes, 1895). He also published several books on French grammar and, in 1896, a *High School History of Greece and Rome*. During their dinner before Sharp left London, they must have shared their fondness for expensive cigars since Robertson had a box of 100 “valuable Indian cheroots” sent to Sharp in Edinburgh. Given Sharp’s humorous efforts to Gallicize Robertson’s name, they must also have shared an interest in the Gaelic west of Scotland. Since Sharp knew and admired French poetry, especially Provençal poetry, they had a good deal in common though this is the first mention of Robertson I have found among Sharp’s acquaintances.

³ After spending March on the Isle of Wight, Sharp went first to London and then on to Edinburgh for a brief visit with his mother before taking his sister Mary to the small island of Lismore in Loch Lynne just north of Oban where he could “feel the dear West once more” (*Memoir*, 396).

After our most pleasant evening a deux I had a comfortable journey north: and last night luxuriated in getting to bed early (a rare thing for me) with the sure and certain knowledge there would be no glorious resurrection therefrom at any untimely hour. So after sleeping the sleep of the true Gael — who is said to put 85 to the poor Saddenach 40 winks — I woke in peace. I was thereafter having a cigarette over the *Scotsman* when my youngest (and secretary) sister brought me my letters, papers, etc., and with them a long narrow box which I soon discovered to be your generous gift of 100 of these delectable Indian cigars. It is very good of you indeed, and I am grateful, and may the ancient Gaelic God Dia-Cheo, God of Smoke, grant you remission of all your philological sins and derivative ‘howlers’ — and the more so as there is no authority for any such god, and the name would signify hill-mist instead of pipe-smoke! And may I have a hundred ‘reves de Notre Dame de Nicotine!’ I couldn’t resist trying one. Wholly excellent. And in the meditative fumes I arrived through intuition at the following derivation which I hope will find a place in your book:

Roab ancient Celtic for a Good Fellow

H’Errt “ “ “ “ Smoke-Maker or Smoke-bestower

’s contraction for *Agus* ‘and’

Onn ancient Celtic for ‘May Heaven Bless’

W. J. ancient Celtic Tribal tattoo —

which, assisted in dreams by the spirits of Windisch, D’Arbois de Jubainville, Loth, Whitley Stokes and Kuno Meyer, I take to be W. J. *Roab-H’Errt-Sonn* — i.e. Bill-Jack, or in mod. English ‘William John’ of the Clan of Heaven-Blessed Friendly Smokers — i.e. William John of the Roaberrtsson, or Robertson Clan. This of course disposes of Donnachie once and for all.

Ever sincerely yours, | William Sharp

Memoir 395-6

To Richard Garnett, [early April, 1905]

Murrayfield | Midlothian

My Dear Garnett,

Your welcome letter and the book¹ you so kindly sent reached me just as we were leaving Ventnor — and I had not time even to look at the volume in the train on account of pressing proofs etc., & then during my brief stay in London (en route to see my mother here) I was hopelessly preoccupied. But I had a long day's welcome leisure coming to Scotland, and my leisure was made a great pleasure by perusal of your Shakespearian play. It was not first acquaintance, however, for I got a copy in New York — though circumstances prevented any reading of that or anything else either during our visit to Stedman (& other friends) or when in New York & Boston.

What a tour-de-force your book is! Every line from that mysterious Shakespearian mint, into whose secret ways you have penetrated, rings with the unmistakable challenge. Only out of the most intimate knowledge of Shakespeare's life & thought & life-work could such a drama as yours have been produced, and no one not himself a poet of high order could have achieved so fine & memorable a thing. But I want to read it & study it again, & more closely, before I write further on it.

When I return from Scotland early in May I hope to have the pleasure of calling on you — & also someday with Mrs. Sharp — & having a chat on many things.

I was very sorry indeed to hear of your serious indisposition, & of how it lamed you: but now, I hope, you are well again (I met several friends in America who asked for you).

Most Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, [April 19, 1905]²

Wedny Morning

¹ The book was Garnett's *William Shakespeare, Pedagogue and Poacher, A Drama* (John Lane, The Bodley Head Press, London, 1904).

² EAS reprinted a slightly altered version of this letter in the *Memoir* (397-8). She wrote in pencil at the top of the manuscript: Lismore | April 19, 1905. Sharp and his sister Mary had traveled by train to Glasgow and then northwest to Oban. From the Port of Appin north of Oban they crossed to the island of Lismore where they stayed about a week with Mr. and Mrs. MacCaskill who occupied one of the island's few houses on its northern tip. A native Gaelic speaker, MacCaskill was a friend of Sharp's and the source of many mysterious tales and superstitions that found their way into the Fiona Macleod writings.

Dearest, it was sweet to fall asleep last night to the sound of the hill-wind & the swift troubled waters. We had a lovely walk in the late afternoon, & again in the somber moonlit night. It came on too strong for me to go round to the cavern later, however. I'll try again. I was there about first dusk, however, with Mary. To my chagrin there was neither sound nor sight of the sea-woman, but she must be there for MacCaskill has twice heard her sobbing and crying out at him when he passed close in the black darkness. There was only a pibhinn (*pee-veen*, a lapwing) wailing near by, but both Mary & I heard a singular furtive sound like something in a trailing silk dress whispering to itself as it slid past in the dusk — but this, I think, was a curious echo of what's called a 'sobbing wave' in some narrow columnar hidden hollow opening from the sea. Mary got the creeps, & loathed a story I told her about a midianmara that sang lovely songs but only so as to drown the listener & suck the white warm marrow out of his spine. "Well, you can stay and be sucked" she said, half angrily half frightenedly — "but I'm going back before it gets darker." After she went to bed (fancy Mrs. MacCaskill remembering that I slept in the blankets, & so had them unsheeted & warmed) I joined MacCaskill for a bit over the flickering fire-flaucht. I got him to tell me all over again & more fully about the Maighdeann Mhara. The first time he heard "something" was before his fright last November. 'There was céol then' (i.e. music — but as he repeated *céol-bheul*, that's more like whistling, for the double word means mouth-music) he said. "An robh òrain 'g an gabhail?", I asked ("were songs sung"?). "Tha air uairibh," he said ('Yes, at times' — i.e. now and again). Mrs. MacC. was angry at him he said, and said he hadn't the common sense of a jenny-cluckett (a clocking hen) — but (and there's a world of difference in that) she hadn't heard what he had heard. So to cheer him up I told him a story, speaking slowly, & in English of course, about a crab that fed on the brains of a drowned man, and grew with such awful & horrible wisdom that it climbed up the stairway of the seaweed and on to a big rock and waved its claws at the moon and cursed God & world, and then died raving mad. Seeing how it worked upon him, I said I would tell him another, and worse, about a lobster — but he was just as bad as Mary, and said he would wait for the lobster till the morning, and seemed so absurdly eager to get safely to bed that the pleasant chat had to be abruptly broken off.

But this morning I discovered the mystery of the puddock. He had secured it for me under the mistaken idea I wanted one — whereas what I had wanted was the folklore of the frog,

if he could get any for me. He had never heard of the word folklore, & thought it my way of saying ‘forelegs’ I suppose! As yet I’ve got no information about birds etc. that I don’t already know (& alas, much better than he does), but I hope for something on the heron. “But she wull no pe a burd,” he expostulated — and I had to explain it was’nt sgàdan I meant (i.e. a herring) but the ‘burd’.

You shd. have seen & heard Mary’s burst of suffocating laughter when he was telling her about his blessed much-loved “hairy tog” — and how it chased Mrs. MacC’s best duck — and then, poor man, meaning to say that it snatched the tail out he said something else much cruder but so wildly ludicrous that Mary collapsed. “She will pe ferry fond o’ togs,” said MacC., meditatively staring at her.

Yes, dear, I’m glad indeed to be here, for every reason (except the cold, tho’ its far better than Edinburgh — those awful E. winds — the E. wind gloom — tho’ damper of course) — & I dare say it’s true what you say abt “The Tribe of The Plover.” That, however, was a special folklore paper on the subject, and not one of F’s own spontaneous papers. There have to be one or two like that ever & again. But the “Clans of the Grass” and “The Wild Apple,” both written about same time, are as wholly F. as anything else, especially the first.¹ All the same you are right of course about my needing (I’m always needing it) fresh native & original wellsprings. And Lismore is a haunted isle, & MacC. a treasure. (He’s to tell me some Ross things *soon*.)² And now here he is, & we’re to cross in the ferry at once to post by the steamer.

Hurriedly yours, Dear one, Will

P.S. In one way, however, I’m thankful you aren’t here. The cold is very great, & as it is damp cold you’d feel it hard. Even with a warm blanket below me, & six above I was cold — & when I got up and had a partial bath (for I scootted out of it to dress) my breath swarmed about the

¹ Macleod’s “The Tribe of Plover,” “The Clans of Grass,” and “The Wild Apple” appeared in *Where the Forest Murmurs: Nature Essays* (London: George Newnes, Ltd., 1906) which was published after Sharp’s death.

² County Ross and Cromarty extends from the east to the west coast of North Scotland and includes the Outer Hebrides.

room like a clutch of phantom peewits. No wonder I had a dream I was a seal with my feet clammed on to an iceberg. You couldn't stand it. Even Mary said it was like mid-winter. A duck went past a little ago seemingly with one feather & that blown athwart its beak, so strong was the north wind blowing from the snowy mass of Ben Nevis.¹

After all we're too late, for it's very rough & the wind strong, to catch the steamer-post Mr. MacCaskill says — but he'll take us across an hour hence, & then we'll walk the 6 miles there & back to Duror Station (Upper Appin)² to catch the train-post by the new service via Benderloch & Connel Ferry.

But after this we can't depend on morning posts, tho' sometimes feasible. So that a letter posted say on Monday here won't leave Lismore till Tuesday forenoon. Letters come about 4:30, & the postman now doesn't wait, so there is time to answer — and letters (even to go next day) must be ready for him. The only other thing is to walk 13 miles (6 ½ each way) either at night or in the early morning.

A curious thing — about midnight last night I heard some one singing plaintively late out in the darkness outside the house — & not only did Mary hear it but sat up in her bed, wondering, & spoke to me about it in the morning before I said a word about it — but MacC. says “no, no, that could not ferry well pe at all, at all — for there's no one here to pe singing late at night”, and if there had been he and the dogs wd. have heard it. “Don't pe saying such things,” he added uneasily.

I think it's almost certain that we'll leave here when the week is up next Tuesday — for much as in every way I delight in it, I doubt if I can stand the penetrating cold. However, when one is up & moving about it is better. We have a huge fire all day. But I'm glad indeed to be here once more at this season, for I think it is in the last degree unlikely I'll ever be in Scotland again so early in the year, from choice. Only, it shows how well I am that I can stand it as I do.

We thought we saw a dead man floating off the north rocks, but it turned out to be a sleeping seal.

Ben Nevis is a mass of irradiate snow, worn like a delicate veil. Cruachan has covered

¹ Ben Nevis, the highest peak in Great Britain, overlooks the loch which contains Lismore.

² Duror is a fishing village seventeen miles northeast of Oban.

herself with a pall of snow mist.

Lovingly, Will

ALS NLS; Memoir 396

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, April 20, [1905]

20 April

. . . Fiona Macleod has just been made an honorary member of a French League of writers devoted to the rarer and subtler use of Prose and Verse, a charming letter from Paul Fort acting for his colleagues Maeterlinck, Henri de Roquier, Jean Moreas, Emile Verhaeren, Comte Antoine de la Rochefoucault, Duchesse de la Roche-Guyon, Richepin, Sully Prudhomme, Henri Le Sidaner, Jules Claretie, etc., etc.¹

We're glad, aren't we, you and I? She's our daughter, isn't she?

[William Sharp]

Memoir 398

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, April 23, [1905]

23d April.

. . . You will have got my note of yesterday telling you that I have reluctantly had to relinquish Iona. The primary reason is its isolation at present. . . .

But from something I heard from old Mr. C. I fancy it's as well for me not to visit there just now, where I'd be the only stranger, and every one would know of it — and where a look out for F. M. or W. S. is kept! And, too, anything heard there and afterwards utilized would be as easily traced to me. . . . After Tiree and Iona and Coll, and Arran in the South, I don't care just now for anywhere else — nearer: as for Eigg, which I loved so much of old, Rum or Canna and the Outer Isles, they are too inaccessible just now and Skye is too remote and too wet and

¹Paul Fort (1872-1960) was a French poet who, in 1905, founded and edited *Vers et Prose*, a literary review associated with Valéry. Jean Moreas (1856-1910) was a French poet who founded the periodical *La Symboliste* in 1886 and played a leading role in the French Symbolist Movement. Emile Verhaeren (1855-1916) was a Belgian poet who wrote in French. René François Armand (1839-1907), a Parnassian poet, won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1901. Jules Claretie (1840-1913) was a journalist, critic, and chronicler.

cold. However, it is isolation plus ‘atmosphere’ I want most of all — and I doubt if there is any place just now I could get so much good from as Lismore. I love that quiet isolated house on the rocks facing the Firth of Lorne, all Appin to Ben Naomhir, and the great mountains of Morven.

It was on the sandy bindweed-held slope of the little bay near the house, facing Eilean-nan-Coarach, that F. wrote the prelude to *The Winged Destiny* — and also the first piece, the “Treud-nan-Ron”, which describes that region, with Dr. MacC.’s seal legend, and the dear little island in the Sound of Morven (do you remember our row to it one day?) There one could be quiet and given over to dreams and to the endless fascination of outer nature. . . . And I have got much of what I want — the *in-touch* above all, the atmosphere: enough to strike the keynote throughout the coming year and more, for I absorb through the very pores of both mind and body like a veritable sponge. Wild-life and plant-life too [are] extremely interesting here. There does seem some mystery about that cave tho’ I cannot fathom it.

I’ve all but finished the preparation of the new Tauchnitz vol. (The Sunset of Old Tales) and expect to complete it (for May) tonight.

[William Sharp]

Memoir 398-9

To W. J. Robertson, April[24?], 1905¹

Ri Willeam Iain MacRiobeart mhic Donnach aidh —

Awful accident in a lonely Isle of the West.

A distinguished stranger was observing the vasty deep, and had laid a flask-filled cup on a rock beside him when a tanned gull upset it and at same time carried off a valuable Indian cheroot. Deep sympathy is everywhere expressed, for the distinguished stranger, the lost cheroot, and above all for the spilt cup and abruptly emptied flask. A gloom has been cast over the whole island. Verb: Sap:

[William Sharp]

Memoir 396

¹ EAS said this post card was sent from Oban. Since it describes an event on Lismore, Sharp may have written it on the island and then mailed it when he and Mary spent the night in Oban after leaving the island

To Thomas Mosher, April 24, [1905]

Monday 24th April, | c/o 22. Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield Midlothian | Scotland

(Tempy.) | Eilean Lios Mhor | Casil Morbhern | Argyll

Dear Mr. Mosher

I have today sent to you by registered book-post the final ‘copy’ for the “*Iona*” book.

If immaterial to you I much prefer that the book should be called simply *Iona*: but if you feel convinced that this would be inadvisable for even the small American public for such a book, or relatively for any books of mine, then I would suggest either the title already alluded to in previous letters, *In This Kingdom By The Sea*, or else, and I think better, *The Isle of Dreams*. So far as my own opinion goes, I think that, from every point of view, *Iona* is not only the better of the two, but the best possible. However, if you are convinced otherwise, then use either alternative. [Personally, of the two, I prefer *The Isle of Dreams*, but there’s the question if that would not be thought to clash with the volume called *The Dominion of Dreams* (issued in U.S.A. by Fredk. Stokes & Co.) — though I suppose it would not really do so.] Till this moment I had forgotten a possible objection to the use of “*Iona*” as a title, in so far as it is an integral part of the title of *The Divine Adventure* volume — in which case “*The Isle of Dreams*” would serve. On the other hand, “*The D. A.*” has not been reprinted in America intact. The matter sent comprises the personal and legendary part of the original “*Iona*,” by many people on this side considered the most interesting thing of mine. There are some revisions and MS. additions as well as rearrangement, and also some sixteen pages from *The Winged Destiny*: so that copyright is assured.

As it stands the matter should make a book of about the same size as *From the Hills of Dream*, say about 150 pp. I am estimating by the printed pages sent as I suppose what is on any one of these largely printed pages can be got into one of the “*Old World Series*” pages.

If, however, absolutely necessary to curtail the matter I would suggest the cancelling of the legendary episodes of St. Columba and the Blessing of the Fishes and barbaric tale of Olaus the White . . . namely, from near top p. 99 to p. 118 inclusive: — i.e. 20 pp. If even that should not suffice, then all the pages about Second-Sight (though in general drift so very personal) could be sacrificed also: i.e., the MS. pages 73, 73a, 74, 74a, 75, and printed pages 76 to 81 inclusive

— in all about 9 pp. more. There's nothing else I could care to dispense with, unless, in actual necessity, from last para. on p. 43 to end of p. 51. (about 8 to 9 pp.)

[Possible Cancellings if absolutely necessary.

- (1) 20 pp.
- (2) 9 pp.
- (3) 8 pp]

Of course if feasible I would like to see proofs, and this especially advisable with the Gaelic words occasionally introduced. Please advise me of the approximate or actual date of their despatch, as I may be in the far west or north, and want to arrange to have no delay in connection with them: and please see that they are not registered, as that may (as it sometimes does) cause considerable delay, especially if my Secy. is from home.

Naturally, too, I must see proof of the private dedication-page, as that is solely in Gaelic. Please tell the printer to set and revise this very carefully before it is sent to me, especially in the proper spacing of such unfamiliar typesetting as, for example, *air sgàth n' h-àighh eadarainn* [where the *n'* stands by itself, and where *h-àigh* is one word, though with a hyphen'd *h.*] or again Aislingean 's Miannain, where 's is a distinct word. To obviate the chance of misreadings of such unfamiliar MS, I have enclosed with the registered matter two copies of the Dedication page, one written and one pen-printed. [You will hardly perhaps recognise my name in its Gaelic form, Fionaghal nic Lèoid?]

And now about the *Runes of Women*. I am very sorry to have to postpone the necessary final work on these, and consequently their despatch: but I fear that altered circumstances make it quite impossible for me to let you have the MS. by the middle of May. I have to leave here early tomorrow morning (unless, unfortunately, heavy weather prevents crossing to the mainland in time to catch the steamer for Oban) for Edinburgh, and the following morning must go south to Wales to be near one dear to me and who is seriously ill there. This may make any attempt to finish and despatch the *Runes of Women* till the end of May out of the question. All I can say is that *if circumstances permit (but which you must not depend on)* I will try to finish the small book so as to despatch it either from Wales or Scotland by about the middle of May. All will depend on how circumstances go between this coming week-end and that following: (May 5th to 8th). If these should be unexpectedly (but quite possibly) wholly favorable, then I shall be able to

send off the MS. (typewritten) by or before mid-May: if not, well — you must put your anathema on the adverse circumstances and not on either the indifference or the indolence of,

Dear Mr. Mosher, | Yours very sincerely, | Fiona Macleod

P. S. I need hardly say I shall make every possible effort not to disappoint you (though now at the best the *earliest* for your receipt could not be before May 20th) but more than that obviously I cannot say.

NYPL, Berg

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, [April 25, 1905]

In the Train | (& ferry shaky at that!)

Tarling

It will be ferry difficult to write in this unusually shaky train, which to use a slight hyperbole will almost be hitting the horizon on each side in its ferry pad swayings.

You see what an influence Mr. MacCaskill has left on me! Fancy, Mrs. MacC. has only had her bonnet on twice since we saw her — once at her youngest daughter's marriage to Roronuil MacCoreadaile last year, & once at a photographing by the laird — and it is 6 years since she has ventured across the water to Appin! From years end & to years end, life is the same, save for the slow change of the seasons, & the slower invisible movements of the tides of life. It is restful for a time, but wd. be crushing after a spell, & mean stagnation for any not accustomed to daily manual toil or without local engrossing work. They on the other hand look with mingled awe & amusement at the to them inexplicable longing to get away from such conditions, & for the already strong desire to leave this gloomy & dull climate for abroad, where life is (for us) so far far easier as well as happier now. But even when I told MacC. that it was a matter of prolonged life & energy & youth for me, & that I invariably recede on an ebbing tide over here, & go high on a strong flowing tide over yonder, he'd only shake his head & say *Ishe miann na lach an loch air nach bi I* [i.e., in effect, the duck's desire is to be on some other loch then that on which she happens to find herself!]

But I am most glad to have been there: & learned & heard much, tho' little on the one subject where I can get next to nothing, Gaelic astronomy. By a coincidence the Gentleman opposite me in the train is the Astronomer of the Edinburgh Observatory (on his way to the

Shine Observatory in the Isle of Wight, to examine the seismic vibration records of the Indian earthquake) & we have had a long talk, & lunched together, but it ended by his saying he wished he knew what I did about the Gaelic stars etc.!!¹ What little I told him interested him greatly, but he says he has met no one in Ed. or Glasgow who has any knowledge on the subject, & that there's no book on the subject. In fact, he says, he didn't know of any G. name except for the North Star (& then proceeded to give the wrong name, for *Reul Nêar* is Star of the East! *Reul Tuath* or *Tuathal* is the N. Star.) When I told him about certain groups & constellations & said I had lists of many Gaelic star-names, gathered at long intervals, & thro' a hundred sources, he hinted he would like to know who I was, for, as he said, he hardly ever met anyone away from astronomical sets interested in these things, & especially in such themes as the migration of star-symbols, Aryan origins of Celtic names, & probable spiritual significance of oldest star-legends & even folk-lore — but I evaded this, as superfluous.

Yes, I was sorry to leave Lismore. It may be my last time in the Gaelic West. (I don't say this "down-ly" — but because I think it likely: and, in a way I'll explain later, am even glad. There is much I want to do, and now, as much by W. S. as F. M., & that I realize must be done abroad where alone (save for spring time in London) can I keep well — & mentally even more than physically. (How I hope Fontainebleu may someday suit us.)²

Dear Seùmas MacCaskill was sorry to part too. He shook hands (with both his) and

¹ The man Sharp met on the rain was Ralph Copeland, the Astronomer Royal of Scotland. Appointed to that position in 1889, he worked first as the Director of the Calton Hill Observatory in Edinburgh and then of the new observatory on Blackford Hill, Edinburgh when it opened in 1896. Copeland traveled widely to observe astronomical events, and his discoveries earned him a world-wide reputation. Seven of the galaxies in the constellation Leo form the "Copeland Septet." Mount Copeland in northwest Canada was named for him as was Copeland Ridge and nearby Copeland Creek. Born in 1837, he was sixty-eight years old when he and Sharp lunched together on the train. Both men would be dead by year's end, Copeland in October and Sharp in December.

² In the *Memoir*, EAS printed this paragraph and the next as a separate letter dated April 24. They are, in fact, the concluding paragraphs of this manuscript letter EAS dated in pencil as April 25. She did not include the preceding paragraphs in the *Memoir*. The sequence suggests Sharp and Mary left Lismore on the 24th, spent the night in Oban, and took the Oban/Glasgow train on the 25th.

when I said in Gaelic “Goodbye, & farewell upon that, my friend” he said “No-no” — and then suddenly said “Mo beannachd oirbh agus slàn leibh air an àm” [My blessing on you — and goodbye now! (literally — ‘and health be to you in the interval)] and turned away & went down the pier-side & hoisted the brown sail & went away across the water, waving a last farewell.

[William Sharp]

ALS NLS

To Thomas Mosher, May 16, [1905]

C/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield, Midlothian | 16th May

Dear Mr. Mosher

Only a hurried line for the mail, for I am not well: — and that to say I am sorry I must disappoint you as to the “Runes of Women” volume. As I feared when I last wrote to you (after despatch of the “Iona” copy), when I was summoned to Wales, I found my friend too seriously ill to allow of any possible leisure for work of any kind — indeed even reading and correspondence had to be set aside. Since then, I have not been well myself, and I am told that as absolute a mental and nervous rest as practicable is imperative for me. In the circumstances it was quite impossible for me to work at a volume, either creatively or revisionally demanding such concentration and nervous energy as the book in question. It is impracticable for me to say when I can now see to it — possibly after a long yachting-voyage with friends I hope to take in a fortnight or so: possibly in the autumn: so, in these circumstances, I can say no more than that when opportunity and circumstance permit I hope to complete and forward this small book. At the present juncture I could not touch it even if able to do so, for circumstances compel me to look to material advantage for what I write, and the nominal sum you offer is wholly inadequate to the thought and energy and time, with relinquishment pro-tem. of all other work, involved.

I hope the “Iona” copy reached you all right. By the way I do think that royalty-system would suit me here. I should prefer it in the case of the “Runes.” For “Iona” I would like the nominal payment of £10. (its preparation for you cost me a good deal more than this!), if you are agreeable thereto.

This is a forbidden length of letter! But I want to catch this mail.

Believe me, dear Mr. Mosher, | Most sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

NYP, Berg

To Robert Underwood Johnson, May 27, 1905

5 Gordon Place | Campden Hill, London W. | Saturday Morning | 27: May: 05

Thanks for letter (and supplementary note). I set about the matter at once, & MS.¹ is now ready: but I have been delayed by the desired photograph. That, however, has now been got for me.

The U. S. A. mail leaves early on Saturdays and I fear I cannot catch it today (as 10:50 a. m. out here is the hour). If not, the next outgoing mail will bring you MS, letter, & photos.

William Sharp

ACS Huntington

To Robert Underwood Johnson, May 27, [1905]

5 Gordon Place | Campden Hill | London W. | 27/May

Dear Mr. Johnson,

A line in great haste, as, after all, I think I can just manage to get off MS. etc. by this mail. Thanks for your letter asking me to do it.

I have given you full measure to your commission! — for apart from length to which it had to go (unless you delete the lines abt Hilton & Haydon²) — it has taken me a full week, at home, at the Brit. Mus Library, & verifying details, & also getting the Photo etc.

With the Nat. Gal. photo of S's [Severn's] Keats I send the fine one of Hilton, by many considered at the time & since the best of K. I do not think it has ever been reproduced. (The

¹ Sharp's "The Portraits of Keats with Special Reference to Those by Severn," *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 71 (February, 1906), 535-51. See Sharp's letters to Johnson and Gilder dated February 5, 1905.

² William Hilton (1786–1839) was an English portrait and history painter who trained at the Royal Academy School and eventually became Keeper of the Royal Academy. Successful in his lifetime with huge history paintings in the "Grand Manner, he is best known today for his portraits of the poets John Keats and John Clare. He, Joseph Severn, and Benjamin Hayden (1786–1846) were close friends of Keats. Hayden also specialized in grand historical pictures and painted some portraits, most notably of William Wordsworth.

photos come to 5^s /-) — If proofs are sent, they can be sent here up till near end July tho' for the first part of July I have to go to Germany for special treatment, not being well. (As for this & other reasons I am somewhat severely hard pressed financially I'd be greatly obliged if you cd. let me have the payment at your early convenience.)

Excuse so hurried a scroll, at the Mail-edge.

Ever sincerely yours, | William Sharp

P.S. Of course if wished delete the opening pages of warning or advice to Keats portrait collectors, but I thought it needed. In making forthcoming plans, if you w^d an article dealing with Cprdica (life, literature, people, scenery, etc.) will you think of an application from me? We are thinking of going there again, in late autumn, & spending 6 months.

ALS Huntington

To Robert Underwood Johnson, [May 28, 1905]

5 Gordon Place | Campden Hill | London W.

In sending off Severn-Keats MS by a prior mail I think I gave above as address till end of July — but if so cancel it.

My best letter address till the end of July will be

C/o Frank Rinder Esq.,

21 Woronzow Road,

London N.W.

[Thereafter Murrayfield, Midlothian]

William Sharp

ACS Huntington

To Yone Noguchi, [Summer, 1905]

On the Mediterranean

Dear Mr. Noguchi,

Your note and delightful little book reached me, after considerable delay, in southern

Europe.¹ I write this at sea, and will send it with other letters, etc., to be stamped and posted in Edinburgh — and the two reasons of delay will show you that it is not from indolence!

I have read your book with singular pleasure. What it lacks in form (an inevitable lack, in the circumstances) it offers in essential poetry. I find atmosphere and charm and colour and naivete, and the true touch of the poet; and congratulate you on your ‘success of suggestion’ in a language so different in all ways from that wherein (I am sure) you have already achieved the ‘success of finality’.

Believe me, | Yours very truly, | Fiona Macleod

Memoir 409

To Thomas Mosher, June 8, [1905]

C/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield, Midlothian | Scotland | Friday 8th June

Dear Mr. Mosher

I have just arrived in Edinburgh, and have time only for a brief note, as I want to register the proofs for tomorrow’s mail.

Herewith I am returning to you, by registered post, all the Galley-Proofs as yet received by me, finally revised for press. You will see that I have approved, and adopted, your suggestion, as to numbering (Roman numbers) each section. At same time I return, as wished,

¹ After studying briefly at Keio University in Tokyo, Yone Noguchi (1875-1947) went to San Francisco in 1893 and met Joaquin Miller who encouraged him to become a poet and introduced him to other San Francisco Bay area writers. He published two books of poetry in 1897: *Seen & Unseen, or, Monologues of a Homeless Snail* and *The Voice of the Valley*. He moved to New York in 1900 and, in 1902, to London where he self-published and promoted a third book of poetry, *From the Eastern Sea* (1903), and associated with many leading literary figures: William Michael Rossetti, Laurence Binyon, William Butler Yeats, Thomas Hardy, Laurence Housman, and Arthur Symons. An admirer of the Fiona Macleod poetry, Noguchi sent her a copy of *From the Eastern Sea* which she acknowledged in this letter. Noguchi’s presence in England explains Sharp’s putting her “at sea” when she wrote the letter. EAS says Noguchi sent Fiona a copy of “his subsequent book *The Summer Cloud*, a collection of short prose poems, which he explained in his note of presentation: ‘In fact I had been reading your prose poems, *The Silence of Amor*, and wished I could write such pieces myself. And here is the result.’” Noguchi’s return to New York before *The Summer Cloud* was published in 1906 may explain why he had not heard Fiona was Sharp and no longer living. Years later Noguchi returned to Japan and avidly supported in the thirties Japan’s expansionist and militaristic regimes.

the original book page-proofs.

With this note I am also sending you the finally approved Dedication-page.

In great haste, | Believe me | Dear Mr. Mosher | Most sincerely yours | Fiona Macleod
P.S. Thanks as to payment concerning “The Isle of Dreams”: and I may add that I agree as to Royalty-payment for the “Runes”, *when* I can send these. (I am hopeful of finishing the little book before end of July though I am still very far from well, and cannot say definitely.)

ALS NYPL, Berg

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, [June 16, 1905]¹

[Villa Eisner, Bad Neuernahr] Friday

Darling,

I am told — but all information here is difficult to get, and uncertain at that — that a letter posted today will be delivered in London tomorrow evening.

Whatever else I may gain here I am certainly gaining in nervous repair. It is, here at the Villa Eisner, deliciously quiet and reposeful — and tho’ I do not like Germans & their ways, or German ‘living,’ I find that by seeing & dwelling upon the good & pleasant side in each that life can be made agreeable here, as it can most wise & in most places in a like spirit. I did not realise to the full how much nervous harm I’ve had for long, & especially at the Gordon Pl. rooms, where the whole nervous system was frayed by the continual noise and old-exhaustedness of everything, from the air to the rooms themselves & the gas-poisoned atmosphere. To live near trees is alone a joy & a restorative to me. People here speak much of the heat. I don’t feel it. On the contrary, it is simply a pleasant warmth, & very reposeful & life-giving — warm enough to sit out at any time under green boughs or arbours or in shady avenues or the pleasant garden here, but not a bit too warm for me at any rate to walk about at any time.

I am convinced that you and I can regulate our life to suit better than any doctor can

¹ EAS wrote in pencil at the top of the manuscript the date and “Neuernahr” and bracketed sections to include in the *Memoir* (400-2) where she also said the cold weather on Lismore “proved so disastrous” that her “husband was ordered to Neuernahr for special treatment. Sharp spent five weeks in London after his return from Lismore working on the article on Keats’ portraits before leaving on June 10 or 11 for Bad Neuernahr where he stayed four weeks.

direct. I am not well, it is true, but I am not as ill or anything like it as might be supposed from the symptoms. Depression, weariness, spiritual strain, nervous energy on the ebb, a dozen things will affect me so that a stranger may readily be deceived — just as vice-versa at certain times a stranger might refuse to believe anything the matter at all. The sense of rapid healing I have at present is due to no treatment of course yet [as a matter of fact the food is of a kind that I neither like nor suits] — but to rest of mind & body, the sense of reposefulness, the escape from the perturbing & exhausting forces & influences of town life especially at this season, the absence at night and by day when I am in my room or in the garden of all noise, no sounds save the susurrus of leaves and the sweet monotony of the rushing Ahr, & the cries & broken songs of birds. There is no strain in connection with the waters etc. I am called at 6, but there is no need to keep to any special time. So I can either get up, or lie for ½ an hour or so reading or drowsing, or sleep again, as I like. But generally I shall rise about 6:15, & take the first water about 7, & the second¹

things. The expenses here will be greater than I anticipated. 9^s/ a day here, and I do not²

I cd. see that Dr. G. (whom I met out this morning) can't understand why I am not more depressed or, rather, more anxious. I explained to him that these physical troubles meant little to me, & that they were largely the bodily effect of other things, & might be healed far more by spiritual wellbeing than by anything else: also that nature & fresh air & serenity & light & sun warmth & nervous rest were worth far more to me than all else. "But don't you know how serious your condition may become at any moment, if you got a bad chill or set back, or don't soon get better?" Certainly, I said: "but what then? Why should I bother about either living or dying? I shan't die before the hour of my unloosening comes — &, for the rest, I am absolutely convinced that these symptoms, tho' there & indisputable, are in a sense misleading. I want to be helped all I may be — but all the waters in the world & all the treatment in the world can only affect the external life, & even that only secondarily very often.

I am equally convinced — that, after the nervous rest, & waters (*probably*) & diet

¹A section of the manuscript is missing here.

²Another section of the manuscript is missing here.

(possibly — it only remains to be proved) here, that I'll keep well when with you and away from England for the autumn to spring months. Even here, the difference climatically is very great — & I feel the immediate gain: & the balmy warmth suits me.

But this is hardly keeping to Dr. G.'s advice about writing as little as possible. But what's the good of a darling wife if I can't write to her when I want — & hear from her often too I hope. Am going to the forest this afternoon with Frau Urecke, a pleasant, handsome Dusselderferin

Dearest love to my Dear One, | Wilf

ALS NLS

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, [June 19, 1905]¹

[Villa Elsner, Bad Neuenahr] Monday Evening

. . . How I enjoyed my breakfast this morning! (in the lovely garden, in a vine-shadowed arbour or pergola, with great tall poplars and other trees billowing against the deep-blue). Then a cigarette, a stroll in the lovely sunlit-dappled green shadowiness of an adjoining up-sloping avenue — and a seat for a little on a deserted south-wall bench (because of the blazing heat) for a sun-bath, while I watched a nightingale helping its young to fly among the creaming elders and masses of wild-rose, while her mate swung on a beach-branch and called long sweet exquisite cries of a thrilling poignancy (which, however, might only be “Now then, Jenny, look out, or Tommy will fall into that mass of syringe: — hillo! There's Bobby and Polly gone and got scratched pecking at these confounded white wild-roses!)

Then I got up to come in and write to you (gladly in one way reluctantly in another for I seem to drink in life in the strong sunlight and heat), but first stopped to speak to a gorgeous solitary dandelion. I stroked it gently, and said “Hullo, wee brother, isn't the world beautiful?

¹ EAS printed a portion of this letter in the *Memoir* immediately following a portion of the previous letter identifying it only as “Monday evening.” I have not located the manuscript. It could have been written on either Monday the 19th or the 26th, but its fresh impressions of the Villa and its surroundings suggest the former. The letter demonstrates a surprisingly child-friendly aspect of Sharp's personality as it was clearly intended to be read to Marjorie who EAS identified as “the little daughter of our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Tomson.” EAS probably sent the letter on to the Tomsons after using it for the *Memoir*.

Hold up your wee head and rejoice!” And it turned up its wee golden nose and said.” Keep your hair on, you old skidamalink, I’m rejoicing as hard as ever I can. I’m *always* rejoicing. What else would I do? You *are* a rum old un-shiny animal on two silly legs!” So we laughed, and parted — but he called me back, and said gently in a wee soft goldy-yellow voice, “Don’t think me rude, Brother of Joy. It’s only my way. I love you because you love *me* and don’t despise me. Shake pinkies!” — so I gave him a pinkie and he gave me a wee golden-yellow pinkie-petal.” . . .

Tell Marjorie the wee Dandelion was asking about her and sends her his love — also a milky daisy that says *Hooray!* Every morning when it wakes, and then is so pleased and astonished that it remains silently smiling till next morning.

This flower and bird talk doesn’t bother you, does it? Don’t think I don’t realize how ill I have been and in a small way still am: but I don’t think about it, and am quite glad and happy in this lovely June-glory. . . .

[William Sharp]

Memoir 400-1

To Alexander Nelson Hood, June, 1905¹

[Villa Elsner, Bad Neuenahr] June, 1905

My Dear Julian,

Just a brief line, for I am still very restricted in permission as to writing, as so much depends on the rest-cure which is no small factor in my redemption here. . . .

It has been ‘a narrow squeak’. Briefly, after a hard tussle at the brink of ‘Cape Fatal’ and a stumble across ‘Swamp Perilous’ I got into the merely “dangerous condition” stage — and now at last that’s left behind, and I’ll soon be as well in body as I’m happy and serene in mind.

It is at best, however, a *reprieve*, not a lifetime-discharge. *N’importe*. Much can be done with a reprieve, and who is to know how long the furlough may be extended to. At any rate, I am well content.

[William Sharp]

Memoir 399-400

¹ EAS said this letter was written in Neuenahr.

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, [July 9?, 1905]

Witte Huis, Doorn | Sunday Forenoon

I cross most probably on Saturday night from Hook
but shall send exact postal & other date partics later.

Darling

After a beautiful and restful afternoon and evening in this most charming and simpatica home of dear and good friends — and a long sleep from about 9:30 p. m. till about 8 this morning, I feel perfectly well again. I have not seen anyone yet, save Ciccio the Taormina boy, who at 8 brought me my daintily served breakfast of 2 eggs, and cream and tea, (for I have my own Gluton Bread which I like greatly) for I've only just got up (10 a. m.) and had a spongedown in the baf and had a shave and dressed.

Thanks so much for your telegram, dear, though on the way I regretted that you had known anything about it till it was absolutely a thing of the past, so as not to distress your loving heart. It distresses me deeply to think of the distress of *your* dear tender heart. But my telegrams from Neuenahr and yesterday afternoon from Doorn [i.e., station 3 or 4 miles away at Zeist-Driebergen] will have reassured you.

Today there is not a trace of *any* kind of trouble. As I told you, the stone penetrated no intestinal film, so there were no peritonitic or other complications — and I'm now of course ever so much better for having got rid of it and all the allied uric acid poison. Last night there was naturally the diabetic symptom of continuous thirst — but that was natural after the longish journey in great heat and in the vibration of a train. Today, despite that I woke to 75% [perhaps degrees?] in my room (with both front and side French-windows wide open all night, & a large shadowy spacious room outlooking on sunlit green forest-glades a stone's throw away) I have had no thirst, no symptoms of any kind. The heat is very great, but to me most welcome and regenerative and strengthening.

It is no exaggeration to say that, so greatly do I value and treasure afterwards certain aspects of beauty, I would quite willingly go through it all again for the sake of the lovely impressions here last night and this morning. The beauty and charm of this house and its forest environment, the world of lovely sunny greenness, the wild-doves and the nightjar at dusk, the

young noon, the peace, (and then to soothe and sleepify me still more soft, sweet, lovely old fashioned melodies of Haydn from 9 till 9:30) — two or three lovely peacocks trailing about in front — the swallows at corner of my great verandah at lovely front window — a thousandfold peace and beauty, and the goodness of these dear friends [Mme. Herbrecht, a sister in law of B's¹ also here — but not her other sister whom we met] have not only been, and are, a living continuous joy, but have been like the Heralds of Spring to the return of gladness and² energy into my mind. Today I realise that too, for one thing, 'Fiona' has come back from afar off. It is peace and greenness she loves — not the physical and psychical perturbation and demoralisation of towns.

Yes, we'll make 'green homes' for ourselves now. No more long needless months in London

ALS NLS and *Memoir* 402

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, [July 10?, 1905]

Witte Huis | Doorn | Holland | Monday morning

Linky-Blue Dear,

How you'd love to be here!

(an unconscious rhyme!)

I rose at 7:30, and had my baf [glad to be up after a close and oppressive night following the terrific and prolonged thunderstorm of last night — as I slept little, and that brokenly —] and at 8 Ciccio brought me my breakfast, and your dear lett of 'Friday-Night and Saty-Aftnoon' and a pleasant line from Frau Elsner saying in effect "Strange to say, I felt as if someone had left me whom I had known long ago and who had helped me to find life and the pension less dreary than usual." As I told you, there is outside the front of my large spacious beautiful bedroom an immense verandah-balcony, with a thatched roof that not only shades but keeps it cool. It has to the left a large wooden work-table and easy chair, and to the right a long comfortable sofa lounge: and it fronts a large angle of grassy and trey lawn, and in a huge semicircle the

¹ (Abrahamina Arnolda Louise) 'Bramine' Hubrecht (Donders) (Grandmont) (1855-1913)

² The manuscript ends here, and the lines that follow are included in the *Memoir* (402).

encroaching forest. Nothing visible but green depths fading into green depths, and fringing the sky-lines the endless surf of boughs and branches. From the forest glades the cooing of doves and the travelling-voice of a flowing cool sweet wind of this delicious morning. I always gain immensely in mind and body from nearness to woodlands and green growth — hence in no small part my feeling for Fontainebleau. The peace is exquisite, at once soothing and calm in to an extraordinary degree, and mentally stimulating and spiritually quickening. I'd such a lot to tell you about it, and to talk of à propos of it, and of what we should strive to obtain for ourselves in restful, fine, dignified (and no more expensive hotel or dreary, inadequate and du borne and in a sense sordid lodgings) life, and much else, apropos and apart, — as you lay happy and contented on the long luxurious lounge beside me, half listening to me, half to the forest-wind, and with one eye on a large Morella cherry (hoping to bag it from me and eat it when I wasn't looking, and I simply trusting you!) and one on a young rabbit trying to play with its own puzzling frisky shadow in the dappled sunlight — that more than an hour elapsed after I had drunk my tea and cream, read your letter, and two forwarded papers, and then talked to you to the soft continuous susurrus of the pine-fragrant breeze.

How good and dear the Grandmorts are. She is so thoughtful and tender, too: and so good when I was tired after my journey and yesterday in bringing cushions when I was lying in a chair outside — and seeing to everything about food, often at no little trouble here.

I shall be sorry indeed to leave here on Wednesday — but they have to go to Utrecht themselves: for if only you were here I'd contentedly remain till the autumn-end. The house is¹

[William Sharp]

ALS NLS

To [Nigel] Severn, July 16, 1905²

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

Dear Mr. Severn,¹

¹ The final section of the manuscript is missing.

² Someone, perhaps Severn, wrote "Sunday 16: Jany" at the top of the manuscript letter. That is clearly a mistake for "July

On my return today from abroad I find your letter of the 14: awaiting me among many others. In a day or two (for by a coincidence, one of the reasons of my coming to London just now is to complete an article on the several portraits of Keats) I may be able to write on the point you raise.² If at all possible (& I have been very unwell, & am now terribly busy) I may try to call upon you one day this week & see the mask you have.³ In case you should be out (but perhaps you cd. let me have a card saying what time is likeliest to find you at home), could you leave word that I be shown the Mask.

In great haste | Yours very truly | William Sharp

PS If you are free I could manage I see to come about 3:30 to 4 on Tuesday. Would this suit? You have I suppose no other Keats-Severn portraits of any kind?

ALS Princeton

To Nigel Severn, July 18, [1905]

18th July | 9 St. Mary's Terrace | Paddington | W.

Dear Mr. Severn,

I saw Mr. Hollyer this afternoon, and he agreed to make the photographs. It is essential

¹ Nigel Severn was the son of Walter Severn (1830-1904), a well-known and accomplished artist, and the grandson of Joseph Severn (1793-1879), a portraitist and friend of Keats who accompanied him to Rome and stayed with him until he died. In the *Memoir* (168), EAS said Walter Severn gave Sharp access to his father's papers in 1889 or 1890 and asked him to write a biography which became *The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* (London: Sampson Lowe, Marston & Co., 1892). In "Writing Keats's Last Days: Severn, Sharp, and Romantic biography" (*Studies in Romanticism*, March 22, 2003), Grant F. Scott corrected EAS's dates: "The project was initiated as many as five years before, in the summer of 1884. In a letter of 23 July 1884, Walter Severn responded to a number of Sharp's queries and mentioned Ruskin's agreement to contribute to the biography. In a subsequent letter to Sharp, dated 19 November 1887, he also mentioned the 'coming Life of my Father.'"

² Having received Sharp's manuscript of the Keats article and photo copies of two portraits of Keats, Robert Underwood Johnson had asked for revisions in the manuscript and wondered if Sharp could obtain photographs of other portraits of Keats. It turned out that Nigel Severn did have two other portraits and was willing to have them photographed.

³ Severn told Sharp he had a mask, perhaps a death mask of his grandfather, he would like Sharp to see and identify.

that they be made at his place, because of light and the question of time & convenience — but I told him that you had kindly suggested that your frame-maker could see to the safe carriage of the picture, and to bring it back to you when Mr. Hollyer has photographed it (or them). He on his part promised the utmost expedition, and said that if he received by or before Thursday he could photograph that day or at latest on Friday, & that then the picture could be returned at once.

I wish I could feel certain that the small Keats portrait already photographed by Hollyer is identical with the panel portrait you have. There seemed to me differences in the forehead & elsewhere, but most noticeably in detail such as the different necktie. Perhaps you will kindly look at the panel again by morning light, & see if any differences in the photograph are merely accidental or if they really indicate another replica of the Keats original. If you feel convinced they are the same, it wd. be superfluous to have the panel photographed again. Otherwise of course by all means let it be sent to Hollyers along with the Nightingale picture.

I forgot to tell you that the above address is only till the end of this month, as it is that of temporary rooms — & that thereafter my best letter-address is “The Grosvenor Club,” Piccadilly, W.

Yours sincerely | William Sharp

PS. My lost folio envelope & its contents (of importance) were found by someone at or near Victoria & reposted to me, I am relieved to say.

ALS private

To Robert Underwood Johnson, [July 27, 1905]

Yorkshire | (En route for Scotland) | Thursday, 27th¹

Dear Mr. Johnson,

As I mentioned in my registered letter of Tuesday, with revised & rewritten MS. — just before I left London — I had at the last moment to send it without the two photographs which I had commissioned Mr. Fredk Hollyer² to make. [Also, to save pressing time, I did not delay to

¹ “July” and “1905” have been inserted in the manuscript letter, perhaps by Johnson.

² Frederick Hollyer (1838-1933) was an English photographer and engraver known for his photographic reproductions of paintings and drawings, particularly those of the Pre-Raphaelite

have the article typed — knowing you wished to receive it at the earliest possible moment.] These have now reached me here in Yorkshire, where I am with friends for a couple of days en route to Scotland.¹ So I send them on now. One is the photograph of the Panel Miniature of Keats alluded to as Severn's own copy — and the other is the photograph of the “Keats and the Nightingale” (The Spaniards, Hampstead Heath) picture by Severn. With the utmost care it has not been possible to get a better photo. of this time-darkened and somewhat heavily pigmented picture. Mr. Hollyer does not include his a/c, but I understand that including all expense for the removal of the large picture and the panel from Mr. Nigel Severn's to Mr. Hollyer's, the maximum was not to exceed 20^s/ -- or a guinea each. So when remitting the extra payment as kindly arranged, will you please include for the Photos as well.

I am glad to be out of London again, and realize that with rest and fresh air and early hours I shall soon be well again.

Yours Sincerely, | William Sharp

ALS Huntington Library

To Dr. John Goodchild, July 30, 1905

Edinburgh | 30th July.

. . . August is always a ‘dark’ month for me — and not as a rule, I fancy, a good one: at any rate an obscure and perhaps perilous one. But this time I fancy it is on other lines. I believe strong motives and influences are to be at work in it perhaps furtively only: but none the less potently and far reachingly. Between now and September-end (perhaps longer) many of the Dark Powers are going to make a great effort. We must all be on guard — for there will be individual as well as racial and general attack. But a Great Unloosening is at hand.

Yours Ever, | W.S.

Brotherhood, and for portraits of literary and artistic figures of late Victorian and Edwardian London. Under the patronage of painter and sculptor Frederic Leighton, he began photographing paintings and drawings in the 1870s.

¹The friends may have been R. Murray Gilchrist and his partner, George Garfitt, who lived in Derbyshire and frequently met Sharp in Yorkshire.

To Edmund Clarence Stedman, July 30, 1905

~~North British Station Hotel | Edinburgh~~

Murrayfield | Midlothian | 30th July/05

My dear and well- loved E. C. S.

While I am here in Edinburgh en route for the North (after a narrow squeak for my life, with two distinct illnesses, and treatment for a month in Germany) I have just received a letter from Janvier, which tells me of the great sorrow that has come to you and yours. I cannot let the first available mail go without sending you my deep and loving sympathy — to you and Laurretta and your daughter-in-law, but to you most who have lost a tender and loving and life-long companion. Nor is it only deep regret for you, dear friend, but on my own account, for I have ever had the truest affection for dear Mrs. Stedman. I know too, how sorry my wife will be when she hears (I join her Mail Train for the North tonight) — for she drew closely to your dear wife during our recent visit.

As for you, dear friend, you have already known so much sorrow, as well as so much happiness, in life, that (I know) you will bravely accept the inevitable, and do your best to keep as well and mentally alert and active as may be, for the sake of all near and dear to you and also for the sake of all who love you and truly honour and regard you, among whom as you know is none more loyally and affectionately, your loving and admiring friend than

Yours always | William Sharp

P.S. Just this moment had a letter of yesterday from my wife, who has heard from Mrs. Janvier — and who tells me she has written to Laurretta. My love to her.

ALS Columbia

To Mr. John Masefield¹, [early August, 1905]

¹ The popular poet and novelist John Masefield (1878 -1967) succeeded Robert Bridges as Poet Laureate in 1930. Among his works are *Salt Water Ballads* (1904); *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911); *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912); *In the Mill* (an autobiography in 1941). *A Mainsail Haul*, a collection of stories, was published in 1905.

Kessock Cottage, | Nairn

Dear Mr. Masfield,

A brief word to tell you what pleasure I have had in your little book *A Mainsail Haul*. It is not only that it is written with delicate art: but it is rich in atmosphere — a much rarer thing. The simplicity, the charm, the subtle implication of floating, evasive yet fluctuating romance, your own keen sense of the use of words and their veiled life and latent as well as obvious colour, combine to a winning and often compelling effect. I do not think any who has read Don Alfonson's drinking bout with the little red man and the strange homegoing of the weed and flower-grown brigantine with the Bible name, will forget it: and what dream charm also there is in "Port of Many Ships", "Sea Superstition", "The Spanish Sailor's Yarn." In such a splendid and delightful colour fabric as "From the Spanish" "high words and rare" are of course apt — but is it not a mistake to introduce in "Sea Superstition" words such as "August" and "wrought" in a sailor's mouth? (In the text the effect seems to be enhanced not lessened, by the omission of these words — "were like things in bronze", "the roof of which was of dim branches".)

In "From the Spanish" I would, as a matter of personal taste, prefer that the end came at the close of the penultimate para, the shore-drift of the Italian lute. I think the strange dream-like effect would be much enhanced without (what seems to me) the superfluous 'realistic' tag. Otherwise the piece is a gem of its kind.

But you will forgive the critic (and it shows he has read closely) in the admirer, I hope?

Let us have more work of the kind. There is much need of it, and you are of the few who can give it.

Yours sincerely | William Sharp

Memoir 403-4

To Thomas Mosher, August 15, [1905]

15th August.

Dear Mr. Mosher

Yours of the 2nd inst. reached me here this forenoon (in the Northern Highlands) and I hasten at once to reply.¹

¹ This letter was written by Sharp in Nairn and forwarded to Mary in Edinburgh to be transcribed

First let me acknowledge with many thanks your Draft for Ten Pounds (£10) in full discharge for “The Isle of Dreams” as reprinted by you in U.S.A.¹

Next, as to the copies you are kindly to send me — please let them be all in limp leather, as I very much prefer these, and so I find do my friends. This, as you indicate, may mean my not receiving any till well on in October. (Perhaps you will send me one of the white ones, if published earlier?) However, this matters less, as I have probably to be abroad in any case from mid-September. It is not certain yet, and it is possible I may not leave before October, possibly even mid-Octr.] — and so in any case I’ll have to depute the sending off of copies. A concurrence of untoward happenings has been responsible for another break-down in health, and though now all menace of immediate danger is over, the doctors say I have to be scrupulously on guard and particularly this coming winter — and it is for that reason, because of prevention being so very much wiser than cure, that I am advised to go abroad (to sunnier and drier climates) as soon as the autumnal damp becomes trying.² One great anxiety I am now, however, relieved from — that concerning the recent serious and prolonged illness of the dear friend whom you also know: and concerning whom I am glad too at the prospect of seeing much of, in the coming autumn and winter, in France and Sicily.

Again, tho’ it still bothers me ever and again, my writer’s-cramp or neuritic trouble in my right arm has been much better of late, and I can now often write several letters at a time without ill consequence. I hope much the improvement will continue, tho’ for some months yet at least I must not exceed a very limited allowance.

in the Fiona Macleod handwriting. He placed Fiona in “the northern highlands” though not specifically in Nairn.

¹ In 2013 currency this amount would be at least £1500.

² Here Sharp conflated Fiona’s plans with his own. In the next sentence he had Fiona express relief that he has recovered from his “recent and prolonged illness.” Then she express her pleasure in the expectation that she will see much of Sharp in the fall and winter in France and Italy. This merging of William and Fiona geographically lends support to the assumption that Sharp told Mosher when they met in Boston the previous December that he and Fiona were, if not lovers, “dear friends.” It also indicates that Sharp was not worried that Mosher would show up in France or Sicily with the expectation of meeting Fiona.

Well, to resume: let all the copies be in limp leather.

I would, however, be very much obliged if you would kindly send me in advance another unbound set, such as that you have now kindly sent to me, for which I thank you sincerely. Indeed, I would like two sets, but it may not be right to ask for this: if so, let me have one, please, and equal thanks.

So far as I have glanced at it I see nothing misprinted — but I have not time or opportunity to do so systematically just now. Nor is there any need. At most I feel sure there can be only very minor slips — and possibly, even, none of these. And now as to “The Runes of Women.” The serious anxieties I have alluded to, combined with my own break-down in health about the end of June, have altogether prevented my doing anything. I have fulfilled no engagements — not even an important and immediate one from Sir James Knowles for the *Nineteenth Century*, received early in June, and not yet even touched! while the two, or three, nature papers that have appeared, were all written before I became ill. In a word, I have done absolutely nothing with my pen since the last proofs of “Iona” went to you, except to revise the proofs of the new and shortly forthcoming Tauchnitz volume.

It is useless for me now to say when I shall send you “Runes of Women.” But, believe me, it will be as soon as I can do so. You must just be patient with me, dear Mr. Mosher. It is safest for me to say no more than what is a hope, an intention, viz. to let you have all complete by November, anyhow before Christmas. If the Fates permit earlier, well and good.

As soon as “The Sunset of Old Tales” (the new Tauchnitz volume) is published I shall give myself the pleasure of sending you a copy — also, in due course, of Herr Winnibald Mey’s new German vol (the first having gone well) — “Das Reich der Traume”, or “Das Land der Traume” — and of Monsieur Davray’s long-delayed French volume. Also, before November-end I hope to see the publication of my Nature essays, *Nature and Dream*.

You are well, I hope? And projecting many new delightful surprises?

With friendliest regards, | Believe me, dear Mr. Mosher,

Yours most sincerely | Fiona Macleod

To Frank M. Wells, August 22, 1905

The Grosvenor Club | Piccadilly | London | August 22, 1905

Dear Sir,

Your note has reached me in Scotland — and I have now pleasure in acceding to your request.

Yours faithfully | William Sharp

To | Frank M. Wells, Esq.

ALS, Private

To Thomas Mosher, September 5, [1905]

C/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield, Midlothian | Tuesday night 5th Sept.

Dear Mr. Mosher

Many thanks for the two unbound vols. of “The Isle of Dreams.” I knew the book had already been announced for I have had two or three letters (one of them a kind of deputation-letter from Atlanta in Georgia) protesting against the abandonment of the name “Iona”, and the more so as there are already *The Dominion of Dreams*, *Ulad of the Dreams* and *From the Hills of Dream*. However, tho’ I am sorry not to have it “Iona,” I daresay your general reasons may be right for the other title. In any case I hope you will find the book’s present and later reception satisfactory, and thus, help the other volumes.

I will send you the new ‘Tauchnitz’ vol when it is published (“The Sunset of Old Tales”) — which may be this month; if not, next. Also the new German and the French translations, when published. I think the white glazed wrappers of the 3. vol Geddes edition of the Shorter Tales were merely a Christmastide variant of the dark gray-green wrappers with white labels. I suppose you know that the first edit. of *Pharais* was a white-vellum-parchment long octavio with a frontispiece? Only a limited number was printed. The ordinary edition was the small green-and-gold volume, afterwards reprinted in ‘Green Tree Library’ of Chicago. The only other issue of anything of mine that is not to be had from the booksellers is the white parchment or paper square 8vo or quarto of “The Three Marvels of Iona,” done for the St. Columba millenary. I have not a copy now, but I believe one or two are still to be had from Miss Morrison, of the Gaelic Press, Iona: possibly from the Manager, P. Geddes & Co. The Outlook Tower, Castlehill, Edinburgh.

To [Is] the “Little Garland of Celtic Verse”, in your Fall-Announcements, a new anthology? If so I’d be glad to have a copy.

I have other notes to dictate during my flying visit, so must trust to have answered all questions in your letter.

Yours most sincerely, | Fiona Macleod

NYPL, Berg

To Fiona Macleod, September 12, 1905

Gu Fionaghal Nic Leoid | Sliabhean N’an Aisling | *Y-Breasil* (Na Tir-fo-Tuinn)¹

An Domhain Uaine | 12th Sept., 1905

Dearest Fiona,

A word of loving greeting to you on the morrow of our new year. All that is best in this past year is due to *you*, mo caraid dileas²: and I hope and believe that seeds have been sown which will be reborn in flower and fruit and may be green grass in waste places and may even grow to forests. I have not always your serene faith and austere eyes, dear, but I come to much in and thro’ my weakness as you through your strength. But in this past year I realise I have not helped you nearly as much as I could: in this coming year I pray, and hope, it may be otherwise. And this none the less tho’ I have much else I want to do apart from *our* work. But we’ll be one and the same *au fond* even then, shall we not, Fiona dear?

I am intensely interested in the fuller development of the Celtic Trilogy — and shall help in all ways. You say I can give you what you have not: well, I am glad indeed. Together we shall be good Sowers, Fionaghal mo run: and let us work contentedly at that. I wish you Joy and Sorrow, Peace, and Unrest, and Leisure, Sun, and Wind, and Rain, all of Earth and Sea and Sky in this coming year. And inwardly swell with me, so that less and less I may fall short of your need as well as your ideal. And may our “Mystic’s Prayer”³ be true for us both, who are one.

¹ To Fiona Macleod | Hills of Dreams | (by the Land under Wave)

² my dear twin

³ This poem was written between 1900 and 1905, and appeared in *The Hour of Beauty, Songs and Poems*, (Thomas Mosher, 1907).

Ever yours, dear, | Will

Memoir 410

To William Sharp, September 12, 1905

Hills of Dream | Y-Breasil | 12th Sept., 1905

My Dear Will,¹

Another birthday has come, and I must frankly say that apart from the loss of another year, and from what the year has brought you in love and friendship and all that makes up life, it has not been to your credit. True, you have been in America and Italy and France and Scotland and England and Germany — and so have not been long settled anywhere — and true also that for a month or two you were seriously and for a few months partially ill or ‘down’ — but still, after all allowances, I note not only an extraordinarily indolence in effort as well as unmistakable laziness in achievement. Now, either you are growing old (in which case admit dotage, and be done with it) or else you are permitting yourself to remain weakly in futile havens of ignoble repose or fretful pseudo rest. You have much to do, or that you ought to do, yourself: and as to our collaboration I see no way for its continuance unless you will abrogate much of what is superfluous, curtail much that can quite well be curtailed, and generally serve me loyally as I in my turn allow for and serve *you*.

Let our New Year be a very different one from the last dear friend: and let us not only beautifully dream but achieve in beauty. Let the ignoble pass, and the noble remain.

Lovingly yours, dear Will, | Fiona

Memoir 411

To ?, September 15, 1905²

¹ According to EAS, her husband wrote each year for his birthday a letter from W.S. to F.M. and a letter from F.M. to W.S. and posted them. Aside from these two, I have seen only one other — a letter to W.S. from F.M. on September 12, 1897.

² In printing this letter, EAS stated it was addressed to an unknown friend. It responds to a letter from someone, identity unknown, who praised and expressed an affinity with the woman Fiona Macleod who emerged through her writings.

Sept. 15, 1905

. . . I have been away, in the isles, and for a time beyond the reach of letters. I wish there were Isles where one could also go at times, where no winged memories could follow. In a Gaelic folk-tale, told me by an old woman once, the woman of the story had only to burn a rose to ashes and to hold them in the palms of her hands and then to say seven times *A Eileanain na Sith*, “O Isles of Peace”! and at once she found herself in quiet isles beyond the foam where no memories could follow her and where old thoughts, if they came, were like phantoms on the wind, in a moment come, in a moment gone. I failed to find these Isles, and so have you: but there are three which lie nearer, and may be reached, Dream, Forgetfulness, and Hope.

And there, it may be, we can meet, you and I . . .

Yes, your insight is true. There is a personal sincerity, the direct autobiographical utterance, in even, as you say, the most remote and phantastic of my legends as in the plainest of my words. But because they cover so much illusion as well as passion, so much love gone on the wind as well as love that not even the winds of life and death can break or uproot, so much more of deep sorrow (apart from the racial sorrow which breathes through all) than of Joy save in the deeper spiritual sense, they were thus raimented in allegory and legend and all the illusion of the past, the remote, the obscure, or the still simpler if more audacious directness of the actual, the present, and the explicit. There is, perhaps, a greater safety, a greater illusion, in absolute simplicity than in the most subtly wrought art. . . .

But you will understand me when I say that you must not count on our meeting — at any rate not this year. I too stand under obscure wings.

Your friend, | F. M.

Memoir 405-6

To Helen Hopekirk¹, September 19, [1905]

Address: Miss Macleod | c/o 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield, Midlothian | Scotland
19th Sept.

¹ Helen Hopekirk (1856-1945) was an American pianist and composer who, in 1905, published *Seventy Scottish Songs* (Boston: Oliver Ditson and Company).

My dear Miss Hopekirk,

I am indebted to you for your friendly letter, and for the booklet of five of my poems set to music by yourself. It is always a pleasure to hear from any one to whom writings of mine have strongly appealed, and that pleasure is enhanced when one learns that the unknown friend began the silent acquaintanceship years ago and has since cared to maintain it. I like your music. It has fragrance and charm; much of it passes from the pleased suspense of the outward ear to the subtle inward ear, that which we mean when we say the mind and the soul listen as well as the body. I hope you will compose more. Do you know any of the Breton airs? They have been less exploited than the now more familiar Scottish and Irish gaelic airs. Many are singularly plaintive and sweet. You should set some French poems to music. I am not of those who lightly disparage French poetry. Much modern French-verse has a unique and truly exquisite loveliness, with a delicacy of charm. You should try some of Verlaine's, for example.

With all sincere wishes for the success of your present venture and with hope to hear of you and your work again.

Believe me, | Yours very truly, | Fiona Macleod

ALS Huntington

To Robert Underwood Johnson, September 22, [1905]

Friday Night 22nd Sept.

By an accident the Severn-Keats proofs were reforwarded to me to a recent address abroad — & great delay ensued. They have now reached me — & if impossible to get off by tomorrow's mail shall certainly leave by ensuing mail. Much of the delay proves to be due to the understamping (this has happened by the way every time you've written) —

William Sharp

ACS Huntington

To Edmund Clarence Stedman, [late September, 1905]

The Grosvenor Club | Piccadilly | London W

For 8th October¹

¹ For many years Sharp had written a letter to Stedman in late September for him to receive on

Dear Poet and Friend

I hope this will reach you on your birthday morning. The past year has been one of sorrow for you: may this new year bring you peace and health and good weal in all respects.¹ And, too, may the fates permit that the hand of the artist & the impulse & achievement of the poet may find beautiful & welcome expression. It is a happiness to me (to my wife also I should say) to remember that we saw you about a year ago — and that we spent Thanksgiving with you & your dear wife & daughter-in-law & dear Laretta.

I hope you got my letter to you after I had heard of your great loss. (I have written Laretta both before & after that great sadness — but I fear she has forgotten her friend overseas.) Don't you write in reply to my last or to this: all I want to feel assured of is that you were not hurt by any apparent silence.

As you may have heard from the Janviers, I all but 'went under' this summer from a severe access of my Diabetes malady — but a month's special treatment at Neuenahr in Germany tided me over — & in July & August I was not only convalescent but (in August) became wonderfully well. Since mid- September, however, I have known the ebb-tide again — & now have to leave this damp climate at once. We start in a few days & go first for a month to Venice (where we have already got a friend's rooms engaged for us) — then to Sicily till Xmas or so — & then for 3 months to Algeria (mostly Biskra in the Sahara) for a thorough 'warming' & 'drying', for my chest is menaced.

We have thought & spoken often of you and your dear circle since we left last Dec^r — & now if there be indeed power to send loving thoughts oversea you should feel on your birthday the inrush of a deep & true affection, all loving good wishes, and from us both.

Ever yours, | William Sharp

ALS Columbia

his birthday, October 8. This was the last of those birthday letters.

¹ This is the last of many letters Sharp wrote for Stedman to receive on his birthday, October 8. Sharp had written Stedman on July 30 to say he had just received a letter from Thomas Janvier, a mutual friend in New York, conveying the sad news that Stedman's wife had died. The Stedmans entertained the Sharps in their home north of New York the previous November. Stedman died in January 1908.

To Millicent Sutherland, [late September,] 1905¹

. . . I have the memory that recalls everything in proportion and sequence. I have often written that art is memory, is in great part memory, though not necessarily a recalling of mere personal experience: and the more deeply I live the more I see that this is so. . . .

When you write, I mean imaginatively, you must write more and more with concentrated vision. Some time ago I re-read your *Four Winds of the World*; much of it is finely done, and in some of it your self lives, your own accent speaks. But you have it in you to do work far more ambitious. The last is not a word I like, or affect; but here it is convenient and will translate to your mind what is in my mind. These stories are yours but they are not you: and though in a sense art is a wind above the small eddies of personality, there is a deeper sense in which it is nothing else than the signature of personality. Style (that is, the outer emotion that compels and the hidden life of the imagination that impels and the brooding thought that shapes and colours) should, spiritually, reflect a soul's lineaments as faithfully as the lens of the photographer reflects the physiognomy of a man or woman. It is because I feel in you a deep instinct for beauty, a deep longing for beautiful expression and because I believe you have it in you to achieve highly in worth and beauty, that I write to you thus. . . . There is that Lady of Silence, the Madonna of Enigma, who lives in the heart of many women. Could you not shape something under *Her* eyes — shape it and colour it with your own inward life, and give it all the nobler help of austere discipline and control which is called art? I have not much to tell you of myself just now. At the moment I do not write to you from the beloved west where I spend much of each year and where my thoughts and dreams continually are. Tonight I am tired, and sad, I hardly know why.

O wind, why break in idle foam
This wave that swept the seas — . . .

¹ Millicent Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, The Duchess of Sutherland (1867–1955) was a society hostess, social reformer, author, editor, journalist, and playwright. In 1884, on her seventeenth birthday, she was married to Lord Cromartie Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, Marquess of Stafford, eldest son and heir of the 3rd Duke of Sutherland, who inherited the Duchy of Sutherland on his father's death in 1892. An enthusiastic reader of the Fiona Macleod's writings, she had sent Fiona a copy of her collection of short stories, *The Winds of the World* (London: William Heineman, 1902).

Foam is the meed of barren dreams,
And hearts that cry for peace.

Lift then, O wind, this heart of mine
And swirl aside in foam —
No, wander on, unchanging heart,
The undrowning deeps thy home.

Less than a billow of the sea
That at the last doth no more roam
Less than a wave, less than a wave
This thing that hath no home
This thing that hath no grave!¹

But I shall weary you. Well, forgive me. ...

[Fiona Macleod]

Memoir 406-7

To Helen Hopekirk,² October 18, 1905

C/o 22. Ormidale Terrace. | Murrayfield | Midlothian. | 18th Oct. 1905

My Dear Miss Hopekirk

I was very pleased to hear from you again. Your letter reached me while I was on a visit in Stirlingshire, and now I have come to Edinburgh for three days, and have a brief leisure in which to answer your and other letters, but yours first. I am busy with preparations for Italy, for the doctors say I should be away from our damp Scottish climate from October-end till Spring comes again. How far off it seems . . . Spring! Do you long for it, do you love its advent, as I do? Wherever I am, St Bride's Day is always for me the joy-festival of the year — the day when the real new year is born, and the three dark months are gone, and Spring leans across the often

¹This poem, entitled "In the Night," first appeared in *From the Hills of Dream: Threnodies, Songs and Other Poems* (Portland, Maine: Thomas Mosher, 1901).

² This letter survives in three places: Sharp's draft written on pages torn from a notebook that contain several notes Mary made to herself while copying it into the Fiona Macleod handwriting (Sharp Collection, National Library of Scotland), Mary's faithful and beautifully written copy that was sent to Hopekirk (Pierpont Morgan Library), and excerpts from the letter Elizabeth included in the *Memoir* (407-9) which were copied from Sharp's draft.

grey and wet, but often rainbow-lit and green-tremulous horizons of February. This year it seems a longer way off than hitherto, and yet it should not be so — for I go to Italy, and to friends, and to beautiful places in the sun, there and in Sicily and perhaps in Algeria. But, somehow, I care less for these than I did a few years ago, than two or three years ago, than a year ago. I think outward change matters less and less as the imagination deepens and as the spirit more and more “turns westward.”¹ I love the South; and in much, and for much, am happy there: but as the fatally swift months slip into the dark I realise more and more that it is better to live a briefer while at a high reach of the spirit and the uplifted if overwrought physical part of one than to save the body and soothe the mind by the illusions of physical indolence and mental leisure afforded by long sojourns in the sunlands of the South.

But, forgive me, this is egotistic wandering from the subject, and not a reply to what you primarily write to me about.

Yes, you may arrange the verses of “The Lonely Hunter” as you will, and, also, may delete for your setting the last verse of “The Bird of Christ” — and now or at any time take what you will and in the way you wish, confident that I am content with whatever you think best for your purpose. I do not think the needs or nuances of one art should ever be imposed upon the free movement of another in alliance.

How I wish I knew Loeffler Debussy and others as you do: but then, though I love music, though it is one of the vital things in life for me, I am not a musician, alas. So even if I had all their music beside me it would be like a foreign language that must be read in translation. Do you realise — I suppose you do — how fortunate you are in being your own interpreter. Some day, however, I hope to know intimately all those wonderful settings of Verlaine and Baudelaire and Mallarmé and others. The verbal music of these is a ceaseless pleasure to me. I have a great love of and joy in all later French poetry, and can never understand common attitude

¹ Fiona’s plans for the fall and winter reflect those of the Sharps, though they were able to go only as far as Sicily. They also demonstrate Sharp becoming reconciled (“turning westward”) as Fiona to his waning health and the likelihood of an early death. After the turn of the century, as indicated by EAS (*Memoir*, 423-4) and encouraged by her, the Fiona Macleod “literary expression” became increasingly intermingled with that of William Sharp.

to it here — either one of ignorance or patronage, or complete misapprehension. Because of the obvious fact that French is not so poetic a language as English or German, in scale, sonority, or richness of vocabulary — it is, indeed, in the last respect the poorest I believe of all European languages as English is by far the richest — people, and even those who should be better informed, jump to the conclusion that therefore all French poetry is artificial or monotonously alike, or, at best, far inferior to English. So far as I can judge, finer poetry has been produced in France of late years than in England, and very much finer than any I know in German. However, the habitual error of judgment is mainly due to ignorance: that, and the all but universal unfamiliarity with French save in its conventional usage, spoken or written.

You say you have sometimes felt impelled to write to me, but have refrained. I feel you to be a friend, and hope you feel that I too can be so to you — so I hope you will write to me sometimes. Only you must be patient if I don't answer speedily. For one thing I prefer to wait till time and occasion permit me to write something more than a mere note of acknowledgment. The friendship of yourself and a few others (including your friend Miss Evelyn Benedict) is a real and deep pleasure to me, and more.

As to what is obscure to you in “The Winged Destiny” I may or may not be able to make things clear to you (or to snatch the rare hour in which I could do so), but if you ask me anything at any time I will at least listen as friend to friend, and, as friend to friend, see if I can adequately respond.

When I go abroad I will send you a copy of my new Tauchnitz volume (just published or just about to be published I believe) called “The Sunset of Old Tales” as you may care to have something direct from a writer whom (to her true pleasure) you so truly care for, and who, as you say, has opened gates to you with others.

And so believe me, dear Miss Hopekirk, | Most sincerely yours | Fiona Macleod
P.S. My new book, *Nature and Dream* (to which, however, I may possibly give another title) will not now be published till sometime in February. I mention this lest I told you it was to be out this November.¹

¹ This book was published as *Where the Forest Murmurs: Nature Essays* (London: George Newnes, Ltd., 1906).

To Catherine Ann Janvier, October 22, 1905

Sunday | Oct, 22. | Venice | 1905

... Remember that her all surrounding love saved me, I am sure, in faraway Greece, and what it has meant ever since to me.¹

ALS CJ to RLS, private

To: Anna (Mrs. Patrick Geddes), mid-November, 1905

c/o Il Duc de Bronte | Catello Maniace | Bronte | Sicily

Florence

Dear Friend,

Your letter etc. came just we're about to leave. Many thanks for it and its news & what you send — also letter from Mr. Guthrie which shall have immediate attention.

Shall write later from Sicily. (We shall hope to see P.G. on the Riviera — for, after Xmas or the turn of the year, we now go there to Nice, but possibly breaking first at Mentone or elsewhere — instead of Algeria: partly for health reasons. Partly for purse reasons.)²

¹ This sentence is from a letter to Catherine Janvier from Sharp which she quoted in a letter to Roselle Lathrop Shields on February 8, 1905. The woman whose love saved Sharp was Mrs. Shields of whom EAS said of the time they spent together in Greece in the winter of 1904: “With Spring sunshine and warmth my husband regained a degree of strength, and it was his chief pleasure to take long rambles on the neighboring hills alone, or with the young American archaeologist, Mrs. Roselle Lathrop Shields, a tireless walker” (*Memoir*, 378). In her letter to Shields, Janvier promised to look through her surviving letters from Sharp for references to Shields and send them to her. She had found this single sentence and added “I cannot get at the earlier ones yet.” Janvier’s letter implies that Sharp had confided to her details of his relationship with and feelings for Shields he had not shared with Elizabeth. Janvier wrote that Sharp’s sentence about Shields occurred “In reference to our, your and mine, first meeting.” Where and when Janvier and Shields first met is unknown.

² The Sharps had decided before leaving Florence for Sicily to give up their plans for North Africa (partly because of his ill health and partly for lack of finances) and spend a few months on the French Riviera where they hoped to meet Patrick Geddes.

We shall be at above address (after a week at Taormina) till Xmas.¹

W.S.

ACS, University of Strathclyde

To Thomas Mosher, November 17, 1905²

17th Nov. 1905

Dear Mr. Mosher

Just a hurried line before I leave for Italy to say that I have duly received the setting of a song of mine by Mr. Gilbert³, sent through you: also your delightful and fascinating Catalogue. The six copies of “The Isle of Dreams” which you sent me duly reached me also. A copy of “The Sunset of Old Tales” (my new Tauchnitz volume) should reach you about the same time as this, or soon after. Whether “Dans les Vents et sur les Vagues” is out yet I do not know, but you shall have a copy soon or late. I think I told you I had postponed my volume of Nature-Essays till February. Its provisional title ‘Nature and Dream’ will then probably be relinquished for “Where the Forest Murmurs” after the first paper in the book — the same that concludes the new Tauchnitz volume.

You are well, I hope, and happy in your work. I am looking forward to some months of leisure for work and reading in the South — and the more so as it is to be a period of convalescence.

Sincerely yours ever | Fiona Macleod

¹ Since the Sharps left Taormina for Maniace on November 27, they must have arrived in Taormina on or about November 20. This card was written from Florence just as they were about to leave the Lee-Hamiltons for Sicily.

² Since the Sharps were in Italy in November, Mary Sharp may have forwarded the catalogue and books to Sharp to draft a letter of acknowledgement, or, more likely, Mary herself acknowledged them in the Fiona handwriting before forwarding them to Sharp.

³ Henry Gilbert (1868-1928) was the first American composition pupil of Edward MacDowell and the first composer of significance to recognize the possibility of an American school of composition springing out of the use of Negro musical compositions. In 1905 he composed the “Comedy Overture on Negro Themes.” Also in 1905, he published through the Wa-Wan Press in Newton Center, Massachusetts musical settings of four poems, one by Fiona Macleod.

To [Roselle Lathrop Shields], December 4, 1905¹

[Castello Maniace] | Dec. 4, 1905

. . . As my card of yesterday will have told you we arrived here all right on Monday afternoon, after a wonderful journey. We left Taormina in a glory of mid-summerlike warmth and beauty — and we drove down the three miles of winding road from Taormina to the sea at Giardini; thence past the bay and promontory of Naxos, and at the site of the ancient famous fane of Apollo Archagêtês turned inland. Then through the myriad lemon-groves of Al Cantara, till we crossed the gorges of the Fiumefreddo, and then began the long ascent, in blazing heat, by the beautiful hill road to the picturesque mountain-town of Piedemonte. There we caught the little circum-Ætnean mountain loop-line, and ascended the wild and beautiful slopes of Etna. Last time we went we travelled mostly above the clouds, but this time there was not a vestige of vapour in the radiant air, save for the outriders' trail of white occasionally flare-coloured, smoke from the vast 4-mile wide mouth of snow-white and gigantically-looming cone of Etna. At the lofty mediaeval and semi-barbaric town of Randazzo we were delayed by an excited crowd at the station, on account of the arrest and bringing in by the carabinieri of three chained and heavily manacled brigands, one of them a murderer, who evidently had the sympathy of the populace. A woman, the wife of one of the captured men, outdid any lamenting Irish woman I ever saw: her frenzy was terrible — and of course the poor soul was life-desolate and probably punished and would likely never see her man again. Finally she became distracted with despair and fury, and between her appeals and furious curses and almost maniacal lamentations, the small station was anything but an agreeable stopping place. The captive brigands were absolutely impassive: not a glance: only, as the small train puffed onward, one of them lifted a manacled arm behind one

¹ Mrs. Sharp said this letter was written to “a friend” and identified her as the same friend he wrote to on December 8. Both letters were written to Roselle Lathrop Shields. Since December 4 was a Monday and since Sharp’s diary indicates he had been in Maniace since at least December first, the trip from Taormina to Maniace took place on Monday, November 27th. In a February 8, 1906 letter to Mrs. Shields, Catherine Janvier expressed her envy of Mrs. Shields having received several letters from Sharp after he went to Maniace. She says she received none written during the last month of his life though that was clearly not the case. It is the case that Sharp wrote more personally and at greater length to Shields.

of the carabinieri and made a singular sign to someone.

Thereafter we passed into the wild and terrible lava-lands of the last frightful eruption, between Randazzo and the frontier of the Duchy of Bronte: a region as wild and fantastic as anything imagined by Doré¹, and almost terrifying in its somber deathfulness. The great and broad and sweeping mountains, and a mightily strath — and we came under the peaked rocks of Maletto, a little town standing 3000 feet high. Then the carriage, and the armed escort, and we had that wonderful drive thro' wild and beautiful lands of which I have heretofore written you. Then about four we drove up to the gates of the Castle, and passed into the great court just within the gates, and had the cordial and affectionate welcome of our dear host.

A few minutes later we were no longer at an ancient castle in the wilds of Sicily, but in a luxurious English country house at afternoon tea. . . .

[William Sharp]

Memoir 413-15.

To William Butler Yeats, [December 7, 1905]²

C/o Il Duca di Bronte | Castello di Maniace | *Bronte* / Sicily

My dear Yeats,

Your letter of the 4th has reached me in Sicily some 9 days later.

¹ An Alsatian painter, engraver, and sculptor, Paul Gustave Doré (1833-1883) is best known for his imaginative, dramatic, and often horrific illustrations. Among his most famous are those of the *Divine Comedy*, *Don Quixote*, Balzac's *Contes drolatiques*, the works of Rabelais, and the *Fables* of la Fontaine. His best known painting is "Retreat from Moscow."

² From the *Memoir* and other correspondence, we know the Sharps spent most of October in Italy (Venice and Florence) and in mid-November went on to Sicily where they stayed first in Taormina and then, beginning November 27, with Alexander Nelson Hood at his Castle Maniace southwest of Taormina on the northwestern slopes of Mount Etna. Sharp died at Castle Maniace on December 12 and was buried there two days later. This letter was written in early December, shortly after the Sharps had taken several modes of transportation up to Maniace, a journey Sharp described in detail in his December 4 letter to Roselle Lathrop Shields. The letter from Yeats to which Sharp was responding was probably written on November 4 and reached Sharp in Taormina on November 13. Sharp's letter to Yeats was printed in *Letters to W.B. Yeats*, I, 155-7. It is transcribed here from a copy of the manuscript which was in the possession of Michael B. Yeats and is now in the National Library of Ireland.

Frankly, I have been much hurt by your continuous and apparently systematic ignoring of any communication from me, and had made up my mind to keep silence henceforth. I knew of your dislike of writing letters [common to all of us who have so much pen-work to do, & fully shared in if not exceeded by myself] and ever bore in mind your overstrained eyesight — but naturally I thought that in the course of more than a year, and after letter-after-letter, you wd. have sent even the briefest word, or even a P.C. — or, what seemed simple, dictated a message through Lady Gregory or some other friend.

I have a very strong feeling as to the Noblesse-oblige of friendship — and as I do not regard you as a mere acquaintance, I feel it the more.

Now, however, that you have at last written, and that I have explained my feeling in the matter, I'll endeavour to put it aside among the discharged things.

I am in a remote and wild part of the Sicilian Highlands, staying with a dear friend: and expect to remain here till Christmas. Thereafter we shall be in the French Riviera (probably at Cimiez near Nice) for three months. So I fear there is little likelihood of our meeting till after Easter.

I am unfortunately not in a position to say anything definite on the matter which you broach. If we meet, we may speak of what cannot well be written about. I may add, however, that neither I nor any person personally known to me “sent” any one to you on a veiled mission. [At the same time — that a certain person sought you and that you did not recognize the person, the occasion, or the significance.]¹ As you know, we are in a crucial period of change in many ways, and there are circles within circles, veiled influences and good and evil (and non-good and non-evil) formative and disformative forces everywhere at work. Obscure summons, obscure warnings, meetings & partings, veiled messages, come to us all.

All which sounds very absurd, or mysterious, or conveniently vague. However, you'll understand. Also my present silence.

As you are likely to be in France (Paris?) in April or May, we may possibly meet there. Perhaps you know nothing of any such likelihood, and it may be mere wildfire of supposition.

¹The words within the brackets are crossed out in the MS.

Bien, nous verrons.

I hope the dramatic undertakings will be a success, above all in reaching the psychic nerves, the living thought, of those to whom their appeal is made.

For many months this year I was ill — dying — but there were other than physical reasons for this, & I survived thing after thing and shock after shock like a swimmer rising to successive waves — & then suddenly to every one's amazement swam into havens of relative well-being once more. But the game is not over, of course: and equally of course is a losing game. Nevertheless I'm well content with things as they are, all things considered.

Have you heard of or from Miss Macleod? If I can get a copy from the Catania bookseller who occasionally sends foreign books by courier to this remote place, I'll send you a copy of her Tauchnitz volume of revised, augmented, and selected matter called "The Sunset of Old Tales" — or I may get some one to do it for me at home, or in Germany — yes, that will be simpler. If in the course of a week or two one does not reach you, write to Miss Macleod who wd. like you to have one.

I wish you'd dictate a line to me of your own literary work. Is any new vol. of prose or verse to come out soon? I hope so.¹

As for myself, I have much on hand, but for long I have had to do little. Now, if the Gods permit, I hope to recover some lost ground.

I dreamt of you some time ago as going thro' a dark wood and plucking here and there in the darkness seven apples (as you thought) — but they were stars.² And you came to the edge or cliff and threw three away, & listened, and then hearing nothing threw three more idly away. But you kept, or forgot, one — & it trickled thro' your body and came out at your feet, and you kicked it before you as you walked, & it gave light, but I do not think you saw the light, or the star. What is your star, here, — do you know? Or can you interpret the dream?

Yours as ever, | W. S.

ALS Private

¹ In less than a week, on December 12, Sharp would be dead.

² Sharp's dream of Yeats may have been prompted by the ending of Yeats's poem, "The Song of Wandering Aengus" ["And pluck till time and times are done | The silver apples of the moon, the golden apples of the sun which appeared first in *The Sketch* on August 4, 1897 where it was

To [Roselle Lathrop Shields], December 8, 1905¹

. . . A single long letter means no work for me that day, and the need of work terribly presses, and in every way, alas. My hope that I might be able for some writing in the late afternoon, and especially from 5 to 7:30 is at present futile. I simply can't. Yesterday I felt better and more mentally alert than I've done since I came, and immediately after afternoon tea, I came to my study and tried to work, but could not, though I had one of my nature articles begun and beside me: nor had I spirit to take up my reviews: then I thought I could at least get some of that wearisome accumulated correspondence worked off, but a mental nausea seized me, so that even a written chat to a friend seemed to me too exhausting. C'est cette maladie poignante, ce "degoût de la plume," que Tourgenieff (ou Flaubert?) parlait de son coeur frappé.² So I collapsed, and dreamed over a strange and fascinating ancient-world book by Lichtenberger, and then dreamed idly, watching the flaming oak-logs.

[William Sharp]

Memoir 415-6

To Catherine Ann Janvier, December 9, 1905

. . . I hope and expect to be all right before Tuesday.³

To Catherine Ann Janvier, December 11, 1905

. . . There is no need for anxiety, the worst is over and I soon shall be up again.⁴

called "A Mad Song." and then with the new title in *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899).

¹ Sharp's diary entry for December 8, 1905 included: "Wrote a long letter to Robert Hichens, also to R.L.S." (*Memoir* 417-8). EAS said this letter was written to the "same friend" as his letter of December 4. The friend addressed in both letters was Roselle Lathrop Shields.

²"It is this sad illness, this 'gout of the pen' that Tourgenev (or Flaubert?) said broke his heart."

³ Catherine Janvier said this letter, dated 9 December, a Saturday, was the last she had in his handwriting. The sentence was preceded, she said, by a brief description of his illness (*North American Review*, 5 Apr 1907). Sharp died on the following Tuesday.

*To ?, [1905]*¹

. . . This will reach you after my death. You will think I have wholly deceived you about Fiona Macleod. But, in an intimate sense this is not so: though (and inevitably) in certain details I have misled you. Only, it is a mystery. I cannot explain. Perhaps you will intuitively understand or may come to understand. “The rest is silence.” Farewell.

William Sharp

It is only right, however, to add that I, and I only, was the author — in the literal and literary sense — of all written under the name of “Fiona Macleod.”

Memoir 422-23

*To George Russell (AE), December 25, 1905*²

⁴ Catherine Janvier said this letter, written the day before he died, was dictated. Both this letter and that of the 9th would have reached her after Sharp died. Since the two letters are dated in the days immediately preceding Sharp’s death, it is odd that she wrote as follows to Roselle Lathrop Shields on February 9, 1906: “It always will be a bitter pain to me that he put off writing to me, so that I have nothing of any account after he went to Maniace. . . . How I envy you your four last letters — had I had but one! Well, I feel I know how he longed for his wee “Roseen.” How weary he was of many things. It breaks my heart to think of him there — alone — I know the best of care was taken of him, that every comfort was his, but I know that he was ‘alone,’ he knew that too, I am sure, that it had to be” (private letter). The letters to Mrs. Shields, unlike those to her, were more personal and expressive of his feelings. Since Elizabeth included portions of only two of Sharp’s four letters to Mrs. Shields from Maniace without identifying the recipient, the other two may have been withheld from her as too personal, perhaps too frank on expressing his love for his “wee Roseen.” We know Sharp was not alone when he died. Mrs. Janvier may have been trying to help Mrs. Shields deal with her loss.

¹ In printing this letter, Elizabeth Sharp stated: “At the last realizing with deep regret that one or two of the friends he cared greatly for would probably feel hurt when they should know of the deception, he left the following note to be sent to each immediately on the disclosure of the secret.” The news of Sharp’s death was wired to Edith Rinder in London who sent it to several newspapers which published obituaries. Elizabeth sent Sharp’s confessional note to at least two of his friends (George Russell and W. B. Yeats) in late December after she returned to London where she was staying with Edith and Frank Rinder.

² This note is in Mrs. Sharp’s hand on mourning paper. The enclosed note is in Sharp’s hand on two sides of a small white card. The cards were written at Chorleywood when the Sharps rented rooms there in the fall of 1899. He was anticipating his death six years before it occurred and attempting to help Elizabeth deal with the revelation that her husband was Fiona Macleod.

Mrs. Wingate Rinder | 21. Woronzow Road | St. John's Wood | N.W. | 25: Dec

Dear Mr. Russell

It was my dear husband's wish that this letter should reach you immediately on his death. Unfortunately I found it today only. Hence the delay.

Sincerely yours | Elizabeth A. Sharp

Chorleywood

This will reach you after my death. You will think I have deceived you about Fiona Macleod. But, in absolute privacy, I tell you that I have not, howsoever in certain details I have (inevitably) misled you. Only, it is a mystery. Perhaps you will intuitively understand: or may come to understand. "The rest is silence." Farewell.

William Sharp

It is only right, however, to add that I, and I only, am the author (in the *literal* and literary sense) of all written under the name of Fiona Macleod.

ALS, Indiana University, Lilly Library

To William Butler Yeats, December 28, 1905

London | 28 December

Dear Mr. Yeats

My husband wished that you should receive the enclosed immediately on his death. Unfortunately I found it today only.

As you will see, he and he only was, and wrote as, Fiona Macleod.

Sincerely yours | Elizabeth A. Sharp

Chorleywood

This will reach you after my death. You will think I have deceived you about Fiona Macleod. But, in absolute privacy, I tell you that I have not, however in certain details I have (inevitably) misled you. Only, it is a mystery. Perhaps you will intuitively understand, or may come to understand. "The rest is silence."

William Sharp

It is only right, however, to add that I, and I only, am the author — in the *literal* and literary sense — of all written under the name of Fiona Macleod.

Letters to W. B. Yeats, I, 157-8