

The Life and Letters of William Sharp and “Fiona Macleod”

Volume 3: 1900-1905

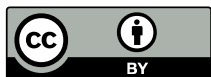


WILLIAM F. HALLORAN



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Chapter Twenty-Two

Life: 1902

At the beginning of January, Sharp went to the Riviera in Bordighera where his friend Dr. John Goodchild was caring for his English patients. Elizabeth had planned to join him shortly in Genoa, but instead remained in London caring for her ailing mother. After a few days Sharp went south to Rome where, as he told Ernest Rhys, he had a brief but severe recurrence of the fever which he suffered in December. Once recovered, he went on to Sicily where he planned to spend two months in and near his “beloved ‘Greek’ Taormina.” In late January he boarded a narrow gauge rail car, the Circumetnea, which took him up to the town of Maletto, high on the northwestern slopes of Mt. Etna, where he was met and taken by donkey-cart to Alexander Nelson Hood’s “wonderful old Castle-Fortress-Monastery-Mansion — the Castle Maniace,” as he described it to Rhys. Elizabeth joined him there in early February, and they remained as guests of Hood for what Elizabeth called “a month of sunshine and flowers” (*Memoir*, p. 339). On February 10, Sharp told Watts-Dunton that he was “convalescent” from his “gastric attack” and “happy to be in this beautiful & “romantic” place with my dear friend Alex Nelson Hood (in Sicily, the Duke of Bronte).” Spring had come, he continued, “Everywhere is a mass of purple iris, narcissus, Asphodel, & thousands of sweet — smelling violets.”

A fellow guest and British composer, Maud Valerie White, suggested Sharp compose a poem to commemorate their time together which she would set to music and dedicate to their host, Alec Hood. The result was Sharp’s “Buon’ Riposo” or “Good Rest” which became a song that must have put the group to sleep once the bagpipers, employed by Hood to march up and down the main hall playing Christmas airs, had left.

BUON' RIPOSO

When, like a sleeping child
 Or a bird in the nest,
 The day is gathered
 To the earth's breast ...
 Hush! ... 'tis the dream-wind
 Breathing peace,
 Breathing rest
 Out of the gardens of Sleep in the West.

O come to me ... wandering
 Wind of the West!
 Gray Doves of slumber
 Come hither to nest. ...
 Ah, sweet now the fragrance
 Below the dim trees
 Of the White Rose of Rest
 That blooms in the gardens of Sleep in the West.¹



Fig. 10. Maude Valérie White. Photograph by Herbert Rose Barraud, published by Eglington & Co. Carbon print, published 1889. © National Portrait Gallery, London. Some rights reserved.

Before the Sharps left Maniace on March 7, Sharp wrote a letter to Dr. Goodchild in which he said he was glad to leave, though with regrets. He went on to describe a defining trait of his personality:

My wife says I am never satisfied, and that Paradise itself would be intolerable for me if I could not get out of it when I wanted. And there is some truth in what she says, though it is a partial truth only. I think external change as essential to some natures as passivity is to others.; but this may simply mean that the inward life in one person may best be hypnotized by a "still image," that of another may best be hypnotized by a wavering image or series of wavering images. It is not change of scene one needs so much as change in these wavering images (*Memoir*, pp. 340–41).

He went on to say he "should now, in many ways, be content to spend the most of [his] life in some quiet place in the country, with a garden, a line of poplars and tall elms, and a great sweep of sky." This wavering image, with echoes of the English countryside, briefly occupied Sharp's mind after a month in the relatively barren landscape of Hood's estate, but, as Elizabeth knew, he would not be content to spend much time in such a place.

On March 7, the Sharps returned to Taormina where they spent another month in the warmth and beauty of that town perched high above the Bay of Naxos. Taormina's landscape is quite different from that of the slopes of Mt. Etna though the volcano is visible as a backdrop in the distance. During their first trip to Sicily in 1901, Elizabeth thought her husband's opinions were tarnished by the island's troubled past.

When I suggested how much the fascination of the beautiful island had seized hold of me he would say: "No, I cannot feel it for the ground is sodden and every leaf drips with blood." To his great relief, on his return there he found, as he said, that he had got beyond the surface of things, had pierced down to the great essentials of the ancient land, and had become one of her devoted lovers (*Memoir*, p. 343).

A March 1902 letter to Catherine Janvier conveyed his new-found love of the land. Sometime, he wrote, he would like to come to Taormina without anything to do so he could simply dream and

relive many of the scenes of this inexhaustible region of romance: to see in vision the coming and going of that innumerable company — from Ulysses and his wanderers, from Pythagoras and St. Peter, from

that Pancrazio who had seen Christ in the flesh, from Aeschylus, and Dionysius and Hiero and Celon [three Sicilian rulers in the fourth and fifth centuries B. C.], from Pindar and Simonides and Theocritus, to Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Garibaldi and Lord Nelson — what a strange company (*Memoir*, p. 342).

The beauty of Taormina impelled Sharp to some of his most effective word-painting in an April 3 letter to Mrs. J. H. Philpot:

From my room here in the Castello-a-Mare — this long terraced hotel is built on the extreme edge of a precipitous height outside the Messina Gate of Taormina — I look down first on a maze of vividly green almond trees sloping swiftly down to the deep blue sea, and over them the snowy vastness of Etna, phantom-white against the intense blue, with its hitherside 11,000 feet of gulfs of violet morning shadow. ...



Fig. 11. Taormina on the east Coast of Sicily with Mt. Etna in the distance. The view resembles that of Sharp's view from his hotel outside the Messina Gate. Photograph by MiguelForres (2011), Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17133090#/media/File:Taormina_and_Mt_Etna.jpg

My French windows open on the terrace, it is lovely to go out early in the morning to watch sunrise (gold to rose-flame) coming over Calabria, and the purple-blue emerald straits of Messina and down by the wildly picturesque shores of these island coasts and across the Ionian sea, and

lying like a bloom on the incredible vastness of Etna and its rise from distant Syracuse and Mt. Hybla to its cone far beyond the morning clouds when clouds there are — or to go out at sunrise and see a miracle of beauty being woven anew — or at night when there is no moon, but only flashing of the starry torches, the serpentine glitter of lights, the soft cry of the aziola, and the drowsy rhythmic cadence of the sea in the caves and crags far below. Just now the hum of bees is almost as loud as the drowsy sighing of the sea: among the almonds a boy is singing a long drowsy Greek-like chant, and on the mass of wild rock near the cypresses a goatherd is playing intermittently on a reed pipe. A few yards to the right is a long crescent-shaped terrace garden filled with roses, great shrub-like clumps of white and yellow marguerite, myrtle, lilies, narcissus, sweet-scented blossom-covered geranium, oranges hanging in yellow flame, pale gold lemons. Below the branches a “Purple Emperor” and a snow-white “May Queen” are hovering in butterfly wooing. On an oleander above a wilderness of pink and scarlet geraniums two blue tits are singing and building, building and singing.

While in Taormina, Sharp wrote “Italian Poets Today,” a lengthy survey which appeared in the July issue of the *Quarterly Review*. He also read Greek history and Italian literature and worked on a Greek drama, never completed, titled “The Kôrê of Enna.”

Shortly after returning to England in the spring, Sharp succumbed to what he called malarial fever, followed by a bout of pneumonia. He was able to spend a week or two in Brittany in late May, and then, in mid-June, he suffered a serious financial blow. Elizabeth attributed their financial difficulties to her husband’s ill health and consequent inability to generate income. He no longer had the “energy and buoyancy” to counter “the stress of circumstances,” and his need to leave England for a warmer climate in winter forced Elizabeth to give up her journalistic work, primarily her art criticism for the *Glasgow Herald*, and with it her income. Many times in the past, Sharp had run out of money and asked for loans from friends and advances from editors to sustain his lifestyle and support his constant travels. This time there was an added problem.

In a July 21 letter to Alden, he described the “very serious disaster” as “the complete & final loss, without any warning, of all I had to depend upon, except what I can make by the pen.” It was

the worse as coming when I was still very “down” from a prolonged & health-shaking malarial fever. ... The loss, though it might seem small to others, is a very material one to me, and above all I miss it as a surety, the

one thing I could look to. ... The trouble was complicated by coincident loss to others dear to me (thro' the mismanagement and defalcations of an agent in Australia) — & what with a pneumonic attack after return to England, & worry, etc., I have had anything but a satisfactory time of it! ... However, I am now feeling much better in health, & if only health keeps hope to emerge from my present pressing embarrassments, & though I cannot replace the sure income lost forever still I hope I can make enough to get along on. ... I hope very much, therefore, that one or two of the proposals made to you may appear to you "commissionable."

Sharp and others in his immediate family were beneficiaries of a trust set up by a relative in Australia. He learned in mid-June the trust had suddenly disappeared due to mismanagement by an agent. His description of the loss in this letter to Alden highlights its seriousness. His description of the effects of the loss in a Fiona letter to Mosher is equally compelling: "Through an unforeseen financial disaster affecting one who had money in trust for me I find myself not only in a most difficult position for the present but strained to get away abroad when the late autumn damps begin, as I am strongly advised to do." Alden would be able to help him financially by accepting his articles for *Harper's*, and Mosher by publishing the Fiona books.

When Alexander Hood returned to England from Sicily in the summer and learned of Sharp's financial problems, he started a petition to have him placed on the Civil Pension List. He began by enlisting the support of Alfred Austin, the Poet Laureate, to whom Sharp wrote on July 12 to thank him for his concern and his "prompt and generous action." He hoped Austin's influence with James Arthur Balfour, First Lord of the Treasury, would be successful, and he sent names of friends in case others were needed to endorse the petition: George Meredith, A. C. Swinburne, Thomas Hardy, Theodore Watts-Dunton, Dr. Richard Garnett, Austin Dobson, W. G. Prothero, Editor of the *Quarterly Review*, and the Duke of Sutherland. He went on to describe his need in a compelling manner:

To show you how urgent things are with me, let me add therefore that I have only a few pounds left, enough with care to carry us on till the middle or end of August (& this because of an advance cheque for a long article of mine on contemporary Italian poetry in the forthcoming "Quarterly Review" July-Sept) — and that at the present moment I see no way, without borrowing (which I am most loth even to consider, apart

from being already £50 in debt to my Bank) to meet the living-expenses of the autumn-months, or the winter (& alas, it is even more imperative than before, the doctor says, that I should get abroad before the fogs and damps begin — by the 1st of November, he says, if at all possible). By the turn of the year, of course, I hope that what I am now variously busy upon will begin to bring in money — if health holds, tho' worry and anxiety are heavy handicaps.

That Sharp felt he had to convey these personal details to a man he knew only slightly shows the seriousness of his plight. Recognizing the petition for a Civil List Petition might fail, he also asked Austin to use his position on the Board of the Royal Literary Fund to obtain a one-time grant.

By the time Sharp wrote to Alden on July 21, he had heard there was "little or no chance of success, as party & private influences are all potent, & for other reasons." On July 11, Balfour, to whom Austin had appealed, succeeded his uncle, Lord Salisbury, as Prime Minister. Though Balfour surely had other matters on his mind during July, he managed to send word to Alexander Hood that "the writings of William Sharp, considered alone, would not constitute a sufficient claim." Hood then asked Sharp "to allow him to acquaint the Prime Minister with the authorship of the Fiona Macleod writings, and of the many sacrifices their production had entailed." According to Elizabeth, her husband consented providing that Mr. Balfour were told "confidentially" and orally (*Memoir*, pp. 345–49). Word came back to Hood in mid-August that the confidential message was insufficient. "A statement of entire claims to consideration" would have to be "laid upon the table of the House of Commons for the inspection of members." Informing Sharp of this requirement, Hood first declined to offer an opinion and then proceeded to do just that: "If you will sacrifice your unwillingness to appear before the world in all the esteem and admiration which are your due, then (I may say this) perhaps you will obtain freedom — or some freedom — from anxiety and worry that will permit you to continue your work unhampered and with a quiet mind."

Sharp decided not to disclose Fiona Macleod's identity to members of Parliament since word would soon leak from there to the British press. His letter to Hood of August 21 (*Memoir*, pp. 346–49) is Sharp's clearest and most affecting statement of how he came to view the Fiona Macleod

phenomenon. A few sentences from the letter illustrate the effort he devoted to understanding the matter and his conclusions:

Rightly or wrongly, I am conscious of something to be done — to be done by one side of me, by one half of me, by the true inward self as I believe — (apart from the overwhelming felt mystery of a dual self, and a reminiscent life, and a woman's life and nature within, concurring with and often dominating the other) — and rightly or wrongly I believe that this, and the style so strangely born of this inward life, depend upon my aloofness and spiritual isolation as F. M. To betray publicly the private life and constrained ideal of that inward self for a reward's sake would be a poor collapse.

The genesis of Fiona Macleod was "no literary adventure, but a deep spiritual impulse and compelling circumstances of a nature upon which I must be silent." Even to his good friend Hood, Sharp did not identify Edith Rinder, but only alluded to the crucial role she played in the genesis of Fiona. Elsewhere, he claimed Fiona was born within him under the influence of Edith and gradually developed into a second personality. For the single issue of his *Pagan Review* in 1893, Sharp wrote all the items and printed them under different pseudonyms. In experimenting with different persona, he was able to express a variety of different selves. As he turned to the composition of the first Fiona novel, *Pharais, A Romance of the Isles*, he had the sense it was being written by a distinct personality that was decidedly feminine. On completing the novel in 1894, he feared it would be mocked if published under his name. It needed a pseudonym whereupon he invented the name Fiona and attached it to the surname of an old man of the Inner Hebrides named Seumas Macleod who had filled his mind with Celtic myths and Gaelic lore when he was a boy.

Reflecting his grounding in myth and legend and his association with W. B. Yeats and Dr. John Goodchild in spiritualist activities, Sharp offered another explanation of the Fiona presence in his letter to Hood:

In a word, and quite simply, I believe that a spirit has breathed to me, or entered me, or that my soul remembers or has awakened (the phraseology matters little) — and, that being so, that my concern is not to think of myself or my "name" or "reward," but to do (with what renunciation, financial and other, may be necessary) my truest and best.

Fiona Macleod, the female who had emerged and gained by his agency a wide readership in Britain and America, was both a second personality and a spirit speaking through him from another realm.

Sharp was not compelled to choose between the two explanations of Fiona; he experienced both as true. He had explored both the psychological and the spiritualist approaches to the mysteries of the human mind — indeed of human life — that vied for adherents in a post-Darwinian world which had rejected the comforting beliefs of established religions. The scientific, or materialist, approach recognized the presence of dual or even multiple personalities some of which, according to his friend Havelock Ellis, might be male and others female. The spiritualist approach manifested itself in many movements and organizations, among them the Order of the Golden Dawn (Sharp was a nominal member of the London branch), Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, Yeats' Celtic Mystical Order, and Dr John Goodchild's Avalonians who fixated on the Holy Grail and sites in and around Glastonbury. Powerfully attracted to spiritualism, Sharp had engaged in elaborate rituals of evocation. Even the sensible, down-to-earth Elizabeth Sharp visited mediums after her husband died to communicate with his spirit. Sharp's letter to Hood of August 31, 1902 shows the psychological and spiritualist explanations of Fiona Macleod living together in his mind.

In the letter to Hood, Sharp attributed his decision not to reveal the truth to his need for "aloofness and spiritual isolation as F.M." He had convinced himself he would no longer be able to write as Fiona Macleod if her true identity was revealed, and he feared the truth would subject him to endless derision and mockery in the popular press and literary journals. That, in turn, would diminish editors' interest in publishing the pseudonymous writings. The impact on their finances would be devastating. Small wonder Sharp was able to assure Hood Elizabeth, though on a visit to Fife, would wholeheartedly endorse his decision.

Unable to inform Parliament Sharp was Fiona, but responsive to the appeals of Hood, Austin and others, Balfour, now Prime Minister, arranged for a one-time government grant. Sharp heard the news directly from Balfour's secretary and later from Austin. In his letter of appreciation to Austin, Sharp asked him to withdraw his request to the Royal Literary Fund since the grant from the government freed him from

"present embarrassments and immediate exigencies." In fact, the grant, along with some payments and advances for his writings, enabled the Sharps to leave Britain for warmer weather at the end of October.

Shortly after learning about the lost trust in mid-June, the Sharps decided to go to the west of Scotland and live as frugally as possible. On June 23, Sharp wrote to John MacLeay from St. Abbs, a coastal fishing village in Berwickshire. He planned to leave for Edinburgh two days later. Elizabeth would join him at the end of July, and they would spend August and September in the Highlands before going to Sicily at the beginning of November. Macleay was planning to write an article about Sharp, and he asked for material he could use. Sharp replied he was reluctant, and frankly too exhausted, to say much about himself in a letter. He suggested they meet sometime during his stay in Scotland; his tongue would be less reticent than his pen. Near the end of June, Elizabeth joined her husband in Edinburgh, and they went on to Glasgow, southwest to the Isle of Arran, north to Oban, and rented a room in the ferryman's cottage at the northern point of "'the Green Isle' of Lismore in the sea-mouth of Loch Linnhe within sight of the hills of Morven" (*Memoir*, p. 344). In his July 21 letter to Alfred Austin, which carries the return address "Point House | Island of Lismore | (by Oban)," Sharp said he had come to the "quiet farm house (already known often) so as to live with the utmost possible saving of expense."

Despite her husband's worries about finances, Elizabeth remembered her month on Lismore as happy, disease-free, and productive (pp. 344–45): "We spent much of our time on the water in a little rowing boat. A favourite haunt was a little Isle of Seals, in the loch, where we one day found a baby seagull, fat and fully fledged, but a prisoner by reason of a long piece of grass that had tightly wound round and atrophied one of its feet." The ferryman sometimes served as their oarsman and guide: "One day when we were out on the loch at sundown, and an exquisite rosy flush lay over hill and water, he stopped rowing and leant over his oars, silent for a time, and at last murmured in his slow Highland English 'Tis-the-smile-of-God-upon-the-waters.'"

The isolated ferryman's cottage proved a good place for work. While there, according to Elizabeth and quoting her husband, Sharp wrote as Fiona: "'The Four Winds of Eirinn' (long); 'The Magic Kingdoms' (longer and profounder), one of the best things F. M. has ever written;



Fig. 12. North Lismore from Port Appin, with the hills of Kingairloch beyond.
 Photograph by Alan Partridge (2004), Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lismore_Island.jpg

‘Sea-Magic’ (a narrative and strange Sea-Lore); ‘The Lynn of Dreams’ (a spiritual study); and ‘Seumas’ (a memory).” He revised for American publication a Fiona review of Yeats’ *Wind Among the Reeds* which appeared in 1899 in the *Dublin Daily Express*. The revised review was published in the October 1902 issue of *The North American Review* as “The Later Works of W. B. Yeats.” Sharp also arranged a selection of Fiona stories for a Tauchnitz book to be called *Wind and Wave*, and he prepared *The Silence of Amor* for publication by Thomas Mosher in Maine. This small book contained the prose poems, or as Sharp preferred to call them, “prose-rhythms,” from “The Silence of Amor” section of the 1896 edition of *From the Hills of Dream*.

After leaving Lismore, Sharp wrote the introduction to a Canterbury Poets edition of the poems of his friend Eugene Lee-Hamilton. The June 1902 issue of *Harper’s* contained his essay called “Sir Walter Scott’s Land.” This was the first of several “pot-boiling” articles in which he wrote about the home locations of famous writers. *Harper’s Magazine* published a second — “Robert Louis Stevenson’s Country” — in September. Sharp’s

boyhood friend George Halkett, who edited the *Pall Mall Magazine* from 1900 to 1905, published seven of these articles during the remainder of 1902, and they were collected in a volume titled *Literary Geography* which was published by the Pall Mall Press in 1904 and dedicated to Halkett (see Sharp's letter *To Theodore Watts-Dunton* dated August 1, 1901 in this volume). Both Editors — Alden and Halkett — were motivated in part by their desire to help their friend through a financial crisis. Under the pressure of such a crisis and in spite of what Elizabeth called his "increasing delicacy," Sharp managed to write an amazing amount during the summer and fall in order to generate income.

After their month on Lismore, the Sharps went north to Nairn for a week where Sharp met John Macleay in nearby Inverness. His lips must indeed have been less reticent than his pen, since Macleay produced an article and sent it to Sharp for review and comment. In a list of articles about William Sharp in the bibliography at the close of the two-volume edition of her *Memoir* (p. 447), Elizabeth included under the year 1903 an article entitled "A Literary Wanderer: The Career of William Sharp" in a publication named *The Young Man*. I have not found that publication, but the article's title indicates MacLeay was its author since Sharp in his July 23 letter to MacLeay called himself a "homeless wanderer."

From Nairn, Elizabeth went home to London, but Sharp stayed in Edinburgh for the remainder of August and half of September in a room rented from a Mrs. Rhind at 53 Castle Street. In early September, he spent a long weekend with a friend in Linlathen where he received from Alfred Austin the good news that the Prime Minister had arranged a government grant. He became ill again in Edinburgh and then, according to an October 31 letter to Grant Richards, he had "hardly recovered when, on my return to London, I was seized with a dangerous & painful illness through catching a bad internal chill in a fog on the morning of my arrival." It did not take long for London to make Sharp ill, but the illness provided a convenient excuse for avoiding a meeting with Grant Richards regarding a dispute over what he believed to be a mistaken debt which he could not afford to repay. In any case, the income from his writings and the government grant made it possible for both Sharps to go to Sicily.

The couple left London in mid-October, and Sharp wrote to Catherine Janvier from Taormina on October 30: "We reached Messina

all right, and Giardini, the Station for Taormina, in fair time; then the lovely winding drive up to unique and beautiful and wildly picturesque Taormina and to the lovely winter villa and grounds of Santa Caterina where a warm welcome met us from Miss Mable Hill, with whom we are to stay till the New Year" (*Memoir*, p. 349). Santa Caterina, formerly a convent and now a hotel, was renovated as a winter home by Sir Edward Stock Hill (1834–1902). An English politician who was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath by Queen Victoria in 1892, Hill contributed substantially to the well-being of the English community in Taormina. His daughter, Mabel Hill, carried on her father's tradition of philanthropy focused on improving the condition of Taormina's native residents. She established, for example, an embroidery school where many women learned the art for which the town became famous and earned money of their own. Arriving in Taormina revived Sharp's spirits and again moved him to word-painting in a letter to Catherine Janvier:

I have for study a pleasant room on the garden terrace, at the Moorish end of the old convent-villa with opposite the always open door windows or great arch trellised with a lovely "Japanese" vine, looking down through a sea of roses and lemon and orange to the deep blue Ionian Sea. The divine beauty, glow, warmth, fragrance, and classic loveliness of this place would delight you. ... Beneath my Moorish arch I look down through clustering yellow roses and orange and lemon to green-blue water, and thence across the wild-dove's breast of the Ionian Sea.

On November 7, the Sharps and Mable Hill took the narrow-gauge railroad up and around the slopes of Etna to stay with Alexander Nelson Hood at the Castello Maniace. Writing the next day to Catherine Janvier, Sharp described the journey:

We three came here yesterday (Elizabeth, Miss Hill and I) and enjoyed the marvelous mountain-climbing journey from the sea-level of Giarre (near Catania) up to beautiful Linguaglossa, and Castiglione 2000 ft. high and so on to Randazzo and Maletto (3000 ft.) where we got out, and drove thro' the wild lava-lands of this savage and brigand haunted region to Castello di Maniace where il Signor Ducino Alessandro gave us cordial and affectionate welcome.

The ladies stayed a week, and Sharp a week longer before returning to Taormina with Hood who went on to Venice.



Fig. 13. The Ferrovia Circumetnea is a narrow-gauge railway which encircles Mount Etna. From its terminal in Catania the line loops around Mount Etna and eventually reaches the other terminal at the seaside town of Riposto. Its rolling stock has been updated several times, but the route is the same as when the Sharps boarded the train to travel back and forth between Taormina and the Castello Maniace in the early twentieth century. Photograph by Arbalete (2011), Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mappa_ferr_Circumetnea.png



Fig. 14. The Randazzo station of the Ferrovia Circumetnea where the Sharps entered and left the train on their trips to the Castello Maniace. Photograph by LuckyLisp (2005), Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Circumetnea_stazione_di_randazzo.jpg

During November, Sharp worked on a story about Flora Macdonald entitled “The King’s Ring” which appeared as the work of Fiona Macleod in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in May and June 1904. Flora MacDonald (1722–1790) was a member of the MacDonalds of Sleat, who helped Charles Edward Stuart evade government troops after the Battle of Culloden in April 1746. Her family supported the government during the 1745 Rising, and Flora later claimed to have assisted Charles out of sympathy for his situation. After her release from the Tower of London in 1747, she married and moved to North Carolina. Sharp’s story focused on her life there, and her support of Britain during the American Revolution. In his October 30 letter to Catherine Janvier, Sharp wrote that as soon as he had finished some “pot-boiling” essays, he planned to put together for publication in Britain “two F. M. volumes, one a vol. of Gaelic essays and Spiritual studies to be called *For The Beauty of an Idea* and the other a volume of Verse to be called probably ‘The Immortal Hour and Poems’

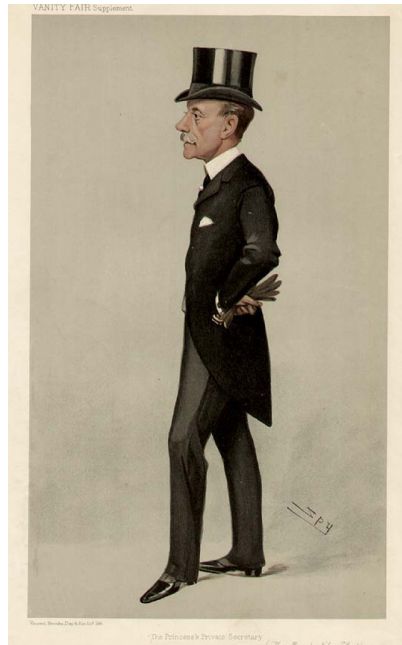


Fig. 15. Sir Alexander Nelson Hood, 5th Duke of Bronté (1854–1937). “The Princess’s Private Secretary,” Caricature by Spy (Leslie Ward), published in *Vanity Fair* in 1905. Wikimedia, Public Domain, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Hood,_5th_Duke_of_Bronté#/media/File:Alexander_Nelson_Hood,_Vanity_Fair,_1905-10-26.jpg

or else "The Enchanted Valley"". When the volume of essays and spiritual studies was published in 1904 by Chapman and Hall in London, it had expanded significantly. "For the Beauty of an Idea" became the second half of a 400-page book called *The Winged Destiny: Studies in the Spiritual History of the Gael*. The volume of Fiona Macleod poems did not materialize until two years after Sharp died when Elizabeth organized it as her husband had directed: *From the Hills of Dream: Threnodies, Songs and Later Poems* (London: William Heinemann, 1907).

Sharp's letter of thanks to Hood exemplifies the renewal he experienced in the warmth and beauty of Sicily: "what a happy time I had at Maniace, and how pleasantly I remember all our walks and talks and times together, and how the true affection of a deepened friendship is only the more and more enhanced and confirmed." Hood was in Venice to collect information for a romance he was writing called *Adria: A Tale of Venice* which was set in that city and dealt with its occupation by Austria after that country received it in a trade with Napoleon. When Hood's book was published in 1904 it contained the following dedication:

TO
WILLIAM SHARP
IN TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF PLEASANT COMPANIONSHIP, THIS "SAGA OF
A BELEAGUERED CITY" — THIS TALE OF
THAT VENICE OF WHICH WE BOTH
HAVE SO GREAT A LOVE

In Hood, Sharp found late in life another man with whom he forged an intimate friendship, as he had earlier with Hall Caine, J. Stanley Little, and R. Murray Gilchrist. That Hood tried so hard to obtain a government pension for Sharp and continued to entertain him for weeks at a time in his Bronte Castle reveals the affection expressed in this dedication was genuine. In late August, Sharp concluded a letter to Hood by saying "I am more than ever glad and proud of a friendship so deeply sympathetic and intuitively understanding. | Ever affectionately yours, dear Friend, | Will." The bond formed between the two men endured until December 1905 when Sharp died at the Castle Maniace, whereupon Hood arranged his burial in the estate's Protestant cemetery and commissioned and oversaw the installation of a large Celtic cross to mark his grave.

Letters: 1902

To Ernest Rhys, early February, 1902

Il Castello di Maniace

My Dear Ernest,

As I think I wrote to you, I fell ill with a form of fever, — and had a brief if severe recurrence of it at Rome: and so was glad some time ago to get on to my beloved “Greek” Taormina, where I rapidly “convalesced.” A few days ago I came on here, to the wild inlands of the Sicilian Highlands, to spend a month with my dear friend here, in this wonderful old Castle-Fortress-Monastery- Mansion — the Castle Maniace itself being over 2,000 feet in the highlands beyond Etna, and Maletto, the nearest station about 3,000.

How you and Grace would rejoice in this region. Within a day’s easy ride is Emma, sacred to Demeter, and about a mile or so from Castle Maniace, in a wild desolate region of a lava wilderness, is the lonely heron-haunted moorland-lake wherein tradition has it Persephone disappeared. ...

W. S.

*Memoir, p. 339**To Thomas Mosher, January 6, 1902*

c/o Mrs. Wingate Rinder | 11 Woronzow Road | London | N. W.
Edinburgh | (En Route)

6th Jan. 1902

My dear Mr. Mosher

How charming, those “Celtic” copies on Japan Vellum, and how glad I was to get them. They are beautiful little booklets, and have been very greatly appreciated by recipients. How much distinction and charm you

do give to your publications. And it was so good of you to send me so many.² I am perhaps leaving day after tomorrow for Menton on the Riviera for my health as the Scottish winter is so inclement from now till March.³ So excuse this brief word — and any delay for some time to come in correspondence. I hope to write to you about "The Silence of Amor" — possibly with copy — in a fortnight or three weeks. Meanwhile again thanking you (and — how stupid of me to forget — for the safely returned photograph and all your friendly heed and expressions).⁴ Believe me, again with all New Year Greetings and hopes,

Your friend, | Fiona Macleod

ALS New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To Theodore Watts-Dunton, February 10, 1902

Monday, 10th Feby | 02

Italia, | Castello di Maniace, | Bronte, | Sicily

Address: | Telegrams, | Maletto Station | c/o Il Duca di Bronte | Bronte |
Sicily

My dear Watts-Dunton

I have heard nothing more either from "Literature" ("as was") or the "Academy" — neither returned MS, nor payment, nor even acknowledgment of any kind of my letter.

I am now convalescent from my gastric attack, & happy to be in this beautiful & "romantic" place with my dear friend Alex. Nelson Hood (in Sicily, the Duke of Bronte).

We are only some 20 miles from ancient Enna — & about a mile from here (in a desolate wilderness) is the lonely heron-haunted moorland Lake wherein tradition has it Persephone disappeared.

Altho' of course it is not so warm here as at Taormina (whence I came last & hope to return in 3 weeks or so), Spring is come. Everywhere is a mass of purple iris, narcissus, Asphodel, & thousands of sweet-smelling violets.

(Just off with my host to be at the opening of some ancient Greek (Saracane? Roman?) tombs, newly discovered by the washing away of a divergent watercourse.)

I hope you are now feeling all right, & that all goes well with your projects. (My regards to Mr. Swinburne whose Tauchnitz selection has won much appreciation.)

Ever affectly yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Leeds, Brotherton Library

To Dr. John Goodchild, Friday, March 7, 1902

Friday, 7th March, 1902

... Tomorrow we leave here for Taormina⁵. ... And, not without many regrets, I am glad to leave — as, in turn, I shall be glad (tho' for other reasons) when the time comes to leave Taormina. My wife says I am never satisfied, and that Paradise itself would be intolerable for me if I could not get out of it when I wanted. And there is some truth in what she says, though it is a partial truth, only. I think external change as essential to some natures as passivity is to others: but this may simply mean that the inward life in one person may best be hypnotised by "a still image", that of another may best be hypnotized by a wavering image or series of wavering images. It is not change of scene one needs so much as change in these wavering images. For myself, I should, now, in many ways be content to spend the rest of my life in some quiet place in the country, with a garden, a line of poplars and tall elms, and a great sweep of sky... .

Your friend affectionately, | William Sharp

Memoir, pp. 340–41

To Catherine Ann Janvier, [March, 1902]

Taormina

It is difficult to do anything here. I should like to come sometime without anything to do — without even a book to read: simply to come and dream, to re-live many of the scenes of this inexhaustible region of romance: to see in vision the coming and going of that innumerable company — from Ulysses and his wanderers, from Pythagoras and St. Peter, from that Pancrazio who had seen Christ in the flesh,⁶ from Aeschylus, and Dionysius and Hiero and Gelon,⁷ from Pindar and Simonides and Theocritus, to Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Garibaldi and Lord Nelson — what a strange company! ...

As for my own work, it is mostly (what there is of it:) dealing with the literature, etc., of the south. I do not know whether my long article on Contemporary Italian Poetry is to be in the April-June issue of *The Quarterly*,⁸ or the summer issue. I am more interested in a strange Greek drama I am writing — The Kôrê of Enna⁹ — than in anything I have taken up for a long time. My reading just now is mostly Greek history and Italian literature. ... Looking on this deep blue, often violet sea, with the foam washing below that perhaps laved the opposite shores of Greece, and hearing the bees on the warm wind, it is difficult to realise the wet and cold you have apparently had recently in New York — or the fogs and cold in London. I wish you could bask in and sun yourself on this sea-terrace, and read me the last you have written of "Captain Dionysius"¹⁰ while I give *you* tea! ...

[William Sharp]

Memoir, pp. 342–43

To Mrs. J. H. Philpot, April 3, 1902¹¹

Taormina, | April 3, 1902

Dear Friend,

... It would take pages to describe all the flowers and other near and far objects which delight one continually. Persephone has scattered every treasure in this her birth-island. From my room here in the Castello-a-Mare — this long terraced hotel is built on the extreme edge of a precipitous height outside the Messina Gate of Taormina — I look down first on a maze of vividly green almond trees sloping swiftly down to the deep blue sea, and over them the snowy vastness of Etna, phantom-white against the intense blue, with its hitherside 11,000 feet of gulfs of violet morning shadow. About midway this is broken to the right first by some ancient cactus-covered fragments of antiquity at the corner of a winding path, and then by the bend of Santa Caterina garden wall with fine tall plume-like cypresses filled with a living green darkness, silhouetted against the foam-white cone.

My French windows open on the terrace, it is lovely to go out early in the morning to watch sunrise (gold to rose-flame) coming over Calabria, and the purple-blue emerald straits of Messina and down by the wildly picturesque shores of these island coasts and across the Ionian sea, and lying like a bloom on the incredible vastness of Etna and its rise from distant Syracuse and Mt. Hybla to its cone far beyond the morning clouds when clouds there are — or to go out at sunrise and see a miracle of beauty being woven anew — or at night when there is no moon, but only flashing of the starry torches, the serpentine glitter of lights, the soft cry of the aziola, and the drowsy rhythmic cadence of the sea in the caves and crags far below. Just now the hum of bees is almost as loud as the drowsy sighing of the sea: among the almonds a boy is singing a long drowsy Greek-like chant, and on the mass of wild rock near the cypresses a goatherd is playing intermittently on a reed pipe. A few yards to the right is a long crescent-shaped terrace garden filled with roses, great shrublike clumps of white and yellow marguerite, myrtle, lilies, narcissus, sweet-scented blossom-covered geranium, oranges hanging in yellow flame, pale gold lemons. Below the branches a "Purple Emperor" and a snow- white "May Queen"

are hovering in butterfly wooing. On an oleander above a wilderness of pink and scarlet geraniums two blue tits are singing and building, building and singing. ...

Since I wrote the above Easter has intervened.¹² The strange half pagan, half Christian ceremonies interested me greatly, and in one of the ceremonials of one processional part I recognized a striking survival of the more ancient Greek rites of the Demeter and the Persephona-Kôrê cult.

[William Sharp]

Memoir, pp. 341-42

To John Macleay, May 23, 1902

Edinburgh | 23rd May 1902

Dear Mr. Macleay

This is just a line to say you may certainly select for your book "Deirdre's Lament" and anything else you consider suitable and desirable. I have not a copy (except a severely revised one for use later) of the American revised and amplified edition of "From the Hills of Dream" — but I asked Mr. Sharp if he would lend you his if he had it at hand; and I hear that he has sent it to you. I hope your book will find the right way, and reach many readers. It is to be regretted there are so few good translators of Gaelic verse: indeed, except Dr. Douglas Hyde and possibly Mr. Rolleston I can think of none at the moment whose work is in itself excellent.

Personally I have a great objection to a certain kind of periphrastic translation (the interjectional, loose-measured kind affected by Prof. Blackie for example): and, indeed, doubt if adequate verse-translation of Gaelic poetry be practicable, save in the few instances where a Mangan or a Douglas Hyde can as exceptions further emphasize the rule.

Do you know the verse of an Anglican-Gaelic writer who has contributed frequently to our own and to American periodicals — Ethne Carbery, the recently deceased wife of the well-known Irish writer

Seumas McManus? If I remember rightly she did some things that might suit you. And of course you have one or more of the beautiful home-longing lyrics of Moira O'Neill? Are you giving anything in Gaelic? . . . if so, of course you could draw upon much beautiful and pathetic poetry. Yet I doubt if there is anywhere anything in kind to equal Clarence Mangan's "Dark Rosaleen."

Much of the best imaginative work of the Celtic, certainly of the Gaelic peoples, is inspired by longing, and generally by the peculiar and acute longing caused by the pressure of uncongenial circumstances in a foreign atmosphere, or by absence, or by forced exile. That, and the deeper and insatiable spiritual longing that has ever characterized our race.¹³

I am writing you almost en route, from Edinburgh, as I am leaving at the earliest moment feasible for the Hebrides. (As before my correspondence-address remains that of my friend and agent | Mrs. Rinder | 11 Woronzow Road | London. N. W.

With all good wishes | Believe me, dear Mr. Macleay,
Yours most sincerely | Fiona Macleod

TLS National Library of Scotland

To Mr. Black, June, 1902¹⁴

London, | June, 1902

My Dear Mr. Black,

As soon as possible after my return from Brittany I read your MS. It is full of the true sentiment, and has often charm in the expression: but I think you would do well to aim at a style simpler still, freer from mannerisms, and above all from mannerisms identified with the work of other writers. As I am speaking critically, let me say frankly that I have found your beautiful tale too reminiscent ever and again of an accent, a note, a vernacular (too reminiscent even in names), common to much that I have written. You are sympathetic enough to care for much of my work, and loyal enough to say so with generous appreciation:

but just because of this you should be on guard against anything in my style savouring of affectation or mannerism. You may be sure that whatever hold my writings may have taken on the imagination of what is at most a small clan has been in despite of and not because of mannerisms, which sometimes make for atmosphere and verisimilitude and sometimes are merely obvious, and therefore make for weakness and even disillusion. Be on guard, therefore, against a sympathy which would lead you to express yourself in any other way than you yourself feel and in other terms than the terms of our own mind. Mannerism is often the colour and contour of a writer's mind: but the raiment never fits even the original wearer, and is disastrous for the borrower, when the mental habit of mannerism is translated into the mental incertitude of mannerisms. You have so natural a faculty and so eager a desire, that I have no hesitation in urging you to devote your best thought and time and effort to a worthy achievement.

But no work of the imagination has any value if it be not shaped and coloured from within. Every imaginative writer must take his offspring to the Fountain of Youth, and the only way is through the shadowy and silent avenues of one's own heart. My advice to you, then, is not to refrain from steeping your thought and imagination in what is near to your heart and dream, but to see that your vision is always your *own* vision, that your utterance is always your own utterance, and to be content with no beauty and no charm that are dependent on another's vision of beauty and another's secret of charm.

Meanwhile, I can advise you no more surely than to say, write as simply, almost as baldly, above all as *naturally* as possible. Sincerity, which is the last triumph of art, is also its foster-mother. You will do well, I feel sure: and among your readers you will have none more interested than

Yours Sincerely, | Fiona Macleod

To [?], [June, 1902]¹⁵

... Rhythmic balance, fluidity, natural motion, spontaneity, controlled impetus, proportion, height and depth, shape and contour, colour and atmosphere, all these go to every *living* sentence — but there, why should I weary you with uncertain words when you can have a certainty of instance almost any time where you are: you have but to look at a wave to find your exemplar for the ideal sentence. All I have spoken of is there — and it is alive — and part of one flawless whole... .

[William Sharp]

Memoir, pp. 361–62

To Thomas Mosher, June 19, 1902

c/o Mrs. Wingate Rinder | 11 Woronzow Road |
St. John's Wood | London

19th June 1902

My Dear Friend,

I am very chagrined to infer from your note (with enclosure) that you do not seem to have received either a telegram (cablegram) or a long letter I sent to you from Italy. As a matter of fact I, also, have been wondering at your silence. I forget the date in the late “fall” when last I wrote to you about the “Silence of Amor” etc — but at any rate I became very unwell before Christmas, and was recommended to spend the spring in the East. That I could not possibly afford, but through a friend's offer I was able to go on a long yachting cruise in the Mediterranean, and later to spend some time in Sicily, Venice, and elsewhere.

Before I left I sent you, for New Year's Day, a very small but personal present (a little seal that I valued, and had taken from a ring I had long worn, but had accidentally broken). Wrapped round this was a letter, thanking you for several gracious courtesies in what you had sent me, and telling you of my temporarily relinquished work, and plans. I was

very unwell at the time, and dictated all my correspondence. Well, that (fortunately registered) package came back from America, I forget whether through Mrs. Rinder or my cousin at Murrayfield, and in the course of time reached me while on a brief passing-visit to Southern Sicily. And no wonder it had not reached you! ... for I discovered that despite my having dictated the full address my temporary amanuensis had curtailed it to "Mr. M. Portland, Maine, New York City" (the last words being a freak of her own distempered imagination!! Luckily the address-heading was inside. I alluded to all this in a long letter I sent to you from Syracuse in Sicily: and added that you could still have the much travelled seal if you cared (of no value, as I said, but sent in sign of personal friendship). But before that you should have received my cablegram. Looking in my journal I find I cabled to you "*In Italy convalescent Am writing.*" I gave both the telegram and the letter to one whom I thought I could trust — but apparently the temptation proved too great. (The telegram I find cost, with address and signature, about 12 lire — i.e., nearly 10s/ and the letter had six 2½^d stamps — and this, I am told, would be almost irresistible to most Sicilians of the poorer class!)

I did not know till recently that in Italy, and particularly in Sicily, one should always obtain a receipt for a telegram, as otherwise there is but slight chance of foreign telegrams ever being dispatched at all. In that letter I enclosed a few examples of the proposed changes in and additions to "The Silence of Amor" — and also asked you to reply to me on certain other matters (particularly the "personal reminiscence" part of "*The Divine Adventure*" volume and elsewhere, for a vol. to be issued by you as "*From A Kingdom By The Sea*"). So, you see, if you have been waiting for me, I too have been waiting for you! After Italy I was a long time in Brittany, and there gathered much new material. I returned a few weeks ago, feeling quite well: but the wretchedly inclement weather which has prevailed all May and June till a day or two ago, threw me back, and I became very unwell with what just escaped being severe pneumonia. I am better, and now am "in," I hope, for a long spell of creative work (a good deal to revise, much to finish, and an ambitious book just begun after long planning out and thinking over) — but both for reasons of work and health (for I am never so well as on or near the sea) I am going away very shortly for a long yachting

cruise among the Western Isles, to Iceland perhaps, to the Shetlands and Faroes, and to Norway, and back again by the Hebrides — so that I shall not be in Scotland again till October at earliest, and possibly only en route for the South again. Except when I am in the near Hebrides, where I hope to spend some time at first, I shall be at some distance from postal places at times — but shall always be in close telegraphic connection with my two correspondence addresses. If you write to me for my receipt before or up till the end of July, please do so c/o Mrs. Rinder as usual: during August and September the safest and quickest will be Miss Macleod | at 22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield | Midlothian. (marked in left hand corner “Please Forward”) At and after close of September, to “c/o Mrs. Rinder” as before (as she keeps record of my literary correspondence, and sees to my affairs for me). Do you still wish “The Silence of Amor”? Is there a public for a book of the kind? And the other? I should much like to hear about that: and, if so, what you can propose.¹⁶

I began this note as a private letter, and have ended it with a business question! Forgive me, and believe me in both relationships, dear Mr. Mosher,

Sincerely yours | Fiona Macleod

TLS New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To John Macleay, June 23, 1902

“The Rest” | *St. Abbs*’ | Berwickshire | 23rd June | 02
Letter address on or after Wdny: | Murrayfield | Midlothian

Dear Mr. Macleay,

The book duly reached me, thanks.

It is very good of you to wish to write an article on me. Unfortunately I have preserved few of those which have appeared at times during the last 10 or 12 years, and Heaven knows where even these few may be — for I don’t! Probably they are lost in some book-and-manuscript wilderness in some trunk deposited in the Furniture Stores where most

of my worldly goods have long been (and are likely long to remain)! And I'm a very bad hand at this kind of thing, alack!

You'll find all formal literary particulars in *Who's Who* etc. and I don't think there's much else! I've lived my life so fully, travelled so much, lived so much abroad, that (looking back on it) I cannot see how it would fit into more than a sentence. ... a sentence or a book! — and as I'm not "book-worthy," so to say, I think the sentence the better!

Of course I've seen much of eminent men, in our country and abroad and in America: & here, of course, I have many reminiscences. Some day, I suppose, when nearer some kind of settledness than so homeless a wanderer as myself foresees meanwhile, I may take up the reminiscent pen. As yet, the vanity of the author (let us call it that anyway) prompts me to do a good-deal more first myself before I (to use an Americanism) "reminiss."

But if we should meet in Scotland ... why, I daresay my tongue would be less reticent than my pen, whose shocking apathy at the sight of ink is growing into a disease!

I do not know for certain where I shall be between the 1st & 9th of August — but it is very unlikely I shall be in Edinburgh then. There is just a dim chance that I might be there at the end of July or the 1st — but too dim to calculate on. In all probability my wife will join me from London towards the close of July, to spend August & Sept in the West Highlands or Islands, & then returning via Edinburgh. We shall probably go to Sicily again at the beginning of November. (I am working a good deal at the Latin literatures and developments.)

I have pleasure in sending to you herewith a brief line of the kind you specify, which I hope is what you want.

Sincerely yours / William Sharp

To Alfred Austin¹⁷ July 12, 1902

Point House | Island of Lismore | (by Oban) | 12th July 1902

Dear Poet and Friend,

I have heard from Alec Hood of the friendly concern with which you learned what he told you, and of your prompt and generous action. Believe me, I am very grateful. I hope very much, more than I allow myself to say, that your influence with the first lord of the Treasury may, either by itself or (if routine demands) supported by other eminent names, be successful. If others should have to be asked to endorse the "petition," I am sure that application might be made to George Meredith, A. C. Swinburne, Thomas Hardy, Theodore Watts-Dunton, Dr. Richard Garnett, Austin Dobson, W. G. Prothero (Editor of *The Quarterly*) and others if necessary — and, in another direction, to the Duke of Sutherland, and one or two others of whom Alec Hood would tell you as knowing me.

Probably he explained the circumstances to you — & how I find myself now in an entirely unforeseen way deprived by no fault of my own of all I had to depend upon — in uncertain health and after ten months of an almost continuous trouble affecting my working capacity — and now with almost nothing in hand, a small but nonetheless embarrassing debt of £50, and, though now working hard again, with no likelihood of returns for months to come, much of it not till next Spring or later (you know what is involved in literary work — the often inevitably deferred appearance, and consequent deferred payment). I left London shortly after mid-June & came to this quiet farm house (already known often), so as to live with the utmost possible saving of expense. My wife has been staying with her mother, but will join me soon.

It is disagreeable to have to be explicit on so personal a matter, and to trouble *you*, good friend as you are: but since the matter has been mooted (& at first most reluctantly on my part) then frankness is best, is indeed called for.

To show you how urgent things are with me, let me add therefore that I have only a few pounds left, enough with care to carry us on till the middle or end of August [& this because of an advance cheque for a long article of mine on contemporary Italian poetry in the forthcoming

"Quarterly Review" July–Sept] — and that at the present moment I see no way, without borrowing (which I am most loth even to consider, apart from being already £50 in debt to my Bank) to meet the living-expenses of the autumn-months, or the winter (& alas, it is even more imperative than before, the doctor says, that I should get abroad before the fogs and damps begin — by the 1st of November, he says, if at all possible).

By the turn of the year, of course, I hope that what I am now variously busy upon will begin to bring in money — if health holds, tho' worry and anxiety are heavy handicaps.

Another reason why I write all this detail is the thought that came to me last night that you are on the Board of the Royal Literary Fund. If I am right in this supposition & you could use your influence to obtain me a grant, it would be an obligation of vital moment. I confess that the idea goes very much against the grain — & the more so as one's pride shrinks from any publicity, or even from those knowing whom one would rather not have know. However, I do not want help as one who has failed or is laid low: simply as one whom unforeseen & and unavoidable disaster has overtaken, and who is ready & willing to take up the struggle afresh. In another year or two I hope to be "all right" again — certainly it won't be for want of trying, or for belief that "it will all come right after a bit."

Of course, the Pension's the all important thing — both to immediate welfare & for mental relief (and a surety — that is, indeed, where it could replace what is lost). So disregard the other, if you think it wiser, or would rather not, or are not in a position. (I have said nothing of this to any one — so it can "drop," if need be)

And if, some day, you can send me word that the dispenser of Pensions has favourably considered Mr. W. S. then you will have earned once again my true gratitude. Meanwhile I'll hope to manage somehow.

Ever sincerely & gratefully yours, | William Sharp

ALS Princeton University

To Thomas Mosher, July [19?], 1902

Temporary Letter Address | Miss Macleod |
22 Ormidale Terrace | Murrayfield, Midlothian
(Please Forward) | July 1902

Dear Mr. Mosher

I am not waiting to hear from you in reply to my letter of about a month ago [June 19], which I hope you duly received. Since I wrote, my plans have had to be materially modified, and my projects brought into line with pressing needs.

Through an unforeseen financial disaster affecting one who had money in trust for me I find myself not only in a most difficult position for the present but strained to get away abroad when the late autumn damps begin, as I am strongly advised to do.

I have had to set aside, therefore, certain work I had on hand, and to see to what will bring me in more immediate returns.

As regards yourself, I cannot now set myself to complete the little "Silence of Amor" volume — that is, for the present.

I should very much like, however, to do the other proposed volume (for you exclusively) to be called say *Island Memories* or other such title [e.g. the already suggested "In This Kingdom by the Sea"]; to comprise the personal matter already scattered through the long essay on Iona, and in other pages of *The Divine Adventure* volume — which, as you know, has not been reprinted in U. S. A. — with added new material. If I were to do this, could you pay me the sum of £50, a sum of course very much below what I would ask if I were trying to arrange elsewhere. But apart from having already suggested it to you, I am persuaded by the beautiful format (particularly if it be possible to issue it like "Mimes")¹⁸, and by the relative privacy of your publications. [The conditions would be that you would have the American copyright of said book, but not disposably, and for a specified term, say seven years (that is how my English contracts are made out) renewable if mutually desired. On account of copyright and other reasons it is very unlikely I should be able to republish in this country — even if I wished to do so — so that any of my readers here desirous of this volume would have to write to you for it.]

Now as to another proposal.

You do not as a rule issue quite new books, I know: but possibly you may care for the following, which I had intended to suggest to Messrs Harper, first for serial use, and then for publication in book form: — namely the complete romance of Tristram and Yseult — “l’incomparable épopée de l’amour” as Gaston Paris, the great French specialist on the subject calls it — retold from the several medieval and later sources, or else from the latest synthetical relation by Joseph Bédier, of which indeed it might in effect be a carefully wrought and perhaps augmented re-rendering. It would be a volume of about 250 pp. of ordinary wide-leaded 8vo. pages, and would be in 19 or 20 chapters. It could be called either *Tristram and Yseult* (or *Tristran and Yseud*) or, if preferred, *Yseult of the White Hands*. I could not undertake this for less than £100, but you would of course have complete American rights, and, whatever other arrangements might ultimately be made by me over here, the book would appear first in America.

In alluding again to the romance of Tristran and Yseult, Gaston Paris speaks of it as unquestionably belonging to the enduring world literature (“cette littérature du monde”) of which Goethe wrote.

And now, finally, for a third suggestion for your consideration — a volume of a scrupulously limited anthology of the best Anglo-Celtic poetry — far less eclectic than Mr. and Mrs. William Sharp’s *Lyra Celtica*, I should add — to be called, let us say, *A Little Treasury of Celtic Poetry*. It would come down to the latest (and even some of the unpublished work) of Mr. Yeats and others, including the recently deceased Ethna Carbery about whose poetry I am now writing a brief essay for a magazine. And I would have something to say on the subject, as well as on the matter of the book and the writers represented. [Here again the same terms, and exclusive and final American rights to you: the book probably to be an American publication only.]

I ought to wait for your reply to my recent letter — where, indeed, I did make allusion to the *Island Memories* volume — but time presses and so I do not delay.¹⁹

I hope all goes fortunately with you. Doubtless this may find you either about to enjoy a holiday or already in that enjoyment — In any case, Gu’m a math a bhios sibh ... May it be well with you.

Believe me | Most cordially your | Fiona Macleod

To Thomas Mosher, July 21, 1902

Monday morning | 21st July, 1902

Dear Mr. Mosher

Your welcome and friendly double letter reached me in Appin of Argyll, and just after I had posted a letter to you. If it does not reach you along with this, there can hardly be more than a "post" between them. I write now hurriedly to catch the first outgoing mail, and shall send by a messenger going in any case to Edinburgh today, as there is no post now from here till late tomorrow. Fortunately I was within a mile or two of where I could have a telegram sent off, though too late for Saturday evening, but it was to go off the first thing yesterday, the date you mentioned as the latest by which you should hear. I telegraphed "Agree Essays and Amor. Posting MSS. fortnight hence," for the occasion seemed to justify the outlay. And by that of course I meant that I concur with and authorize your suggested reprint of "By Sundown Shores," and, also, since you say it is your own wish, "The Silence of Amor" — and that by *about* the end of July (possibly a few days before, possibly a few days later, but I hope before) I shall post "copy" to you. [As I shall be travelling to the north of Scotland about the 30th I shall for every reason do my best to send by then.]

"By Sundown Shores"

I shall be very glad to see these pieces reprinted. I shall send a few revisions, with a prefatory paper as you suggest (and just possibly an added piece, not published in book-form, that would fall into line with them) — and so make it more of a new book than merely a reprint.

"The Silence of Amor"

My feeling about these short compositions [in a sense, rather the canticles of a single song, the *Chant D'Amour*] is that (1) they seem to me too slight and (2) that they might not have enough readers to justify you in publication. However, if you are willing, I am of course pleased to accede. Doubtless they would help "From the Hills of Dream," and, too, it is certain that "The Silence of Amor" is best read apart, as a distinct production, and not as an apparent series of prose poems at the end of a volume of verse. [I remember, too, that one or two critics on your side, notably Mr. Bliss Carman, spoke very highly of these "prose rhythms" when the original edition of "From the Hills of Dream" appeared.] So,

about the date mentioned, I shall send "The Silence of Amor" revised, with some added matter. Then or before then I shall also write to you privately — today I have time for no more, and must indeed at this very moment abruptly close.

Most sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

ALS New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To Henry Mills Alden, July 21, 1902

(Though in the Western Isles | I write you from here,
as best | address for the next two months)

72 Inverness Terrace | Bayswater | London | 21st July/02

My dear Alden,

I send this, though editorial, to your private address, as I want to add a private word with it, and also because Miss Macleod is writing to you editorially by same post to Franklin Square. I am also sending a letter about a suggested book to you or the firm direct.

I am afraid that you never got a long private letter, purely with matters of personal interest and enquiring about you & yours written in February last — not so much because I have not heard from you, for there was nothing specially calling for immediate response, but because I have discovered that at least three other letters (one of them important) posted per same source in Italy and at same time never reached their destinations.

Well, anyway, the plans & projects alluded to in that letter were carried out only so far as concerned the late Spring.

Then, unfortunately, a very serious disaster happened to me — & the worse as coming when I was still very "down" from a prolonged & health-shaking malarial fever — namely the complete & final loss, without any warning, of all I had to depend upon, except what I can make by the pen. The loss, though it might seem small to others, is a very material one to me, and above all I miss it as a surety, the one thing I could look to. It is the mental loss of this small but sure

standby that has meant so much to me. The trouble was complicated by coincident loss to others dear to me (thro' the mismanagement and defalcations of an agent in Australia) — & what with a pneumonic attack after return to England, & worry, etc., I have had anything but a satisfactory time of it! Some friends, knowing the circumstances, made an appeal to the Govt. for a pension from the Civil List, but: I have just heard with little or no chance of success, as party & private influences are all potent, & for other reasons. However, I am now feeling much better in health, & if only health keeps hope to emerge from my present pressing embarrassments, & though I cannot replace the sure income lost forever still I hope I can make enough to get along on. I am sorriest at having to relinquish certain things I had long projected or been at work on. But it is absolutely imperative I must work at what will bring in some material and speedy return: & all more so as my medical man leaves me no option but to go abroad again if at all possible & before the November damps & fogs set in. I hope very much, therefore, that one or two of the proposals made to you may appear to you "commissionable."

There is, of course, no chance now of our getting to U. S. A. this autumn or winter — but I still cherish I dare not say an intention but at least a hope that this may prove practicable sometime next year. With you, and yours, I hope all goes well. I would give much to be able "to run over" to Metuchen for a week-end! (You will be pleased to know that our friend Miss F. M.'s influence & circle of readers both continually increase.)

With all cordial remembrances to those at Metuchen and my affectionate greetings to yourself,

Ever Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Delaware Library

To Thomas Mosher, August 2, 1902

August 2nd | (Nairn)

My Dear Mr. Mosher,

Just before I came north (I write to you from Nairn, on the Moray Firth, from Nairn near Inverness) I managed, as I had hoped and half-promised, to post to you from Oban (Port-Appin) in Argyll the completed "copy" of new matter, revisions, and memda [sic] for "*By Sundown Shores*" and "*The Silence of Amor*", which (registered) I hope will have duly reached you by the time you receive this by subsequent mail.

You will see that I have dedicated this American edition of the revised and augmented *By Sundown Shores* to you: and in I think, the best way, a dedicatory prologue. I hope you will accept this tribute of friendship. (I am glad that in itself I think it as good as anything I have written — though both underthought and style may be too foreign for some readers.)

When I alluded to your writing something preliminary to "*The Silence of Amor*" I was thinking of the Bibelot series. Perhaps a booklet like "*The Silence of Amor*" is best to come out without foreword of any kind (certainly without any from me). But decide just as seems best to you, and for your readers. (I expect that those who would go the length of buying such a book would understand at once that the little series of prose-rhythms (I don't like "prose-poems"!) deals throughout with the all but inexpressible subtleties of love lost or relinquished, but that from first to last the word love is never mentioned in the book — hence the title of "*Silence*" and even the use of abstract and impersonating "*Amor*" instead of "*Love*".)

If, however, you think it better to have a foreword from you, by all means let it appear.

I am glad indeed that despite some days of indisposition from a chill I was able, by setting aside all other work, to devote the last fortnight to completing these volumes for you. As to the matter of honorarium you know best what your expenses in connection with production enable you to offer with justice to your own share: so I leave the matter with you, content to do so. I am very glad you are able to bring them out this autumn-season.

(In whatever sum you allow deduct say 20 copies of each, for my own use)

By this post I am sending to you the little crystal seal that has already travelled to you from Italy and returned from America. This time I hope it will reach you safely. I enclose it in a little box for stamps made of the green marble of Iona. Some other time I will reply to your private letter — but now must catch this mail.

Believe me, dear Mr. Mosher | Ever Sincerely Yours, | Fiona Macleod
ALS New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To Thomas Mosher, August 6, 1902

Nairn | 6th Augt

After all, I wrote and typed an Introduction to "The S. of Amor," and left it to be posted by next mail. I had at first a reluctance, hence what I wrote to you: but I see that this introduction is well, and advisable. On looking through my dup. typed copy I see that on the 5th line of page 4 I have "desiderate" instead of "desiderated". Also cancel the final few words, and end at "inward ear."

Please both in this and other Prologue exercise all care in collation of proofs.

F. M.

ACS New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To Alfred Austin, [August 8, 1902]²⁰

Till Mid-Sept | c/o Mrs. Rhind | 53 Castle Street | Edinburgh

My dear Alfred Austin

Many thanks for your p/c of the 4th just received after some reforwarding. Again sincere thanks for all your trouble. Without being sanguine I still hope something may come of it — though for the moment I am so harassed by immediate pressing exigencies as almost to think more of the possibility of assistance meanwhile from the Roy. Lit. Fund. [My health has had a severe strain, & I'm not feeling right at all, but still I hope that by early in 1903 I'll have a pen-income again, but meanwhile it is the present & immediate future that causes me so much anxiety, for I was literally left with almost nothing on hand, & handicapped besides.] Hence my hope that even a grant, if not a pension from the Government or from the Roy. Lit. Fund, to which you so kindly wrote, may come to help me to tide over this too engulfing wave of present difficulties.

What a dreary summer, in weather. But perhaps it has been better with you in the South?

I hope all goes well with tomorrow's Coronation.

Ever sincerely yours | William Sharp

ALS Yale University

To Grant Richards, August 8, 1902

(Temporary) | c/o Mrs. Rhind | 53 Castle St. | Edinburgh | 8th Augt/02

My dear Grant Richards

Will you kindly instruct your clerk or manager not to solicit me further for an account that is not due.

A similar "a/c" came last year, which I took to be inadvertence. When it came again this year I put it in the fire. And now this note comes.

I have no account due to you that I am aware of. You published two books for me, with a small advance on each. That of course was without

any stipulation as to repayment, if sales short. By the given record of sales you have not actually lost money by the books: on the other hand I lost materially through your failure to advertise adequately on the head of the excellent reviews which appeared. At the time, when, one day, I expostulated, you explained that the heavy outlay on advertising "No. 5 John St"²¹ etc. was chiefly accountable: — at another time another reason was given (in the same terms as to R. Murray Gilchrist, & one or two other friends of mine with equal good cause for dissatisfaction).

However, what is to the point now is that your manager is writing to me for settlement of an a/c which does not exist.

When I return to London next month I should look in & have a talk with you about this & other matters.

Yours truly | William Sharp

ALS State University of New York at Buffalo

To Alexander Nelson Hood, August 21, 1902

Edinburgh, | 21st Aug, 1902.

My Dear Alec,

You will have anticipated my decision.²² No other was possible for me. I have not made many sacrifices just to set them aside when a temptation of need occurs. Indeed, even writing thus of "sacrifices" seems to me unworthy: these things are nothing, and have brought me far more than I lost, if not in outward fortune. It is right, though, to say that the decision is due to no form of mental obstinacy or arrogance. Rightly or wrongly, I am conscious of something to be done — to be done by one side of me, by one half of me, by the true inward self as I believe — (apart from the overwhelmingly felt mystery of a dual self, and a reminiscent life, and a woman's life and nature within, concurring with and oftenest dominating the other) — and rightly or wrongly I believe that this and the style so strangely born of this inward life, depend upon my aloofness and spiritual isolation as F. M. To betray publicly the private life and constrained ideal of that inward

self, for a reward's sake, would be a poor collapse. And if I feel all this, as I felt it from the first (and the *nominal* beginning was no literary adventure, but a deep spiritual impulse and compelling circumstances of a nature upon which I must be silent) how much more must I feel it now, when an added and great responsibility to others has come to me, through the winning of so already large and deepening a circle of those of like ideals or at least like sympathies in our own country, and in America — and I allude as much or more to those who while caring for the outer raiment think of and need most the spirit within that raiment, which I hope will grow fairer and simpler and finer still, if such is the will of the controlling divine wills that, above the maze, watch us in our troubled wilderness.

That is why I said that I could not adopt the suggestion, despite promise of the desired pension, even were that tenfold, or any sum. As to "name and fame," well, that is not my business. I am glad and content to be a "messenger," an interpreter it may be. Probably a wide repute would be bad for the work I have to do. Friends I want to gain, to win more and more, and, in reason, "to do well": but this is always secondary to the deep compelling motive. In a word, and quite simply, I believe that a spirit has breathed to me, or entered me, or that my soul remembers or has awaked (the phraseology matters little) — and, that being so, that my concern is not to think of myself or my "name" or "reward," but to do (with what renunciation, financial and other, may be necessary) my truest and best.

And then, believing this, I have faith you see in the inward destiny. I smiled when I put down your long, affectionate, and good letter. But it was not a smile of bitterness: it was of serene acceptance and confidence. And the words that came to my mind were those in the last chorus of Oedipus at Kolônos, "Be no more troubled, and no longer lament, for all these things will be accomplished."

Then, too, there's the finitude of all things. Why should one bother deeply when time is so brief. Even the gods passed, you know, or changed from form to form. I used to remember Renan's "Prayer on the Acropolis" by heart, and I recall those words "Tout n'est ici-bas que symbole et que songe. Les dieux passent comme les hommes et il ne serait pas bon qu'ils fussent éternels."²³

Elizabeth, who is on a visit to Fife, will, I know, wholeheartedly endorse my decision. Again all my gratitude and affection, dear Alec,

Your friend, | Will

Memoir, pp. 346–48

To Alexander Nelson Hood, August 23, [1902]

23rd Aug

Dear Julian,

A little line to greet you on your arrival in Venice, and to wish you there a time of happy rest and inspiration. May the spirit of the Sea-Queen whisper to you in romance and beauty.

How I wish I could look in on you at the Casa Persico! I love Venice as you do. I hope you will not find great changes, or too many visitors: and beware of the September heats, and above all the September mosquito!

“Julian” ought to have a great lift, and not the least pleasure in looking forward to seeing you again early in October is that of hearing some more of your book of Venice and of the other Julian.²⁴

If all goes well — and I have been working so hard, and done so much, that things ought to go smoothly with me again — then we hope to leave London for Sicily about the 21st Oct., and to reach Taormina *about* the 26th of that month.

I need not say how glad I am that you knew I could not decide otherwise than I did: and I am more than ever glad and proud of a friendship so deeply sympathetic and intuitively understanding.

Ever affectionately yours, dear Friend, | Will

P.S. By the way, you will be glad to know that Baron Tauchnitz is also going to bring out in 2 vols. a selection of representative tales by Fiona Macleod. The book called *The Magic Kingdoms* has been postponed till next year, but the first part of it will appear in *The Monthly Review*²⁵ in December probably. Stories, articles, studies, will appear elsewhere.

Your friend W. S. has been and is not less busy, besides maturing work long in hand. So at least I can't be accused of needless indolence.

Memoir, pp. 348–49

To Alfred Austin, [late August, 1902]

53 Castle St. | Edinburgh

My dear Alfred Austin,

You were right in your prognostication — for Alec Hood's efforts added to yours, and with the Memorial signed by you and George Meredith and Thomas Hardy and Swinburne have been set aside by other exigencies or reasons. There seems, however, a strong likelihood that a small Government Grant will be made to me — indeed Mr. Balfour affirmed as much to Alec Hood, as (I fancy) he directly or indirectly indicated to you.²⁶ Its immediate value will be in present relief. The need of rest, and the doctor's imperative urgency about my getting away before the November damp etc. must meanwhile "await events." I am still hopeful that something may come of your kind intervention on my behalf with the Board of the Roy. Lit. Fund.

I shall let you know the result, when finally I hear, as to the other. Hoping you are now having the long delayed Summer weather, and are well, and with song in the heart,

Ever yours sincerely, | William Sharp

ALS, Yale University

To Alfred Austin, [early September, 1902]

Linlathen | Broughty Ferry | Saty

Dear Alfred Austin

I am here at a friend's for the week-end. It is indeed good news, what you write of, & of which I heard also from Mr. Balfour's Secretary. To you, as to Alec Hood, who have both done so much to bring about this happy outcome to my difficulties I am most truly grateful.

Of course as this now frees me from my present embarrassments and immediate exigencies it is proper that the application to the Roy. Literary Fund should be withdrawn — as that Fund (as I understand) is only for relief in urgent circumstances. In the circumstances, therefore, the best thing would seem to be that you should write to the secretary, and withdraw the application, before the matter comes up for consideration at all.

I am very thankful, too, at the prospect of getting abroad soon, on a/c of the doctor's urgency about my heart etc.

Ever sincerely and Gratefully Yours, | William Sharp

*ALS Yale University**To George Hutchinson, September 15, 1902*

Murrayfield | Midlothian | 15/9/1902

Dear Mr. Hutchinson²⁷

Very many thanks for your kind Birthday Greetings. I am now very busy getting ready (& literary "material" is my worst care) to go to Sicily next month. I have been, and am continuously and arduously occupied with pen-work (the articles in the July & Sept, *Harper's*, the poem in the August issue, the long article (unsigned of course) in the July-Sept "Quarterly Review" on Contemporary Italian Literature, etc. are but overthrows of work done last winter) and have now alack added to my

labours by undertaking to complete another volume (of a more general nature) for the Tauchnitz Series before I go!

Hoping that all goes well with you | Sincerely yours | William Sharp
ALS Princeton University

To Thomas Mosher, October 14, 1902

Edinburgh | Tuesday Night | 14th. October

Dear Mr. Mosher,

I was very glad to hear from you. I feared that a letter had miscarried; perhaps that you were ill: possibly that some of my MS. (as happened to me once) had gone astray.

I thank you for your business letter and the accompanying draft for Ten Pounds (£10). I have, of course, absolute confidence that whatever you propose will be an equipoise of interests on both sides. So I accept the arrangement you suggest. As you kindly say you will forward the other Eight Pounds (£8) on hearing from me, to this effect, will you please do so, but to avoid delay and chances of complicated confusion, will you please make the draft payable, not to me, but to Mrs. E. Wingate Rinder and post it direct to her at 21 Woronzow Road | London. N. W. | (Cancel the hitherto No. 11, as her house has been renumbered 21.) with a brief note saying that as requested by Miss Macleod you forward the enclosed draft direct to her, to be passed to Miss Macleod's credit; and asking her kindly to send you a brief word of acknowledgment.

For the copyrighting and all other kind consideration of my interests, accept my cordial recognition.

I see that you say you will send the earliest copies to the Murrayfield address. If this reach you in time please send all there. I much look forward to seeing the two little volumes, though I fear none will arrive before I leave for Italy, namely on Monday next, the 20th. I have unfortunately been seriously ill, but the doctors say that the South and still more the Mediterranean sea-air will soon restore me to health. I hope it: but, meanwhile, I wish the long and tiresome journey were over.

Did I tell you that besides a French and a German translation in process, Baron Tauchnitz commissioned me to make a “representative” volume for his famous series. This also is to appear this month (or early in November). It is called *Wind and Wave* and is in two sections: tales “Of the World That Was” and tales “Of The World That Is.” Many of the tales are considerably revised, and there is an explicatory preface. I shall send you (either direct from me, or from Mrs. Rinder, or from my cousin at Murrayfield ... as the vols. happen to come) one of the earliest copies.

And I shall write to you more personally two or three weeks hence, from the South.

Most Sincerely Yours | Fiona Macleod

P.S. I forgot to say that I should be gratified if you will kindly send me 3 or 4 copies of the “Bibelot” for November, as I see that Mr. Rhys’ “New Mysticism” article is to be reprinted there (I suppose with some little foreword?) ... or is it a new and different article by Mr. Rhys. Also I should like the four volumes marked in enclosed list, the cost of which can be deducted from the draft you send to Mrs. Rinder. These, however, I should like to have sent to me direct (*registered*)

Miss Macleod | c/o Il Duca Alessandro di Bronte | Castello Maniace |
Bronte | Sicilia | (Italy)

Once more, if this reach you before all the copies of my two vols. are sent off, please send with above *one of each* to above address.²⁸

TLS New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To Catherine Ann Janvier, October 30, 1902

... We reached Messina all right, and Giardini, the Station for Taormina, in fair time; then the lovely winding drive up to unique and beautiful and wildly picturesque Taormina and to the lovely winter villa and grounds of Santa Caterina where a warm welcome met us from Miss Mabel Hill,²⁹ with whom we are to stay till the New Year... . I have for study a pleasant room on the garden terrace, at the Moorish end of the

old convent-villa with opposite the always open door windows or great arch trellised with a lovely "Japanese" vine, looking down through a sea of roses and lemon and orange to the deep blue Ionian Sea. The divine beauty, glow, warmth, fragrance, and classic loveliness of this place would delight you... Overhead there is a wilderness of deep blue, instinct with radiant heat and an almost passionate clarity. Forza, Mola, Roccafiorita, and other little mountain towns gleam in it like sunlit ivory. Over Forza (or Sforza rather) the storm-cloud of the Greco, with a rainbow hanging like a scimitar over the old, pagan, tragic, savagely picturesque mountain- ridge town. The bells of the hill-chapels rise and fall on the wind, for it is the beginning of All Souls festa. It is the day when "things" are abroad and the secret ways are more easily to be traversed.

Beneath my Moorish arch I look down through clustering yellow roses and orange and lemon to green-blue water, and thence across the wild-dove's breast of the Ionian Sea. Far to the S. E. and S., over where Corinth and Athens lie, are great still clouds, salmon-hued on the horizon with pink domes and summits. An intense stillness and the phantasmagoria of a forgotten dreamland dwell upon the long western promontories of the Syracusan coast, with the cloud-like Hyblaeen hill like a violet, and a light as of melting honey where Leontinoi and Syracuse lie... .

Nov. 8: This is a week later. I have accidentally destroyed or mislaid a sheet of this letter. Nothing of importance — only an account of the nocturnal festa of All Souls, with the glittering lights and the people watching by the graves, and leaving lights and flowers on each, the one to show the wandering souls the way back to the grave, the other to disguise the odor of mortality and illude them with the old beauty of the lost world — and the offerings of handfuls of beans, to give them sustenance on this their one mortal hour in the year. We three came here yesterday (Elizabeth, Miss Hill and I) and enjoyed the marvelous mountain-climbing journey from the sea-level of Giarre (near Catania) up to beautiful Linguaglossa, and Castiglione 2000 ft. high and so on to Randazzo and Maletto (3000 ft.) where we got out, and drove thro' the wild lava-lands of this savage and brigand haunted region to Castello di Maniace where il Signor Ducino Alessandro gave us cordial and affectionate welcome.

Sunday 9th. The weather is doubtful, but if it keeps fine we are going to drive down the gorges of the Simalthos (the Simeto of today) and then up by the crags and wild town of Bronte, and back by the old Aetnean hill-road of the ancient Greeks, or by the still more ancient Sikelian tombs at a high pass curiously enough known not by its ancient fame but as the Pass of the Gypsies. As the country is in a somewhat troubled and restive state just now, especially over Bronte, all pre-arrangements have been made to ensure safety. . . .

I hope you have received the Tauchnitz volume of "Wind and Wave." The text of Selected Tales has been revised where advisable, sometimes considerably. The gain is very marked I think, especially in simplicity. I hope you will like the preface. The long collective-article in the *Contemporary* for October "Sea-Magic and Running Water" I have already written to you about. One can never tell beforehand, but in all probability the following F. M. articles will appear in December (if not January) issues, viz.: | In *The Monthly Review* — The Magic Kingdoms | In *The Contemporary* — The Lynn of Dreams | In *The Fortnightly* — The Four Winds of Eirinn.³⁰

As soon as I can possibly work free out of my terribly time-eating correspondence and am further ahead with my necessary and commissioned pot-boiling articles etc., I want to put together two F. M. volumes, one a vol. of Gaelic essays and Spiritual studies to be called *For The Beauty of an Idea* and the other a volume of Verse to be called probably "The Immortal Hour and Poems" or else "The Enchanted Valleys."³¹ But I have first a great deal to get off as W. S. and F. M.

What is dear old Tom doing now? Give him my love, and affectionate hug, bless the old reprobate! I was delighted to meet an American admirer (and two hanger-on American admiresses) of his in Florence, who spoke of his work with much admiration as well as personal delight. So I warmed to them mightily in consequence, and had the pleasure of introducing the latest production — the delightful "Consolate Giantess."³²

What a letter in length this is! too long for even *you*, I fear.

[William Sharp]

To Grant Richards, October 31, 1902

Santa Caterina | Taormina | Sicily | 31st: Oct:02

My dear Grant Richards

I became unwell in the autumn soon after I heard from you — & had hardly recovered when, on my return to London, I was seized with a dangerous & painful illness through catching a bad internal chill in a fog on the morning of my arrival.

Altho' I did not at all approve of, & do not now condone, the tone of your letter to me — or, rather, that sentence in it in which you set aside my statement as "sheer rubbish" (or words to that effect) I am willing to overlook what was doubtless written in irritation, &, I am ready to believe, & indeed feel sure, was not really meant offensively. I maintain the exact literalness of my own assertion (& can back it up with month & day & hour, as I noted it at the time in my diary) — and you, on the other hand, say I am wrong or speaking under a delusion.

Well, let it go. If it's worth clearing up, we can do so some day in the Spring (when I'll be back in London) in a friendly way.

As for what I *am* wrong in — in having confused a request for an outstanding debt [which, strangely enough, I had long since cancelled as "settled"] with a demand for an identical sum (following sending of the Statement to last date) for nominal deficit — & for any ill-considered remarks made in my note, I frankly apologise. We are old acquaintances, with pleasant memories of the past: & I certainly don't want foolish words on either side to interrupt that acquaintanceship.

I forget the *exact* amount of the a/c sent to me — but *think* it was £3. 2. 6. So I send you my cheque for that sum, for which please send me acknowledgment.

Yours faithfully | William Sharp

ALS State University of New York at Buffalo

To Thomas Mosher, November 11, 1902

Castello di Maniace | Sicily | Tuesday, Nov. 11

My Dear Mr. Mosher

Yesterday I received from Murrayfield two copies of "By Sundown Shores."³³ You have made a beautiful little book of it. Personally, I have a distinct preference for small books, if only the type be clear and legible. I like large, or at any rate very clear and distinct type, and that is not often got with small and dainty format. A few days ago I heard from Mrs. Rinder, and it may interest you to hear what she writes: "Ten copies of "By Sundown Shores" have arrived and after seeing to the others as arranged, I have selected one for myself. I am sure that you will be delighted with the beautiful little book. I know your fondness for soft ivory-toned paper, vellum or other, for wide marginal spaces, & for clearly cut type; and in all these respects I am sure you will be pleased. The other book you are expecting (The Silence of Amor) has not come by this mail, tho' possibly copies have gone to Murrayfield. Meanwhile I have only glanced thro' the delightful little volume, and on Sunday afternoon I shall give myself up to its enjoyment, and particularly to the new "Lynn of Dreams", the name, idea, and look of which fascinate me. But I have reread the "Children of Water" Forward, and think it, and particularly the close, one of the most beautiful things you have done."

Today I hear from Murrayfield that the remaining copies of "Sundown Shores" have arrived there: and I learn also that you have, in your customary friendly kindness, included a separate set of picked volumes. I have written to have these sent on to me at once, if, as is probable, they are not already on the way. Please accept my cordial thanks for this very pleasant courtesy and friendly gift. As it happens the set includes two vols. I have specially wished to have — "Nature and Eternity" and "Immensee," the last-named a book I have never read.³⁴

But while certain books are certainly best in a small format, there are others which almost as inevitably call for the embodiment in a larger form, and of these none is, to my mind, nearly so seductive as the post-octavo. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that I see you announce the "Silence of Amor" as a post 8vo. vol. I am very curious to see this volume and it will be a pleasure to me to have a copy of this book in a

separate form and in the beauty and distinction with which you have the happy gift to clothe the publications now so widely associated with your name.

By the way I would be much obliged if you will kindly send a copy of "By Sundown Shores" (if you have not already done so) to Mr. H. M. Alden, Editor of "Harper's Magazine," Franklin Square, New York.

I am glad to learn that both in America and in Great Britain my article in a recent issue of the "North American Review" has been so well thought of and noticed — that, I mean, on the work of Mr. Yeats, in poetry and poetic drama.³⁵ As to other magazine work of mine to appear / probably in the December numbers / I would like to draw your friendly attention to the longish paper or essay entitled "The Magic Kingdoms," which I expect will be in the Dec. issue of the "Monthly Review;" and the more critical article, "The Four Winds of Eirinn" in "The Fortnightly Review," if not in Dec. then probably in the January number. It is possible, too, that, despite its publication by you in "By S. S." the "Lynn of Dreams" may appear in the "Contemporary."

Apart from what else I am engaged on here, I hope soon to put together (for English publication) a small volume of collected essays and studies, with possibly one or two that are new. Some friends are anxious for me to include "The Wayfarer," a Spiritual Study which appeared three or four years ago, but of which I do not possess a copy, and cannot decide until I do so. It appeared in "Cosmopolis."

I am also hoping to get together a new volume of verse, to comprise also the "dramatic-form" poems I have not yet published in book form. I am, however, hesitating as to whether

(1) to print the new and uncollected short poems in a small vol. by themselves and to print in a separate vol. "The Immortal Hour," "The Enchanted Valleys," and "The House of Usna" — or, again, as "The Immortal Hour" is in verse, to include it with the poems, and to print separately the other two along with another not yet finished.

(2) or, to make one largish volume, and include in it not only these poems and dramatic pieces, but also a small selection of about a score of those already printed in "Hills of Dream."

I have not yet had the leisure to think out these points, and must also wait to see if I am likely to make any material progress with my long projected poetic drama, "Drostan and Yssul".

I hope that you have duly received the copy of the "Tauchnitz" volume, "Wind and Wave," which I sent to you about a week ago, and that you approve the selection, which, I may add, has been textually a good deal revised and improved with a short explicative introduction.

At your leisure, will you let me know if, for later publication, you would like to have for your "Miscellaneous" series the already mooted volume, to be called, say "In This Kingdom By The Sea" — and to consist of the more biographical and personal part of the "Iona" section of "The Divine Adventure" volume, with a little added matter. As I think I said before, I am tempted by a format akin to (or as near as "affordable") the beautiful "Mimes." Certainly I should like it to be a post-8vo. vol [sic].

You will now, I know, care to have a word about myself. I am in certain respects feeling considerably better since I reached the Mediterranean, and came to these balmy and beautiful shores of Sicily. On the other hand, at the friend's where I am at present staying the elevation is too great for me (between 3000 & 4000 feet) and the climate too inclement and changeable at this late season of the year. In that respect, I shall be glad in a few days to leave here for the southern warmth and beauty of the lovely coasts of the Ionian or Greek Sea. And then, I hope, I shall soon begin to get stronger, and in the course of the winter and spring, at first in southern Sicily and perhaps Greece, and later possibly in southern Spain and much of the time on the water in a friend's beautiful yacht, win from sunshine and leisure somewhat of what mentally and bodily I so much need. What does bother and retard me very much just now is this disabling trouble in my right arm, whether it be "writer's cramp" or neuritis (possibly one and the same thing). I have always been so accustomed to the use of the pencil, stylograph, or quill, that I find the typewriter irksome as well as fatiguing. However, I am now sufficiently expert with it to be able to write with it as quickly as with the pen, and for the rest I dictate all save my private correspondence and most intimate imaginative work. And the doctors say that, with scrupulous refraining from putting pen to paper for a few months I may get quite quit of an annoying trouble that otherwise would become chronic. I remember that some years ago Grant Allen wrote to me warning me to be on guard, and giving me the instance of his own embarrassing and prolonged experience.

I hope that you are yourself keeping well, and are both busy and happy in projecting new volumes which will be a delight to many who love books to be beautiful in raiment as well as in soul. With all friendliest greetings,

Believe me, Dear Mr. Mosher, | Most cordially and sincerely Yours |
FIONA MACLEOD

P. S.

I had just finished this note when I had a most delightful surprise — for the hill-rider who brings the post to this remote place (a wonderful old mediaeval castle some eight miles from the half-civilised hill-town of Bronte, in the interior of Sicily) arrived, and I found several packets for me — and among them to my great pleasure copies from Murrayfield of "The Silence of Amor," and also a packet direct from you containing a copy of the same beautiful volume, with others (I think those for which I asked you, but have not had time to look into yet, as the hill-rider is waiting to take today's mail, and there may not be an opportunity for 2 or 3 days to come) — though I notice with pleasure that "Empodocles on Etna" is among them, as I want to give it to my host, along with the list of your publications.

"The Silence of Amor" is a most beautifully got-up volume, and gives me the keenest pleasure. The size of type is that I like best, and the beautiful pages, with their wide margins, are most pleasant and restful to the eye. I wish that the unfortunate slip, in the strange separation of the mid-sentence on p. xi of Foreword, had been noticed in time, but fortunately the connection of meaning will be sufficiently obvious to the at first puzzled reader to enable him to see just where and how the printer has interrupted the sequence of a continuous sentence by paragraphical division.

I hope very much that all your care and thought over these beautiful vols will be repaid by sufficient support on the part of your public.

I must close this long letter abruptly, I find, or rather this Ps., which I am delighted to be able to add.

P. S. Do not address here again, of course.

To Thomas Mosher, November 11, 1902

PS. | Italia | Castello di Maniace | Bronte, Sicily

(Dictated)

Dear Mr. Mosher,

Merely a brief supplementary line to acknowledge the copies of the Nov. *Bibelots*, which I had not noticed at first in the packet. I am so glad to see this essay of Mr. Rhys reissued in the Bibelot series, and I feel at once grateful and humble for the generous and sympathetic words you have prefaced it with.

Again most sincerely, | F. M.

TL New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To Thomas Mosher, [November 12, 1902]

Italia | Castello di Maniace | Bronte, Sicily

Dear Mr. Mosher,

As a messenger is going down to Catania this morning I find myself able to supplement my long registered letter of yesterday: and to repeat as to the great pleasure given me by your beautiful book, for, in a sense, I feel that you are here my collaborateur.

The book is so charming in its format, and is much a book of my heart that I do not want to be without one or two copies in reserve. And as to keeping any of the copies you so generously sent me, I know I shall be quite unable to disappoint any of those for whom I had already intended a copy! And now, by a fortunate chance, I find myself possessed of a U. S. A. five-dollar note (sent me by an unknown reader, wanting "The Divine Adventure") — and so I am able to ask you at once to let me have other four copies — which I could hardly have otherwise brought myself to do, knowing as I do your ever too generous and swift

responsiveness. But on this occasion, at least, I am able to approach you as I ought, in a business matter!

So, for the enclosed five-dollar note, please send me four other copies of "The Silence of Amor": and please direct that they be addressed to me as the others, namely, Miss Macleod, 22 Ormidale Terrace, Murrayfield, Midlothian — but marked "Not to be forwarded".

I do not know whether the enclosed few blooms from the country of Theocritus will keep their fragrance in the long passage to America, but perhaps they may. I gathered them today, by the banks of the Simeto, the Symaethos of Theocritus.

Your friend of oversea | Fiona Macleod

TL New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To Elizabeth A. Sharp, November 15, 1902³⁶

Castello Di Maniace, | 15th Nov., 1902.

How you would have enjoyed today! ... one of the most beautiful of its kind I've ever had. It was quite dark when we rose shortly before six, but lovely dawn by 6.15, and after a gigantic breakfast we all set off all armed with rifles and revolvers. We drove up to the cutting to the left, ¼ of a mile below Otaheite, and there diverged and went up the wild road of the Zambuco Pass, and for another five miles of ascent. Then we were met by the forest guard and Meli with great jennets (huge hill-mules as big as horses) and rode over the Serraspina (6,000 feet). To my great pleasure it was decided we could risk the further ascent of the great central Watershed of Sicily, the Serra del Rè (8,000 ft.) and I shall never forget it. All the way from about 4,000 ft. the air was extraordinarily light and intoxicating — and the views of Central Sicily magnificent beyond words. When we had ridden to about 7,500 feet thro' wild mountain gorges, up vast slopes, across great plateaux, and at last into the beginning of the vast dense primeval beech-forests (all an indescribable glory of colour) we dismounted and did the remaining half hour on foot. Then at last we were on the summit of the great central watershed.

Thence everything to the south flows to the Ionian Sea, everything to the north to the Tyrrhenian and Mediterranean.

And oh the views and the extraordinary clarity! Even with the naked eye I saw all the inland mountains and valleys and lost forgotten towns, Troina on its two hills, Castrogiovanni and Alcara, etc. etc. And with the powerful binoculars I could see all the houses, and trace the streets and ruined temples etc. in Castrogiovanni on its extraordinary raised altar-like mountain plateau. Then, below us, lay all the northern shores of Sicily from Capo Cefalú to Milazzo on its beautiful great bay, and Capo Milazzo, and the Lipari Islands (so close with the glass I could see the few houses on their wild precipitous shores, from “Volcano”, the original home of Vulcan, and Lipari itself to Stromboli, and white ships sailing. Enna (Castrogiovanni) immensely imposing and unforgettable. And, behind us, Etna vaster, sheerer, more majestic, more terrible, than I had ever dreamed of it.

Then we lunched, amid that extraordinary and vast panorama — seeing 2,000 feet below us the “almost inaccessible” famous Lake of Balzano, with its Demeter and Persephone associations (itself about 6,000 feet among the mountains!) All enjoyed it unspeakably, except poor old Meli, very nervous about brigands — poor old chap, a ransom of 800 francs had to be paid to the capitano of the brigand-lot to free his nephew, who is now ill after his confinement for many days in a hole under the lava, where he was half suffocated, and would have soon died from cold and damp and malaria.

On the way down (in the forest, at about 6,000 feet) Alec suddenly without a word dashed aside, and sprang through the sloping undergrowth, and the next moment I saw him holding his revolver at the head of a man crouching behind a mass of bramble, etc. But the latter had first managed to hide or throw away his gun, and swore he hadn't got one, and meant no harm, and that the ugly weapon he carried (a light, long axe of a kind) was to defend himself from the wolves! His companion had successfully escaped. The man slunk away, to be arrested later by the Carabinieri.

[William Sharp]

To John Macleay, November 18, 1902

Address now and for the winter, / Santa Caterina / Taormina / Sicily

18 Nov '02

Dear Mr. Macleay,

Yesterday morning early [after which I rode up & over the Serraspina & the Serra del Ri, a wild brigand-haunted mountain region of over 6000 feet elevation] I sent you a postcard and by same post a book I know you will be glad to have, if it "get through," namely Miss Macleod's *Wind & Wave*, not of course to be obtained in England. It is the representative selection of tales she has made at the request of Baron Tauchnitz for continental circulation, & with an explicatory preface. I understand that the text has been a good deal revised in places — but I have not had time yet to look into the book, three copies of which I've just had sent to my order on learning that the book is actually out.

Herewith I return the MS. (with a few amendments or added words) with my apologies for my delay.³⁷ I am pleased with your sympathy & friendliness.

I am now practically well again. Tomorrow I leave this old medieval castle of Maniace in the wilds of inland Sicily, & return to beautiful Taormina by the blue Ionian sea, & its divine warmth & beauty, & hope to be there till the end of February at any rate. Then I hope to go to southern Greece for a bit — and, later, to sail thence to the south of Spain — spend some time at Seville, Madrid, Toledo, etc. — then into the Basque Highlands — & then, somehow, as God wills, and a depleted purse permits, & work demands, back to London for as long (a few weeks!) as the roaming fever in my blood will allow.

Let me hear that you receive Miss M's book (I shall see her shortly in Sicily, for she is to spend the winter on the Southern waters, & will be at any rate a week or two, & perhaps weeks, in Sicily, where we have intimate friends & connections in common.) And also what you think of Neil Munro's new story in *Blackwood's*. Is it of his best?

Ever yours cordially / William Sharp

This note private of course.

ALS National Library of Scotland

To Alexander Nelson Hood, November 19, 1902

Taormina, | 19th Nov., 1902

Caro Fra Giuliano,

To my surprise I hear from our common friend, Mr. Aurelio Da Rù, the painter of Venice, that you are at present staying at San-Francisco-in-Deserto. This seems to me a damp and cold place to choose for November, but possibly you are not to be there long: indeed, Da Rù hints at an entanglement with a lady named "Adria."³⁸ Perhaps I am indiscreet in this allusion. If so, pray forgive me. The coincidence struck me as strange, for only the other day I heard our friend Alec Hood speaking of an Adria, of whom, to say the least of it, he seemed to think very highly. By the way, I wouldn't tell him (A. H.) too much of your affairs or doings — or *he may put them in a book*. (He's a "literary feller" you know!)

I have just been staying with him — and I wish when you see him you would tell him what a happy time I had at Maniace, and how pleasantly I remember all our walks and talks and times together, and how the true affection of a deepened friendship is only the more and more enhanced and confirmed.

It is a lovely day, and very warm and delightful. Sitting by the open French-window of my study, with a bunch of narcissus on my table, there is all the illusion of Spring. I have just gone into an adjoining Enchanted Garden I often frequent, and gathered there some sprays of the Balm of Peace, the azure blossoms of Hope, and the white roses of Serenity and Happiness and sending them, by one of the wild-doves of loving thought and sympathy and affection, to Alec at Maniace.

Ever, dear Fra Giuliano, with love to Da Rù, the Graziani, the Manins,
and above all to Alec, Yours, | Will

Memoir, pp. 354–55

To Alexander Nelson Hood, [November 21, 1902]

Shar Shan, Bor!

Which, being interpreted, is Romany (Gypsy) for "How d'ye do, Mate!" — I fear you are having a bad day for your return to Maniace. Here, at any rate, 'tis evil weather. Last night the wind rose (after ominous signals of furtive lightnings in every quarter) to the extent of tempest: and between two and three a.m. became a hurricane. This lasted at intervals till dawn, and indeed since: and at times I thought a cyclone had seized Taormina and was intent on removing "Santa Caterina" on to the top of Isola Bella. Naturally, sleep was broken. And in one long spell, when wind and a coarse rain (with a noise like sheep that has become sleet) kept wakefulness in supense, my thoughts turned to Venice, to Giuliano in the lonely rain-beat wave-washed sanctuary of San-Francisco-in-Deserto; to Daniele Manin, with his dreams of the Venice that was and his hopes of the Venice to be; and to Adria, stilled at last in her grave in the lagunes after all her passionate life and heroic endeavour. And then I thought of the Venice they, and you, and I, love: — and recalled lines of Jacopo Sannazaro which I often repeat to myself when I think of the Sea-City as an abstraction —

"O d'Italia dolente
Eterno lumine
Venezia!"

And that's all I have to say to-day! ... except to add that this very moment there has come into my mind the remembrance of some words of Montesquieu I read last year (in the *Lettres Persanes*) to the effect (in English) that "altho' one had seen all the cities of the world, there might still be a surprise in store for him in Venice" — which would be a good motto for your book.

Your friend, Will