

# William Sharp and "Fiona Macleod"

A Life



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# Chapter Twenty-Two

1902

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In early January, Sharp left for 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 in an early January letter, he had a brief but severe recurrence of the fever 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 Mount 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 described 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*, 339). On February 10, Sharp told Watts-Dunton 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 British guest, the composer Maude Valérie White, suggested Sharp compose a poem to commemorate their time together; she would set it to music and dedicate it to their host. The result was Sharp’s “*Buon Riposo*” or “Good Rest” which became a song that put the guests to sleep when Hood’s bagpipers finished marching up and down the main hall playing Christmas airs.

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.



Fig. 62 Maude Valérie White. Photograph by Herbert Rose Barraud, published by  
 Eglington & Co. Carbon print, published 1889. © National Portrait Gallery,  
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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*, 340–341).

Continuing, he said 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 image of the English countryside appealed to Sharp after a month in the 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 the town perched high above the Bay of Naxos. Taormina's landscape differs from that of the slopes of Mount 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*, 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*, 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. [...] 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, he 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.



Fig. 63 Photograph of the Hotel Castello-a-Mare taken in 1937. William and Elizabeth Sharp stayed here in April 1902, and he described the view from the terrace outside his window in an April 3 letter to Mrs. J. H. Philpot. Photograph of postcard taken by William F. Halloran (2021). Original photographer unknown.



Fig. 64 Taormina as seen from the Saracen castle overlooking the town. The Hotel Castello-a-Mare is at the far left. The Greek theater is in the background. Photograph by Solomonn Levi, Wikimedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Taormina\\_as\\_seen\\_from\\_the\\_castle\\_overlooking\\_the\\_town.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Taormina_as_seen_from_the_castle_overlooking_the_town.jpg), CC BY-SA 4.0.

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 art criticism for the *Glasgow Herald* and its attendant income. Sharp frequently ran short of money, and it was not unusual for him to ask friends for loans and editors for advances. 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." The loss came when he 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 (thru' 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."

A relative in Australia had set up a trust from which Sharp had been receiving a modest income. In mid-June he learned the trust had suddenly disappeared due to mismanagement by an agent. His description of the loss in this letter to Alden indicates its seriousness, as does a Fiona letter dated July 19 to Mosher: "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 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 problem, 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, whom Sharp thanked in a July 12 letter 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 indicates 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.

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 Mr. Balfour were told "confidentially" and orally (*Memoir*, 345–349). Hood learned in mid-August 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 refused 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*, 346–349) is Sharp's clearest and most affecting statement of how he came to view the Fiona Macleod phenomenon:

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 only alluded to the crucial role Edith Rinder played in the genesis of Fiona. 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 saw no reason 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 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.

Sharp's letter to Hood of August 21 shows the psychological and spiritualist explanations of Fiona Macleod living together in his mind. He attributed his decision not to reveal the truth to his need for "aloofness and spiritual isolation as F.M." He believed he would no longer be able to write as Fiona if her 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 the Sharp's finances would be devastating. Small wonder he was free to assure Hood that Elizabeth, who was on a visit to Fife, would wholeheartedly endorse his decision.

Unable to inform Parliament Sharp was Fiona, but responsive to the appeals of Hood and Austin, 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." 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.

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. Writing on June 23 from St. Abbs, a fishing village in Berwickshire in northeast England, Sharp told John MacLeay 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 had asked for biographical material he could use in a projected article, but Sharp was reluctant, and

frankly too exhausted, to say much about himself in a letter. 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 remote 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*, 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 farmhouse (already known often) so as to live with the utmost possible saving of expense."



Fig. 65 North Lismore from Port Appin on the mainland with the hills of Kingairloch beyond. Photograph by Alan Partridge (2004), Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lismore\\_Island.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lismore_Island.jpg), CC BY-SA 2.0.

Despite their worries about finances, Elizabeth remembered her month on Lismore as happy, disease-free, and productive (*Memoir*, 344–345): "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 [and freed] 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.'"

In the isolated ferryman's cottage, "a good place for work," 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; 'Sea-Magic' (a narrative and strange Sea-Lore); 'The Lynn of Dreams' (a spiritual study); and 'Seumas' (a memory)." He revised for American publication an 1899 a Fiona review of Yeats' *Wind Among the Reeds* which appeared in the October 1902 issue of *The North American Review* as "The Later Works of W. B. Yeats." He 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*. As William Sharp he wrote the introduction to his friend Eugene Lee-Hamilton's *Dramatic Sonnets, Poems and Ballads: Selections from and Poems of Eugene Lee-Hamilton* which the Walter Scott firm published in 1903. Earlier in 1902, he wrote an essay called "Sir Walter Scott's Land," which his friend Henry Alden published in the June 1902 issue of *Harper's Magazine*. While on Lismore, he wrote "Robert Louis Stevenson's Country" which Alden published in the September issue of *Harper's*. These were the first of several articles he wrote on the home locations of famous writers. George Halkett, a boyhood friend and editor of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, published eight more of the articles in 1903. In 1904, the Pall Mall Press published a handsome volume called *Literary Geography* which contained twelve such articles and which Sharp dedicated to Halkett, the volume's "godfather." 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 despite what Elizabeth called his "increasing delicacy," Sharp managed to write an amazing amount during the summer and fall of 1902.

While Sharp was on Lismore, he made his way across the water to Oban to meet John Macleay who had come down from Inverness to interview him. In his June 23 letter, Sharp wrote in response to Macleay's request for information about his life and work, "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." His lips were less reticent in Oban since Macleay produced an article on Sharp called a "A Literary Wanderer: The Career of William Sharp"

which appeared in the April 1903 edition of a periodical called *The Young Man*. The article's title was derived from Sharp's June 23 letter to Macleay in which he referred to himself as a "homeless wanderer" who might some day, when settled some place, "take up the reminiscent pen." The Macleay article quotes Sharp's reminiscences about his boyhood and early career, but Macleay, whose primary interest was Scottish and Gaelic writings, says little about his writings. He describes Sharp as a well-read, rapid writer who moves from place to place frequently, and he admires the range of Sharp's interests. He implies that Sharp takes on too many writing assignments, thus limiting his proficiency in one genre. In the interview, Sharp tried to focus Macleay's attention on his youth and early career. Macleay had speculated frequently about the identity of Fiona in *The Highland News*, and he continued to suspect she was Sharp despite his repeated denials. The meeting with Macleay provided Sharp another opportunity to allay Macleay's suspicions. If Macleay hoped for a confession, he was disappointed, and the resultant article is devoid of Fiona.

The Sharps left Lismore in mid-August. Elizabeth returned to London, but Sharp rented a room from a Mrs. Rhind at 53 Castle Street in Edinburgh where he stayed for a month. In early September, he spent a long weekend with a friend in Linlathen, north of Dundee, and he became ill again when he returned to Edinburgh. According to an October 31 letter to Grant Richards, he had hardly recovered from the Edinburgh illness when, on his return to London, he was seized with "a dangerous & painful illness through catching a bad internal chill in a fog" on the morning of his 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 a debt he could not afford to repay. That aside, the income from his writings and the government grant made it possible for both Sharps to escape 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 Mabel Hill, with whom we are to stay till the New Year" (*Memoir*, 349). Santa Caterina, formerly a

convent and now a hotel, was renovated as a winter home for 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. Following his death, his daughter, Mabel Hill, carried on her father's tradition of philanthropy and focused on improving the condition of Taormina's native residents. She established, for example, a school where women learned the art of embroidery and earned money of their own. Taormina became famous for its intricate embroidery which is still prominently displayed in the shops along the town's main street. 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 remained for a second week before returning to Taormina with Hood who went on to Venice.

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





Fig. 66 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 Arbalet (2011), Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mappa\\_ferr\\_Circumetnea.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mappa_ferr_Circumetnea.png), CC BY-SA 3.0.



Fig. 67 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, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Circumetnea\\_stazione\\_di\\_randazzo.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Circumetnea_stazione_di_randazzo.jpg), CC BY-SA 3.0.

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. As soon as he finished some "pot-boiling" essays, he told Catherine Janvier in an October 30 letter, 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' or else 'The Enchanted Valley'". When the volume of essays and spiritual studies was published in 1904 by Chapman & 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 November 19 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 dealt with the city's 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 suggests 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 in Hood's Castle Maniace.



Fig. 68 Sir Alexander Nelson Hood, Fifth Duke of Bronté (1854–1937). "The Princess's Private Secretary," Caricature by Spy (Leslie Ward), published in *Vanity Fair* in 1905. Wikimedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Hood,\\_5th\\_Duke\\_of\\_Bronté#/media/File:Alexander\\_Nelson\\_Hood,\\_Vanity\\_Fair,\\_1905-10-26.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Hood,_5th_Duke_of_Bronté#/media/File:Alexander_Nelson_Hood,_Vanity_Fair,_1905-10-26.jpg), Public Domain.