

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

Volume 3: 1900-1905



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Chapter Twenty

Life: 1900

On 3 January 1900, Sharp wrote a letter to Nellie Allen from Chorleywood and enclosed a copy of the poem he had written and delivered at the December meeting of the Omar Khayyam Club. In the poem he alluded to her husband, and in his preliminary remarks he called Grant Allen “a fine writer and true-hearted man” whose death was a loss to his many friends and to the club. Both Sharps looked forward to seeing Nellie again as soon as she vacated The Croft in Hindhead and settled in London. On January 8, he wrote a long letter to Edith Lyttelton who had come under the spell of the Fiona writings. It demonstrates his use of Fiona to foster a friendship with a member of the aristocracy, herself an aspiring writer. He was sorry to hear she had been ill through much of the fall. He had also been ill, he confided, and was determined not “to spend another midwinter in this damp & sunless climate.” He asked if she had written anything lately and declared that Fiona, having sampled her earlier work, felt assured she “could, and probably some day soon would, write a notable book.” Fiona’s new book, *The Divine Adventure*, would be published in March by Chapman & Hall. The book’s title was also the title of its long titular essay which had appeared in the recent November and December issues of Chapman & Hall’s *Fortnightly Review*. The book, he wrote, will be “personal” and “autobiographical,” unlike anything Fiona has produced. As for William Sharp, he was “at work every available hour on a commissioned ‘History of the Fine Arts in the Nineteenth Century’ — a kind of synthesis, or coup d’oeil perhaps, of the dominating features and interrelated developments of modern art.” He concluded by asking Mrs. Lyttelton to join him the following

Monday for tea and a chat at his club, the Grosvenor Club, or if she preferred, he could come to her.

In these letters of early January Sharp seemed quite happy, but his cheerfulness soon turned to gloom. During the warm and sunny fall he enjoyed life in Chorleywood, but as winter set in he began to tire of country life and rue the travel in and out of London in foul weather. In early February, he had to tell Theodore Watts-Dunton he could not repay the loan of £25 he had received in November. His letter of February 9 casts a revealing light on both the state of his health and the medical issues people faced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

I know you will be sorry to hear that since Christmas I have had a bad time of it. First, I got influenza again, with pneumonic complication — then an inflammatory condition of the veins was set up — & thro' that & an accident on the railway I started a bad varicose vein, badly strained, & constantly threatening a clot (phlebitis) — laming me as though I had the gout! — & keeping me to the house for weeks. Then a very painful & prostrating meningeal neuralgia set in — partly from overstrain of work & financial straits etc. Still, all might have gone well, had not I gone one day (under great stress of agony) to a dentist to be sure there was nothing the matter with my teeth. He was a faddist, & incompetent — & having found all absolutely sound said he wd. take out 5 sound teeth then & there (& without gas!) as that would cure me! I was weak enough to be persuaded of urgency — but after the second sound tooth had been literally torn out (for my teeth are very sound & strong) I fainted & he could do no more. It now turns out he was wholly wrong as to this — & I have lost two sound molars & have my neuralgia still, only worse! The nervous shock proved so bad for me that my wife, & the doctor, became seriously perturbed. The upshot was that a few days ago I was ordered away for a month to recruit by the sea — & would have gone 2 days ago but for a sudden painful attack of lumbago.

One can only wonder how people endured such a litany of pain.

Watts-Dunton had asked Sharp to make some revisions to the sonnets he contributed to *The Sonnets of the Nineteenth Century* which Sharp edited for the Walter Scott publishing company in 1886. He began this letter by assuring Watts-Dunton he would ask someone at the firm to make the "rectifications" in the volume's next edition. Worried as he was about money, he went on to say the book had been through several editions, sold nearly 100,000 copies, and was about to undergo another edition. Yet he had received only £10 for editing it and benefited not at

all from the substantial royalties. He planned to go into London the next day and try to raise enough money to take Elizabeth, who was “down with bronchitis,” to “recruit by the sea.” His bank or other friends came through, and they managed to escape for a month to Broadstairs on the southern coast.

Shortly after returning to Chorleywood in early March, Sharp went to Edinburgh to visit his mother and sister for two days on “family business.” On March 15, he wrote to William Blackwood proposing an article for *Blackwood's Magazine* on “Recent French Art” — he planned to visit Paris for the Salon which would open on April 2 — or an article on Breton poets since he planned to go on to Brittany from Paris. He had called at Blackwood's Edinburgh office, but he was not there, and he would not have the pleasure of meeting him since he planned to return to London the next morning.

As it turned out, Sharp fell ill and instead of returning as planned on March 16, he stayed until Monday the 26th when, back in Chorleywood, he wrote a note to his friend Stanley Little: “Just returned — but E. still very seedy and at her mother's. I go there now but shall be back tomorrow and hope to write then or Wedny.” Two days later, he wrote again and began by saying he was months behind with urgent work due to illnesses, his and Elizabeth's. After recounting the progress of their maladies, he turned to the work he had managed to do. Between January 1 and 21, he wrote 50,000 words for what would become *The Progress of Art in the Nineteenth Century*. Then he came down with the flu and was unable to continue. He still had 70,000 words to write, but he could not get to it until mid-April. Elizabeth agreed to write an additional 15,000 words about music, and they hoped to have it all done before the end of May. It was commissioned by The Linscott Publishing Company in Toronto and Philadelphia and became Volume Twenty-Two in their gigantic Nineteenth Century Series. It was also published separately in 1902 by W. and R. Chamber, Ltd., in London and Edinburgh.

Little asked Sharp about this work because he had agreed to write another volume for the Linscott series and wondered how much Sharp was being paid. Sharp said he “had special terms, without which it wd. have been wholly impossible to take up the book: and not only special terms, but special conditions of payment.” Unfortunately, he could not share those terms with Little because he was under a pledge of honor,

a given promise, not to do so. He also asked Little not to mention his name or what he had told him when dealing with the Linscott firm. Unless specified in a contract, Little was unlikely to get an advance from Linscott so he should just send in his manuscript and hope for royalties. He told Little he was leaving in a few days to review the Salon in Paris and then to spend some time in Brittany. When he returned, he hoped he and Elizabeth could get together with Little and his wife. Meanwhile, "Iona," the "highly autobiographical" Fiona Macleod essay Sharp wrote in the fall of 1899, appeared in the March and April issues of *The Fortnightly Review*.

When he returned from France in mid-April, Sharp began to make arrangements for a performance of a Fiona Macleod play, the only such performance during his lifetime. While visiting Grant Allen in 1897, he met Frederick Whelen, one of Allen's nephews, who wanted to find a vehicle for producing contemporary art plays. Sharp expressed interest since he was writing a highly symbolic Fiona Macleod play destined, he thought, for the Celtic Theater W. B. Yeats was planning in Dublin. In July 1899, Whelen, encouraged by Sharp and several prominent actors and businessmen, invited several hundred people to attend an organizing meeting for what became the Stage Society. Seventy-five invitees showed up at his house in London's Red Lion Square. Despite the crowd, Whelen managed to form a seven-member Managing Committee that included Sharp. It was agreed the Society would sponsor several performances of new plays every year. They would take place on Sunday evenings when theaters would otherwise be dark because of the prohibition of public performances on the Sabbath. To circumvent the law and avoid prosecution, the performances would be called meetings of the Society and only members of the society and invited guests would be able to attend.

The performances began in the fall of 1899, and Whelen, with Sharp's encouragement, scheduled a production of Fiona Macleod's "The House of Usna" for the fifth meeting of the Society in the Globe Theatre on April 29 1900. Sharp sent a Fiona letter to Whelen dated April 16 in which she gave her permission for the performance and delegated all final revisions and performance details to her "friend and relative Mr. William Sharp." Her only request had to do with "reserved accommodations." She asked for two contiguous boxes, one for her

friends the Sharps and herself if she was able to “come from Scotland for the occasion.” She wanted to offer the second to George Meredith in case he was able to attend or, if not, to other friends. She requested eight reserved stall seats which she designated for W. L. Courtney, Editor of *The Fortnightly*; James Knowles Esq., Editor of *The Nineteenth Century*; W. B. Yeats. Esq.; Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Rhys; The Hon. Alfred & Mrs. A. Lyttelton; and Mr. Percy Bunting, Editor of *The Contemporary Review*. The tickets were to be given directly to Sharp who would either send them to Fiona or forward them as she directed. The absence of Edith and Frank Rinder from the list of people for whom tickets were to be reserved is curious. I expect it was due to the possibility that Meredith might attend. We recall Sharp had introduced Edith as Fiona Macleod to Meredith who described her as one of the most beautiful women he ever met. It would be more than embarrassing if he saw Edith at the performance and identified her as Fiona, the author of the play. Since Meredith, in the end, was unable to attend, the Rinders may have been among the friends who occupied the second reserved box.

“The House of Usna” was one of three Fiona plays Sharp had been writing with Yeats’ encouragement. On April 29, it shared the bill with two Maeterlinck plays: “The Interior” and “The Death of Tintagiles.” Y. M. Capel composed music for the Sharp play, and it was directed by Granville Barker. According to Elizabeth, one critic said the play had beauty and atmosphere, “two very rare things on the stage, but I did not feel that it quite made a drama, or convince, as a drama should, by the continuous action of inner or outer forces. It was, rather, passion turning upon itself, and with no language but a cry.” Other reviews were more positive. Elizabeth said Sharp “took the greatest interest in the rehearsals, and in the performance. He thoroughly enjoyed the double play as he chatted about Fiona during the intervals unconcerned about the risks of their detecting the real authorship.” The play was printed in *The National Review* in July 1900 and then in book form by Thomas Mosher in Maine in 1903 (*Memoir*, pp. 317–18).

By July 1900, the Stage Society was floundering for lack of resources. Sharp and Whelen developed a plan to rescue it which Sharp described in a letter to the actor/manager Frederick Charles Charrington, a fellow member of the Managing Committee. The plan prevailed, Sharp became the Society’s Chairman, and Whelen its Secretarial Manager. The Society

went on for forty years and produced more than two hundred plays that would not have succeeded at first in the West End.

For some time, Sharp had used the London address of Lillian Rea rather than that of his sister in Edinburgh as the return address for the Fiona letters. Receiving the letters in London, where he spent most of his time while in Britain, enabled him to draft answers more quickly and send them to Edinburgh for Mary to copy and mail. In a June 1 letter to Grant Richards, Fiona identified Miss Rea as her late agent and typist and said she was away recovering from illness. Fiona was having all her correspondence "sent through a literary friend, whose address heads this letter." This address (11 Woronsow Road, London) was the home of Edith Rinder who was often conflated in Sharp's mind with Fiona and who began to provide secretarial assistance for Sharp.

In June 1899, Grant Richards, at Sharp's suggestion, asked Fiona to assemble and edit a poetry anthology which would be called "The Hour of Beauty." A year later, a Fiona letter informed Richards she could not promise to have the book done before the New Year. She had been "much of an invalid" since the previous November and unable to do much work. On 20 October 1900, Fiona wrote again to Richards, with the Lillian Rea return address restored, to say she was resting in London for two days before leaving England for Tangiers. She had been seriously ill, and "a southern air" and "absolute rest are imperatively prescribed." She had to "relinquish[...] all hopes" of finishing *The Hour of Beauty* before or by Christmas. She wanted to give Richards the option of withdrawing from their agreement or letting it stand indefinitely until her health recovered so she could "take up properly that which can be done only absolutely *con amore*, and with scrupulous judgment and care." She wondered, instead, if Richards would like to publish a little volume of her poetry in the spring:

It would be called either *For a Little Clan* or else *The Immortal Hour* — the latter being the title of the greater part of the little book, a poetic old world drama, perhaps to be defined as "a symbolist drama" (though I dislike such designations) which is to appear in *The Fortnightly Review* either in November or December (or in both). The remainder of the book would consist of the few selected poems (all I care to preserve) from a volume of verse published some four or five years ago, *From the Hills of Dream*, with some new and uncollected poems.

A Fiona letter to Richards dated October 31 indicates he decided to defer the anthology until she was able to finish it. He liked her suggestion of a small book of poems which would include "The Immortal Hour." In her response, Fiona expressed her hope that she would be able to select the poems and send copy for the book "from Marseille or Malta or Algiers (I do not know where yet) by the end of November." In order to avoid Richards asking to meet Fiona, her October 20 letter informed him she would be in London only two days on her way South. Her October 31 letter is postmarked from Paris on November 13 which means Sharp held it for three weeks to avoid a London postmark and mailed it from Paris on his way south.

In the summer and fall of 1899, Sharp implied to several friends he was experiencing a blurring or a reintegration of the two aspects of his personality and suggested his future writings would reflect a merger of the Fiona voice and the William Sharp voice with the former more prominent in his fiction and poetry and the latter more prominent in his nonfiction. In his 8 January 1900 letter to Edith Lyttelton, Sharp said Fiona Macleod's *The Divine Adventure* would be "unlike anything she has done; it would be personal and autobiographical, especially in the essay called 'Iona'", parts of which would appear in February and March in *The Fortnightly*. The periodical's publisher, Chapman & Hall, would also publish the book containing "Iona" and other essays. When it appeared in May 1900, it carried a longer title derived from its content, *The Divine Adventure: Iona: By Sundown Shores: Studies in Spiritual History*, and it went through several editions during the year. In a Fiona letter to John Macleay in early October 1899 (Volume 2), Sharp wrote:

There is a sudden departure from fiction ancient or modern in something of mine that is coming out in the November and December issues of "The Fortnightly Review." [Volume 72, pp. 879–895 and 1058–1076] I hope you will read "The Divine Adventure," as it is called — though this spiritual essay is more "remote" i.e. unconventional, and in a sense more "mystical," than anything I have done. But it is out of my inward life. It is an essential part of a forthcoming book of spiritual and critical essays or studies in the spiritual history of the Gael, to be called "The Reddening of the West."

The essay improbably personifies the Body, the Will and the Soul and sets them on a journey, "each independently, as three good friends," to

discover the meaning of life: "We had never been at one, though we had shared the same home, and had enjoyed so much in common; but to each, at the same time, had come the great desire of truth, than which there is none greater save that of beauty." Confusion sets in from the start as the narrator of the journey sees his Body, his Soul, and his Will independently travelling through a Scottish landscape each talking with people they meet along the way. Just who, we wonder, is the observer-narrator? What part is left after the departure of Body, Soul and Will? Perhaps the intellect, but that piece of the puzzle seems to merge with the Will or the Mind as the journey proceeds. It is a decided relief at the end to find the narrator having learned:

there is no absolute Truth, no absolute Beauty, even for the Soul. It may be that in the Divine Forges we shall be so moulded as to have perfect vision. Meanwhile only that Truth is deepest, that beauty highest which is seen, not by the Soul only, or by the Mind, or by the Body, but all three as one. Let each be perfect in kind and perfect in unity. This is the signal meaning of the mystery.

If that is the conclusion, was the thirty-four-page journey worth the author's effort and the reader's patience? It must have been, since the book went through several editions. Its success shines a bright light on the efforts of many in 1900 to come to terms with the previous century's scientific discoveries. With its masculine narrator and the masculine nature of his dissected parts, the essay comes out of the "inward life" of William Sharp, and Fiona Macleod, the nominal author, is nowhere to be heard.

The longest essay in the volume is "Iona" in which the narrative voice of Fiona alternates with that of Sharp in chronicling stories and legends associated with the island (pp. 91–252). In a letter to Frank Rinder the previous December (Chapter 19, Volume 2), Sharp said he would like him to read

the opening pages of "Iona," for they contain a very deep and potent spiritual faith and hope, that has been with me ever since, as there told, as child of seven, old Seumas Macleod (who taught me so much — was indeed the *father* of Fiona) took me on his knees one sundown on the island of Eigg, and made me pray to "Her." I have never written anything so spiritually autobiographical. Strange as it may seem it is almost all literal reproduction of actuality with only some dates and names altered.

In the opening pages of "Iona", Sharp as Fiona said she will speak "as befalls her pen" of the multiple meanings of Iona, and she will recount legends and remembrances of her own and others. She will describe "hidden meanings and beauty and strangeness surviving in dreams and imaginations, rather than facts and figures that others could adduce more deftly and with more will." After a hundred and sixty-one Iona pages in the first edition of *The Divine Adventure*, Sharp/Fiona summarized the history of the island:

To this small, black-brown tarn, pilgrims of every generation, for hundreds of years, have come. Solitary, these; not only because the pilgrim to the Fount of Eternal Youth must fare hither alone, and at dawn, so as to touch the healing water the moment the first sunray quickens it — but solitary, also, because those who go in quest of this Fountain of Youth are the dreamers and the Children of Dreams, and those are not many, and few come now to this lonely place. Yet, an Isle of Dreams Iona is, indeed. Here the last sun-worshippers bowed before the Rising of God; here Columba and his hymning priests labored and brooded; and here Oran or his kin dreamed beneath the monkish cowl that pagan dream of his. Here, too, the eyes of Fionn and Oisín, and of many another of the heroic men and women of the Fianna, may have lingered; here the Pict and the Celt bowed beneath the yoke of the Norse pirate, who, too, left his dreams, or rather his strangely beautiful soul-rainbows, as a heritage to the stricken; here for century after century, the Gael has lived, suffered, joyed, dreamed his impossible, beautiful dream; as here now, he still lives, still suffers patiently, still dreams, and through all and over all broods upon the incalculable mysteries.

The quotation illustrates the power of the essay which is the most lasting and influential piece of Sharp's writings. Few may have come to Iona when it first appeared, but many, motivated by this essay, began to visit the island. Nowadays, hundreds visit this special place during the summer months, and many purchase booklets containing this essay in the island's shops.

The section of *The Divine Adventure* called "By Sundown Shores" (pp. 255–308) contains five short essays and a longer piece entitled "Celtic" which also appeared in the May issue of *The Contemporary Review*. "Celtic" exemplifies what Sharp referred to as the merger of his masculine and feminine voices better than many of the volume's essays. One hears in it the voice of Fiona Macleod, but that of the practical literary and cultural critic William Sharp predominates. It is as though



Fig. 1. Benedictine Abbey on Iona, Inner Hebrides, constructed in 1203 AD on the site of the Celtic Church which St. Columbo built after he settled on Iona in 563 AD and began to establish Christianity in Scotland. Photograph by PaulT (Gunther Tschuch) (2019), Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iona_07.jpg

two separate persons were speaking, both under the control of a single consciousness. Early on we hear Fiona saying the Celtic Movement was not “as so often confusedly stated an arbitrary effort to reconstruct the past,” but an “effort to discover the past.” As “one imputed to this movement,” she sought “in nature and in life, and in the swimming thought of timeless imagination, for the kind of beauty that the old Celtic poets discovered and uttered.” Those poets had no monopoly on artistic beauty. No beauty of art excels “that bequeathed to us by Greece,” but artists must seek and express their ideals through their own tradition. Fiona placed herself firmly in the Celtic camp, the camp of her heritage: “There is one beauty that has to me the light of home upon it; there is one beauty from which, above all others now, I hope for a new revelation; there is a love, there is a passion, there is a romance, which to me calls more suddenly and searchingly than any other ancient love or ancient passion or ancient romance.”

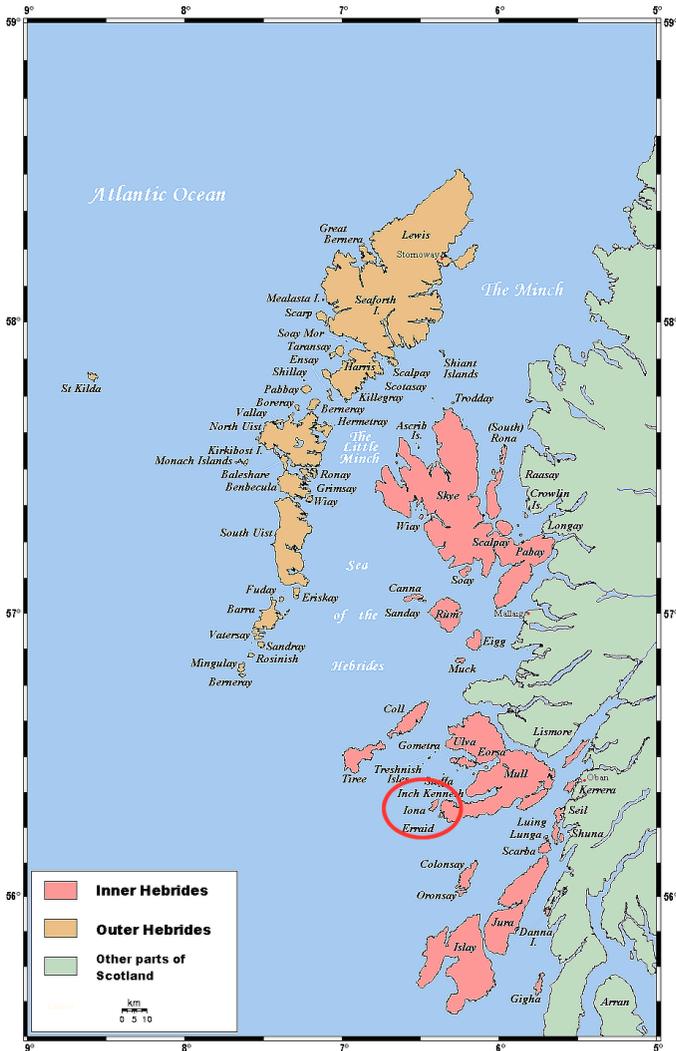


Fig. 2. Map of the Inner and Outer Hebrides in Scotland. Iona is located in the Inner Hebrides, just off the Isle of Mull. Map by Kelisi (2007), Wikimedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hebridesmap.png#/media/File:Hebridesmap.png>

After placing Fiona with her heightened rhetoric firmly among the Celts, Sharp reverted to the plainer language of the literary critic. Still writing as Fiona, he began to sound like the critic William Sharp. Although not a great believer in “movements” or “renascences,” he understood the

"Celtic Movement" as "the natural outcome, the natural expression of a freshly inspired spiritual and artistic energy." Its source was "a mythology and a literature, and a vast and wonderful legendary folklore [...] in great part hidden behind veils of an all but forgotten tongue and of a system of life and customs, ideals and thought that no longer obtains." Then, veering toward dangerous territory, he said he was unable to see the Celtic movement as having "sustenance in elements of revolt." If a movement is to have any force, "it will not destroy itself in forlorn hopes, but will fall into line, and so achieve where alone the desired success can be achieved." He took his examples from the realm of art, but "revolt" and "falling into line" opened the door to politics.

Having placed Fiona, and by extension himself, in the "Celtic Movement," he then placed both figures squarely in the tradition of English literature. The term Celtic writer "must denote an Irish or Scottish Gael, a Cymric or Breton Celt, who writes in the language of his race." Those who write in English, however, are English writers "who in person happen to be an Irish Gael, or Highland, or Welsh." He was willing to be designated

Celtic only if the word signifies an English writer who by birth, inheritance, and temperament has an outlook not distinctively English, with some memories and traditions and ideals not shared in by one's countrymen of the South, with a racial instinct that informs what one writes, and, for the rest, a common heritage.

The paragraph that stands out among the others in the essay turns overtly from literature to the issue of national identity:

Above all else it is time that a prevalent pseudo-nationalism should be dissuaded. I am proud to be a Highlander, but I would not side with those who would "set the heather on fire." If I were Irish, I would be proud, but I would not lower my pride by marrying it to a ceaseless ill-will, an irreconcilable hate, for there can be a nobler pride in unvanquished acquiescence than in revolt. I would be proud if I were Welsh, but I would not refuse to learn English, or to mix with English as equals. And proud as I might be to be Highland or Scottish or Irish or Welsh or English, I would be more proud to be British — for, there at last, we have a bond to unite us all, and to give us space for every ideal, whether communal or individual, whether national or spiritual.

Those carefully chosen words placed all Celtic people in the British Isles, including Ireland, under the British umbrella.

Sharp knew that AE (George William Russell) and Yeats were intent on establishing Ireland as an independent country free of the English yoke. His argument for unity was, therefore, a direct attempt to discourage them from advocating separation from the British Empire to which he remained loyal throughout his life. Though he knew his views would not sit well with them or with other Irish writers advocating independence, Sharp hoped to soften their attitudes, to dissuade them from overt revolutionary activities, and above all to maintain his own position in a Celtic Literary Movement that transcended nationalisms. He underestimated the depth of AE's feelings, the fire underlying his rhetoric, and the strength of the Irish independence movement.

Such is the background of a June 15 Fiona Macleod letter to George Russell. He had written to put her on notice that he intended to write a review of *The Divine Adventure* that took issue with her "Celtic" essay. In response, Fiona expressed her regret that AE rejected her effort to "save our Gaelic remnant from extinction." She hoped he would give up "the transitory while inevitable logic of human sorrow and revolt" and adopt "the immortal and inevitable logic of the Spirit." That hope failed to dissuade AE.

His review appeared in the July 21 issue of Standish O'Grady's *All Ireland Review* (volume 1, number 29). He began by saying there were many things in the book everyone could enjoy. In the title essay, "The Divine Adventure," and in "Iona" there was "a graver and more retrained use of that rhetorical eloquence which Miss Macleod perhaps finds it too easy to employ." If at times there was "only vagueness where a mystic meaning was intended," there was also "genuine imagination and frequent beauty of thought and style." That said, he turned to "Celtic" and its "anti-nationalistic" stance. Casting aside reasoned argument, he accused Fiona of "arrogance and shallowness of judgment" and remarked disparagingly, "it is perhaps like a woman to advise a cheap peace between race and race." She was unable, he said, to distinguish "English emotion from Celtic emotion, or from Hindu emotion." She was "devoid of the faculty of analysis or the power of seeing distinctions, not even subtle distinctions, but glaring ones." He imagined a good Briton reading this essay and feeling quite satisfied that "there were to be no more wild Irish; that he was not to be troubled further with revolt or plain speaking; the truth would be modified to suit his capacity for receiving it." He would beam in satisfaction as the

Celtic "crown of strange jewels" is placed on his brow. AE concluded with some high-handed advice that drew a clear and foreboding line between the Irish and Scottish revivalists: "It is to be hoped in the future if Miss Macleod wishes to write semi-political essays she will speak only for the Scottish Celt. We are a strange people over here and we dislike being preached to by foreigners." When we read this review with the knowledge that Sharp had told AE that he was Fiona Macleod, pledging him thus to secrecy, we recognize, as did Sharp, that "perhaps like a woman" was a double-barreled shot.

Standish O'Grady attempted to ameliorate the venom of AE's review by following it in the same issue of the *All Ireland Review* with a different assessment of *The Divine Adventure* by someone who signed the review only J. S. (2-3): "From the beginning of her remarkable career till now Miss Fiona Macleod has done nothing so beautiful and lofty as this wonderful book." The praise became increasingly elaborate. "Iona," J. S. wrote, was "so full of spiritual light, not raying out aimlessly into the void but clothing reality and life with beauty, that it is no exaggeration to describe them [the rays] as adding a new sacredness to the Mecca [Iona] of the Gael." Turning to "Celtic," the reviewer met AE headlong:

Miss Macleod showed "that her keen insight does not fail her in a region of thought far removed from that into which she has hitherto taken her readers. A Celt of the Celt, and possessed as no other writer of our time is possessed with a sense of the faculty and mission of the Celt, she shows here not only deep intuition but the power [quoting Mathew Arnold] "to see life steadily and see it whole," of which the Celt, in this country at least, must acquire some greater measure before his flame can burn with any but a destructive power.

The real argument, he concluded, was not between the Scots and the Irish, but among the Irish themselves.

In the next issue of the *All Ireland Review* (July 28) O'Grady printed in the letters section the following sentence: "We overhold an interesting communication from the celebrated Fiona Macleod in reference to strictures recently made in A. I. R. on her latest book 'The Divine Adventure.'" In that communication — dated July 22 and printed in the next edition of the weekly (August 4) — Fiona thanked the unidentified J. S. for his praise and responded to AE's charges. She denied her

inability to see distinctions, stated she was not anti-nationalistic, and reaffirmed her belief that "Genius does not lie with any one race." Rather it is "a calling of the Spirit to one soul here, another there; neither tribe nor clan has the divine mystery as its own." Allowing that some of her fellow Gaels may be "in some things [...] astray", she insisted that "others, and the English in particular, are not invariably and inevitably in the wrong, and stupid and malevolent." Justice and love, not hatred and resentment, must accompany nationalism. Taking up AE's gender challenge, Fiona asserted that even a woman knows "there is a peace which is death." She did not advocate "a cheap peace between race and race," but an ideal for "our broken and scattered race that may not only uplift and ennoble but may bring about a great and wonderful regeneration." Here Sharp referred obliquely to the regenerative goals of Yeats' Celtic Mystical Order which he and AE shared. Fiona's attempt to clarify her position only caused AE to harden his. In a letter O'Grady published which constituted the entire front page of the August 18 *All Ireland Review*, he accused Fiona of labeling nationalism as "race hatred," reasserted his adherence to Irish nationalism, and confessed he had no love for England. Cuttingly, he called Fiona a Briton and an English writer who, unlike some other Scottish Celts, lacked the aspiration to nationality common among Irish Gaels.

The public exchange of correspondence concluded with a letter from T. W. Rolleston on the front page of the August 25 *All Ireland Review*. After noting that AE's letters contained "so much that is good and true," Rolleston addressed what he considered the major errors of his ideas about nationalism. Taking issue with AE's emphasis on British oppression, he suggested the Irish had not been so much oppressed as indifferent to the claims of their heritage and that any changes in attitude must be enforced by the Irish people themselves. He also criticized AE for confusing the Celtic spiritual movement with the Irish political movement, adding that "Ireland might have her local legislature and yet be thoroughly denationalized and vulgarized or that she might attain nationalism in social life, literature, and art and yet "be content with her present voice in the Imperial Parliament." After criticizing the bitterness and hatred underlying much of the political movement, he said AE and Fiona Macleod were pressing each other to extreme views; their positions were complementary, not contradictory.

Finally, he commended Fiona's Celticism, insisted she was a "helper not a hinderer," and condemned AE's bias against her as a Scottish Celt. Despite the efforts of O'Grady, J.S., and Rolleston to keep Fiona on board and maintain a unified movement, AE's attack, fueled by the growing spirit of Irish nationalism, caused a rift between the Irish and the Scots that became increasingly difficult to bridge.

In late August Sharp wrote a letter to Yeats in which he expressed his feelings about AE's attack: "As for AE, I think I had better not say what I think: but of one thing I am very sorry, his inevitable loss of prestige among those of his own circle who like myself have thought so highly of him and his work. None can now accept him as a thinker, or as a fair and loyal opponent, however else one may regard him." The letter re-enforced what Sharp had told Yeats about Fiona — that she was an independent individual with a will of her own, mysteriously speaking through him, and that there was a flesh and blood woman whom Sharp loved and on whom he depended to evoke this persona. He wished Fiona would not take notice of critics. He wished he had seen her letter to the *All Ireland Review* before she sent it. And he wished AE would be "content to be the poet and seer, and not turn aside to these unworthinesses."

Perhaps motivated by encouragement from Yeats and by Rolleston's suggestion that they were pushing each other to extremes, Sharp drafted a Fiona letter to AE in mid-September saying she wanted to go with him on the "quest," not apart from him. This letter evoked a conciliatory response from Russell in which he said he had no personal feelings against her: "You are to me so far only a beautiful myth." He never fights, he said, "except when I feel the spiritual life of Ireland is threatened and when I fight why of course I do it with all the energy I can put into it." He often fights with his friends, he said, and remains good friends with his opponents. He hoped to remain friends with Fiona because she belonged to "the clan," the group of Irish or Scottish people "who's ideal is mainly a spiritual one." The clan included O'Grady, Yeats, Hyde, Lady Gregory, and others whom Fiona/Sharp did not know. Finally, he enclosed a spray of heather as a peace offering. The letter is written with the full awareness that its recipient would not be "a beautiful myth," but William Sharp. Indeed, AE had written to Yeats on July 13, a week before his first review appeared in print, that he was "a little sorry" he

had been “so savage,” but he hoped it would “do Fiona/Sharp some good.” We can only wonder if his review would have been so savage had he thought Fiona a real woman.

Sharp responded as Fiona on October 20. Briefly in London on her way to southern France, she accepted AE’s offer of continuing friendship: “Your spray from the sacred hill brought me not only a message from your inward self, but more than you could know perhaps. Some fallen link has been caught up through it — and, too, a truer understanding has come to me in one or two points where we have been at issue.” She hoped AE would read and like “The Immortal Hour” in a forthcoming *Fortnightly Review* and a forthcoming essay in *The Nineteenth Century* on “The Gael and his Heritage” which dealt with “the treasure-trove of the spiritual hymns and ancient lore in the Hebrides.” The breach with AE was thus papered over, but there followed a decided cooling of enthusiasm for the writings of Fiona Macleod among the independence-minded Irish.

In addition to managing this public controversy, Sharp continued his association with the evolving Stage Society during the summer and fall. Except for two brief trips to Scotland in late summer, he stayed in Chorleywood and London. He continued to work on the long William Sharp essay that was published in 1902 as *Progress of Art in the XIX Century*. An article titled “Some Dramas of Gabrielle d’Annunzio,” appeared in the September *Fortnightly Review*, and the October issue of the *Art Journal* carried his article about the work of Monro S. Orr, a well-known contemporary Scottish painter, etcher and illustrator. In November, Fiona Macleod’s “The Immortal Hour” appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* and her “The Gael and His Heritage” in *The Nineteenth Century*. The latter was a lengthy and adulatory tribute to Alexander Carmichael’s recently published *Carmina Gadelica*.

In early November, Sharp began a letter at his club (the Grosvenor) to Murray Gilchrist with the incident that occasioned the letter:

A little ago, on sitting down in my club to answer some urgent notes (and whence I now write) my heart leapt with pleasure, and an undeserving stranger received Part I of a beaming welcome — for the waiter announced that “Mr. Gilchrist would like to see you, Sir.” Alas, it was no dear Peaklander, but only a confounded interviewer about the Stage Society!

He went on to say he and Elizabeth planned to leave England on November 12 and go first to Provence, near Marseilles and then, after Christmas, go on to Italy, "perhaps first to Shelley's Spezzia or to Pegli of the Orange Groves near Genoa: and there we await you, or at furthest a little later, say in Florence. We shall be away till the end of March." He had just returned from Dorset where he saw Thomas Hardy who was well and at work, "the two happiest boons of fortune for all our kinship." He wished Gilchrist would come to London for the Stage Society production that weekend, Sunday November 11, of a play by Hardy, another by Robert Lewis Stevenson, and William Ernest Henley's "Macaire." Sharp said he had resigned as Chairman of the Stage Society but was re-elected, so he is extra busy before leaving for France. As usual in his letters to Gilchrist, Sharp told him how he was feeling; "all unpleasantness and incertitude: much to do and little pleasure in the doing: a restlessness too great to be salved short of departure, and the longed for mental and nervous rest far away."

Ill-health continued to plague both Sharps in the late summer and early fall. Mrs. Sharp described their condition movingly:

Partly owing to the insistence of circumstance, partly from choice, we began that autumn a series of wanderings that brought us back to London and to Scotland for a few weeks only each summer. The climate of England proved too severe. ... Despite his appearance of great vitality, his extraordinary power of recuperation after every illness — which in measure was due to his buoyant nature, to his deliberate turning of his mind away from suffering or from failure and "looking sunwise," to his endeavor to get the best out of whatever conditions he had to meet — we realized that a home in England was no longer a possibility, that it would be wise to make various experiments abroad rather than attempt to settle anywhere permanently. Indeed, we were both glad to have no plans, but to wander again how and where inclination and possibilities dictated (*Memoir*, pp. 323–24).

The Sharps left London on November 12, passed through Paris, and went on to stay near the Janviers in Saint Remy De Provence where they socialized with local writers and artists. Sharp finished an essay on "The Impressionists" which appeared under his name in the April 1901 *New Library Review*. He also began an essay on famous Provençal poets called "Modern Troubadours" which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* of October 1901. Stage Society business followed him. On November 19,

he hand-printed a letter to the Editor of *The Topical Times* stating his absolute opposition to the official censorship of plays.

On November 30, he wrote a long letter to John Macleay, of *The Highland News*, in which he expressed his regret that he was unable to visit Andrew Carmichael and his family during his brief visit to Scotland in the fall. He praised Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica* which, he affirmed, "ought to become as precious to the Scottish Gael as the Greek Anthology to all who love the Hellenic ideal, but with a more poignant, a more personal appeal." After eagerly perusing it from "cover to cover" he had given his early copy to Miss Macleod who praised it highly in "The Gael and His Heritage," an article published in that month's issue of *The Nineteenth Century* (48, pp. 825-41). Fiona had become dissatisfied with the historical novel she was writing, and ill health, "involving much absolute rest, and latterly change of climate," had interfered with her writing. She wanted to go to Italy, but her doctors recommended Egypt or Algeria, as "drier & sunnier, & to vary this frequently with the sea she loves so well & which suits her splendidly." Sharp saw her a week or two ago in Marseilles on her way south, He does not know where to address her now. She may be in Mustapha, near Algiers. He hopes she will be able to pay a flying visit to Sicily in February, where the Sharps hope to go, as she will then be yachting in the Mediterranean with friends. Although he does not know her current address, Sharp said he would be writing to her in a few days and would forward Macleay's note. It was an elaborate effort to impress upon Macleay, who had his suspicions, the separate identity of Fiona Macleod. On Christmas Day, the Sharps left Provence for Palermo in Sicily where they spent New Year's Day. A week later, they crossed the island to the east coast and the beautiful hillside town of Taormina where events affecting the remainder of Sharp's life would unfold.

Letters: 1900

To Mrs. Grant Allen, January 3, 1900

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood, Herts | 3/1/1900

Dear Nellie,

The one intended for you must have miscarried. I now send you my own (E. has another, so that is all right) and regret you did not have it sooner. There is only an allusion to the great loss of us all in dear Grant, but it is from the heart.¹ (The footnote about William Simpson² was put in at the last moment by special request. I did not know him.) As I said in my few preliminary words, "all admired and many here loved the fine writer and true-hearted man lost to us individually and to the Omar Club." Excuse more just now, dear Nellie. As soon as you are settled in town Lill and I eagerly hope to see you again.

Your friend always, | Will

ALS Pierpont Morgan Library

To Edith Lyttelton, January 8, 1900

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood | Herts | 8/1/1900

My dear Mrs. Lyttelton³

I was very sorry indeed to hear that you have been so prostratingly "down" through the autumn, and trust that you are indeed much better and when you return to London will find yourself in "good form". I fear, from your silence at the time and in your letter, that you never received "Sospiri di Roma" & "Madge of the Pool." The former was a loan: the latter an offering for your acceptance: but both now are perhaps occupying an exile's place on some unknown & puzzled recipient's shelf. Later the rare "Sospiri" may again be lent, for a friend

has a duplicate copy: but, if you care to have it, "Madge" can certainly be had.

Illness gives one a shake, however strong one's vitality: and I think we'll do our best not to spend another midwinter in this damp & sunless climate. However, January will pass: & February has always lovely pioneer days: & then Spring & Summer lie ahead.

Yes, I read the "Little Novels" with keen pleasure. Maurice Hewlett told me the other night that he is dramatising one of them ("Ippolita" I think).⁴ And "Paolo & Francesca" — have you read that? and what do you think of it?⁵

But nothing I have read for long has so deeply held me as Stevenson's letters.⁶

I am anxious to hear from you if you have done anything more with your pen of late. In a letter I had some time ago from Miss Macleod she spoke of having heard of, and read, your first publication:⁷ and how from it, but most of all from your letters, and by instinct, she felt assured that you could, and probably some day soon would, write a notable book.

Miss Macleod's new book, unlike anything she has done, and personal (and in "Iona" & elsewhere autobiographical) to a greater extent than ever she has done before, ought to be out in March. It is to be called *The Divine Adventure*,⁸ from the long titular "spiritual essay" which has attracted (on the part of the few who care) so much attention in the *Fortnightly* in November & December. (I understand that selected sections from her long "Iona" are to appear in the Feby & Mch issues of the *Fortnightly* — at least so I understand has been arranged, as the *Fortnightly* publishers (Chapman & Hall) are also to publish the book.) She speaks of my revising the proofs with her "in two or three weeks hence."

For myself, apart from much else on hand, but perforce left alone at present, I am hard at work every available hour on a commissioned "History of the Fine Arts in the Nineteenth Century" — a kind of synthesis, or coup d'oeil perhaps, of the dominating features and interrelated developments of modern art.⁹ Well, this is a long letter.

And now about our meeting. Could you, in the first instance, come to the Grosvenor Club on Monday next about 4 o'clock, & have tea & a chat with me (if you prefer it, I could come to you). Please let me know if this will suit.

Meanwhile, believe me, Dear Mrs. Lyttelton,

Sincerely Yours, | William Sharp

ALS Churchill Archive Center, Churchill College, Cambridge

To John Stuart Verschoyle,¹⁰ January 11, 1900

c/o Mrs. Rinder. | 11. Woronzow Road. | London. | N.W.

My dear Sir,

A hurried line. I am glad you care to print the lines I sent to you. Yes, you may quote the words you indicate: I feel them to stand for the basic truth, and so perhaps they may reach some to whom no other appeal might go home.

Mrs. Rinder will attend to any proof that comes, as she has the copy of the lines which I sent to her to this end, to save time forwarding to Edinburgh.

Will you kindly send me two copies when published.

Yours Sincerely, | Fiona Macleod

ALS UCLA, Clark Library

To Theodore Watts-Dunton, February 9, 1900¹¹

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood | Herts

My dear Aylwin,

Your note & book reached me today. Yes, the Sonnet vol. still sells by the thousand. I believe the (I've quite forgotten *what* edition! — but bringing up to about 100,000) — will be out in the Spring — & your rectifications shall be made. I'll be writing to Scotts in a day or so.

PRIVATE: It's a little hard that for this book I got £10 — & that all I ever had from it since was £5 for preparing a special reprint!! It has gone into innumerable editions — & in all forms has sold to an unprecedented extent for a book of the kind, here & in America etc. At even a royalty of 1d a copy I'd have had over £400 — so imagine what Scott's profit must be!

You don't say how you are or what you are doing — but I hope you are well, & that you are busy with what is after your heart.

I know you will be sorry to hear that since Christmas I have had a bad time of it. First, I got influenza again, with pneumonic complication — then an inflammatory condition of the veins was set up — & thro' that & an accident on the railway I started a bad varicose vein, badly strained, & constantly threatening a clot (phlebitis)— laming me as though I had the gout! — & keeping me to the house for weeks. Then a very painful & prostrating meningital neuralgia set in — partly from over strain of work & financial straits etc. Still, all might have gone well, had not I went one day (under great stress of agony) to a dentist to be sure there was nothing the matter with my teeth. He was a faddist, & incompetent — & having found all absolutely sound said he wd. take out 5 sound teeth then & there (& without gas!) as that would cure me! I was weak enough to be persuaded of urgency — but after the second sound tooth had been literally torn out (for my teeth are very sound & strong) I fainted & he could do no more. It now turns out he was wholly wrong as to this — & I have lost two sound molars & have my neuralgia still, only worse! The nervous shock proved so bad for me that my wife, & the doctor, became seriously perturbed. The upshot was that a few days ago I was ordered away for a month to recruit by the sea — & would have gone 2 days ago but for a sudden painful attack of lumbago. So, considering I am not fallen into depression or loss of "heart," I must be quite a Mark Tapley.¹² I hope now to get away on Sunday, as my lumbago is better.

All this is partly a preamble to explain why I have been unable to repay the loan of £25, which I hoped to do in February. Alas, all this trouble has brought me on my beam-ends, and tomorrow (if able) I am going into London to see if thro' my Bank, or otherwise, I can raise some money to get away with for a month. Elizabeth has been down with bronchitis, & tho' still in bed is better — & will join me on Tuesday — as

she too needs recuperation. What with illness, & these wearing financial straits things are not at their brightest — still I hope all will go well this year. Whenever I can get the money together I'll repay your kind loan — but I have first to earn the wherewithal to satiate the proverbial wolf!

Well, that is a long tirade — all about troubles. When I come back I hope to come & see you. Destroy so tiresome a note, & think of me as recuperative & buoyant as of yore. (It has sadly thrown me back in urgent work — that, perhaps, is worst) Send me a line to say you understand.

Ever, dear Aylwin, | Affectionately yours | W. S.

ALS University of Leeds, Brotherton Library

To Hannibal Ingalls Kimball, [?February, 1900]

Wharnccliffe | Chorleywood | Herts | Thursday

My dear Mr. Kimball

I was very sorry (I shd say "we" were very sorry) not to see you. I would have liked very much to have a chat with you. But this must be a postponed pleasure. We had arranged a special little dinner (hoping to have William Watson, Maurice Hewlett, Richard Whiteing, & one or two others) at the Sesame Club, for Mrs. Kimball & yourself, for next week — but your news about your immediate departure intervenes. Well, we shall have it in May or June — So remember you are engaged!

It was a pleasure to Mrs. Sharp to meet — & for me to see again — your wife, looking if you will allow me to say so more lovely & charming even than when I had the pleasure of seeing her in New York.

Were it at all possible I could call tonight or tomorrow — but I have to hurry away this evening & can't be at home again till Saty.

So meanwhile "bon voyage"

Cordially yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Library

To William Blackwood, March 15, [1900]

Wharnccliffe | Chorleywood | Hertz | Thursday 15th March

My dear Sir,

I was in Edinburgh for two days on family affairs and took the opportunity to call upon you — but was unfortunate in finding that you were absent.

I wished, for one thing, to ask you if you would care (for the magazine) for an article on “Recent French Art” — either as an outcome of a long History of the Fine Arts in the last half century — or, if preferred, more apropos of the art of the year, as I have already seen it, as I shall see it shortly when I go over to Paris for the Salon which opens about April 2nd this year, a month earlier — at the “New Men” at a Private Gallery — the new Gustave Moreau national bequest, & perhaps at the Exposition.

Perhaps you will kindly let me hear from you about this at your early convenience.

I am also going on to Brittany to visit Breton friends. I am anxious to put together (from a long gathering of material) a study of the contemporary poets & romancists [sic] of Brittany or else an indirect study of them through representative work of their finest representative, A. LeBraz. Would you care for this?

With many regrets at not having had the pleasure of meeting you (and unfortunately I return to London this morning)

Believe me | Yours very truly | William Sharp
William Blackwood Esq.

ALS National Library of Scotland

To J. Stanley Little, March 26, 1900¹³

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood | Herts

Just returned — but E. still very seedy and at her mother's. I go there now, but shall be back tomorrow and hope to write then or Wedny.

W. S.

*ACS Princeton University****To J. Stanley Little, March 28, 1900***

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood | Herts | 28.11.1900

My dear Stanley

Often I (I shd. say *we*) have wished to go to Balham to see you both — often I have wished to write — but — well you know our common difficulties, the incessant pressure of life and circumstance, and, over and above all, the painful fact that I am one of the worst correspondents in the world. For one thing I honestly never have time. I am at this moment *months* behind with urgent work — weeks and months also behind with correspondence. We came out here thinking things would be easier: on the whole they are worse in that very respect! Of course, latterly, there has been the additional strain of illness — first of myself, then of Elizabeth, who is still unable to be here, and may not be for 10 days or a fortnight yet (tho' latterly only — a large "only" — with sciatica). We have been little here, since we left our flat and stored our furniture. And shortly after Xmas (i.e. about near end of Jany) I got influenza, then serious pneumonic and other complications, and was more or less ill, and away, till March. Then E. had bronchitis etc. etc. — and at Broadstairs¹⁴ (where we went) had rheumatism — and when I was in Scotland (again ill) she got sciatica, and is still at her mother's (72 Inverness Terrace W). I am "nominally" back here (nominally, for I am here so little, having all E's

work to do as well as my own, and God knows what all, good and bad, especially bad, besides.)

Yes, ultimately, on special *sine-quā-non* terms, I agreed to do the “Fine Arts” for the Toronto series. But I could not touch it or even think of it till after-Xmas. On the last 3 days of the year I planned it all out, and began to write on the 1st day of Jany. I wrote, had typed, and revised over 50,000 words by about Jany 21st — and had that sent off, and it is now I believe being “set up”. Unfortunately, I have not been able to do much else to it, owing to illness — nor can I touch it now till after Easter. I hope, however, to do the remaining 70,000 words (about 3,000 or 5,000 done perhaps) of which E. is doing abt 15,000 (the music), well within the six weeks before end of May — though I have 2 books and articles etc. etc. on hand at same time that I must somehow or another manage to work at concurrently.

Yes — I had special terms, without which it wd. have been wholly impossible for me to take up the book: and not only special terms, but special conditions of payment. On the other hand, I much regret, old fellow, I can’t tell you anything more explicitly. I am under a pledge of honour, a given promise, not to do so: nor can I consent to your mentioning my name as having told you even what I have done. I must trust you in this.

Surely you are wrong about no royalty payment being due till late in 1901? It is to be hoped that all the books will be out by this autumn. You shd send in your MS. as soon as you can. I’m afraid if you haven’t made definite signed terms you won’t get anything in advance out of Linscott.

I hope life goes well — I am sure it goes happily — with you & Maud and your little Lois. Soon after I come back from Paris (i.e. about Easter or soon after) — where I go in a few days to the Salon, wh. opens 3 weeks earlier than usual — we must meet. Perhaps you and M. wd. come here for a day: or I (or we, if E. able — doubtful) to you.

Ever cordially and affectly — if distractedly! — Yours, |
with love to all, | Will

ALS Princeton University

To John Stuart Verschoyle, April 8, 1900¹⁵

Grand Hotel | Paris

My dear Verschoyle

I shall be in England shortly & hope to do as you ask.

Yes, Miss Macleod told me she had written for you, & indeed sent me a copy. She feels profoundly about this matter, as I do — but gets to the root of it better than I fear I can.

Sincerely yours | William Sharp

I hope to be back this week.

*ACS UCLA, Clark Library****To [Frederick Whelen?], April 16, 1900***Edinburgh | 16th April 1900

Dear Sir

I was very pleased to hear through my friend and relative Mr. William Sharp that the Stage Society is to produce "The House of Usna" at its next performance.¹⁶ As I at once telegraphed and then wrote to Mr. Sharp, I leave every arrangement to him and full discretion as to any minor alterations which may be thought advisable, mainly in compression. I have also already sent him, a few days ago, a fresh very brief opening scene for "The House of Usna," which indeed already belonged to it, but which I had taken out for the necessarily briefer magazine-use of the play. This short new scene involves no fresh character, though in it the blind harper Coel now takes an active as well as later, a passive part: and it not only gives a dramatic movement, which "Usna" lacks for stage-representation, but also explains what no doubt to an English audience would otherwise be difficult to follow. At Mr. Sharp's request I have also agreed to a more thorough Anglicization and simplification of ancient names and allusions. The play has been accepted for appearance

in a magazine, and also, with two others, for book-publication, but Mr. Sharp has seen to this for me, and there will be no copyright difficulties in the matter.

For myself I gladly agree to its free production by you, feeling myself to be the more indebted. But I presume I may count upon your courtesies in the matter of reserved accommodation. May I ask to have two contiguous boxes reserved.

One of these would be for my friends Mr. and Mrs. William Sharp, whom I should join if I find myself able to come from Scotland for the occasion: the other I would like to be able to offer to Mr. George Meredith (if he can come) or other friends. I should like also to know that you will send *reserved* stall tickets to one or two persons by whose courtesies I am able in one instance to substitute another play, and in another instance to give you "The House of Usna" — and to a few others concerned, say eight reserved Stall-seats — namely to

W. L. Courtney, Esq / Editor *The Fortnightly*

James Knowles, Esq / Editor *The Nineteenth Century*

W. B. Yeats, Esq

Mr. And Mrs. Ernest Rhys

The Hon. Alfred & Mrs. A. Lyttelton

and (probably)

Mr. Percy Bunting / Editor of the *Contemporary*.

If in the event of the great honour of Mr. George Meredith's coming he wished to be alone (for he is not strong, and rarely goes out), or with his son or daughter only, I suppose you could arrange that a further box could be allowed to him. Also I forgot to say that as soon as the tickets are ready I would be glad if you will hand them to Mr. Sharp, who will either send them to me or forward them as I direct

Believe me | Yours very truly | Fiona Macleod

P.S. Could Mr. George Alexander¹⁷ be invited by the Society? I would be glad if so.

ALS Theatre Museum, London

To Ernest Rhys, May 4, 1900¹⁸

Loch-Fyne-Side

They are books at which I look sometimes with dread, for through all their outward change of time and place they are often so intimately personal. Can you understand that when "Pharais" was published I would have given anything to recall it, partly because of the too much suffering there expressed, but mainly because of that "Cry of Women," which nevertheless has brought so many strange and sorrowful letters, and made many unexpected friends. A still more intimate element animates "The Mountain Lovers," a book which will always for me have an unchanged air. We are fortunate if we have one book, one poem even, which, having lived there, never forgets the "Enchanted Valley."

Fiona Macleod

*Fragment of ALS (see note to this letter)****To Grant Richards, June 1, 1900***

c/o Mrs. Rinder | 11 Woronzow Road |
London¹⁹ | 1st June 1900

My dear Sir,

You would have heard from me long before this but for the fact that since November last I have been much of an invalid, and been forbidden to work, and that since the beginning of the year I have done very little, and that only casually.

I have thus made slow progress with "The Hour of Beauty,"²⁰ despite a great amount of collected matter. Nor can I promise to let you have it soon. If I can let you have it in the autumn I will: but all I can venture to promise is to let you have it by the end of the year. For my own sake as well as for yours I regret the delay: and for my own sake as well as yours

I will now do my best to get on with it. The revision of my latest book, *The Divine Adventure* (recently published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall), stands for almost all I have been able to do, except other arduous revision of unpublished matter.

I see that your letter (which has reached me in Argyll) is addressed to an old address. Miss Rea, my late agent and typist, is still away recovering from illness, and so now and until further notice I am having all my correspondence sent through a literary friend, whose address heads this letter.

By the same post I have received a copy of the June *Fortnightly* which contains a generous and sympathetic study of my writings,²¹ which I would like you to glance at.

Believe me, dear sir, | Yours very truly, | Fiona Macleod

ALS Stanford University

To Edith Lyttelton, June 4, 1900

4th June 1900

My dear Mrs. Lyttelton

I am most glad to hear from you again: and I am glad that you like my new book.²²

It is a step on the road I travel, and towards the high road I hope to reach.

It is very doubtful if I can (or will!) go South after all: if I do it will not be for more than a day or two, between the 9th and 15th. But though I cannot see you I can send you my profound sympathy and eager hopes that all will go well with you. From now I will again and again send out my thought to you, wishing, to you, a safe recovery to new life; to the little child, a beautiful soul and a fair body and a happy nature.

Your letter had reached me in Western Argyll, though today I have to leave for a few days in Edinburgh, so I write and will post this on board the steamer.

Again, I wish you well, and send you all that I have to send, in some surety that it will reach and help you.

Your friend | Fiona Macleod

ALS Churchill Archive Center, Churchill College, Cambridge

To Edith Lyttelton, [mid-June, 1900]

Wharnccliffe | Chorleywood

Excuse a penciled line in the train

Dear Mrs. Lyttelton

In the hurry of an abrupt despatch I may have accidentally sent the MS of your novel²³ to your London address — tho' I *think* not. Could you, however, send me a card to say if it has safely reached you.

I have just seen an article that will interest you too very deeply — a long and sympathetically interpretive paper on the writings of Miss Macleod by Ernest Rhys. It is called "The New Mysticism" and is in the new (the June) number of the *Fortnightly Review* — a number well worth getting otherwise for, alone, the long new "spiritual essay" on mystery by Maeterlinck.

Too shaky to write more distinctly!

Ever cordially yours | William Sharp

ALS Churchill Archive Center, Churchill College, Cambridge

To Leo J. Maxse, June 8, 1900

C/o. Mrs. Rinder | 11 Woronzow Road |
London N.W. | 8th June 1900

Dear Sir

Mrs. Rinder has forwarded your note, which has followed me from the west, as I have had abruptly to come to Edinburgh.

I am pleased that you are going to use "The House of Usna",²⁴ and the more so as since its performance at the Globe Theatre there have been many enquiries about it. I presume you will be able to print it shortly. (If in the July issue, as I hope, Mrs. Rinder will see to the proofs for me, as she has my revised typed copy). I thank you for your acceptance and for the offer you make (£1 per printed page), and now write to let you know that I accept and am well content.

Nor, in turn, do I wish to adhere undeviatingly to what Mrs. Rinder (Knowing my general terms — sometimes more, sometimes less) — [sic] wrote to you as to a rate of £2 a page for other matter. It depends, with me, whence the application comes. The other day a "magazine" wrote offering me two guineas a page "for anything I cared to write," but I declined: and the editor wrote again, and said he could pay three guineas, but again I declined, and finally, irrespective of terms.

So, as you courteously say you "should have liked others papers by Miss Macleod but for the prohibitive rate" I beg to assure you that I am willing to accept a lesser rate, say 25s, or if that is beyond what you consider feasible, a guinea — which, I may in fairness add, is the rate paid me by the *Contemporary*, though I am paid double or more elsewhere.

Forgive this dwelling on a distasteful subject — or rather on a distasteful discussion of a subject — important and just of course, in itself, but not the paramount, certainly not the sole consideration. On the other hand, let me add that I am ill-fitted or little inclined to write articles as ordinarily understood. I prefer papers of an imaginative kind, or partly reminiscent and personal such as parts of the "Iona" articles that appeared in the *Fortnightly*²⁵ and in my recently published book *The Divine Adventure*.

At the moment I cannot promise — and hardly like to suggest — anything: but, later, I should be very glad to contribute as you kindly suggest. (I have, I may add, at present on hand work for the *Fortnightly*, the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Contemporary*, the *North American Review*, and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.)

Perhaps the best way would be for you to see a paper called "From a Sea-Garden" in a forthcoming *Contemporary*²⁶ (alas, unwritten yet, except in notes and journals, and at the moment beyond my approach), and, if you cared for it, for me to send you one or two papers of the kind.

Believe me, dear Sir, | Yours very truly | Fiona Macleod

P.S. Will it be feasible to have "The House of Usna" in July? I hope so.

ALS West Sussex Record Office

To George Russell (AE), June 15, 1900

15th June 1900

Excuse a dictated typed note, as I have slightly strained my wrist.

Dear Mr. Russell,

I thank you for your long letter, though it is, for me, the saddest letter I have ever received. I seem to hear throughout it the crumbling of my highest ideals and hopes — and above all my passionate hope to save our Gaelic remnant from extinction. To my mind, the "other" way means a sad and inglorious end for the Irish and Scottish Gael. I had hoped, oh I had hoped so much. And with you personally I had never doubted but that the divine law of love would prevail. My feeling now would be one of utter dejection for the dream of splendid resurrection of our race were it not that I still cling passionately to the hope that your extremist attitude, and that of those who think with you, represents the transitory while inevitable logic of human sorrow and revolt rather than the immortal and inevitable logic of the Spirit. I am (though alas only but a little) encouraged in this by the fact that,

since “Celtic”²⁷ appeared in the *Contemporary* and in my book, I have had many letters from Ireland, eagerly and gratefully thanking me, as neither you (probably) nor I know them, this may mean little. But here are two sentences from the two letters last received from Ireland, one from Mayo, the other from Dublin: “I had lost all hope for my beloved Ireland, and now from my heart I for one thank you for those noble words breathing love and forgiveness to our ancient enemy — so far the more acceptable to us as coming from one whose own passionate eagerness to interpret the Gael and save him and his from the fate he has so ill deserved, but yet so largely brought upon himself, is beyond doubt.” The other runs: “It’s a good and true word you say, and said at the right time. God speed you. I feel there’s more real hope now than for long I’ve dared to think.” As I say, neither you nor I know anything of these Irish writers — perhaps a score in all, including two that were angrily hostile — but at least you know, or know of, *one* Irishman whose noble spiritual nature and proven patriotism cannot be gainsaid, namely Stopford Brooke.

In a letter I had from him a day or two ago, about “The Divine Adventure,” he writes: — “and now most earnestly I wish to congratulate you on ‘Celtic.’ It is the one piece of genuine understanding, the one piece of common sense and of imaginative intelligence which has been written on the ‘Celtic movement’.”

So, at least, you will see that you are wrong in *one* point, when you say I shall not have a single response.

Ah, dear Mr. Russell, I do not say “Think *my* way, or you shall not be saved”: but I *do* say, “Think well, think well, and again and again think well, before you let hate and bitterness and severance be your servants and lords, instead of love and forgiveness and a both-redeeming reconciliation.”

If England be indeed as you say, then the more need of our love, our forgiveness, our eager pity: if all be lost, the more need of our aid: ay, if all be ignoble, the more need that we should be noble.

Alas, alas, I fear the baffled bitterness, the unreasoning hate, the ignoble end. But yet, no, I will still hope, still pray, still strive. I am well content to leave it in the hands of the wise gods. But, for ourselves, between you and me let there be understanding and peace and comradely love. “Eadar mise agus tusa am càirdeas gràdhach.”²⁸

In January of 1899 you wrote me a long letter which ended thus: "I am brought back while writing this letter to some inner life felt keenly long ago and covered ever by passing crowded externalities. It is to again remember someone, or unity, or unquenchable eternal ideal you also know with myself and others taken before this mortal birth — and this you may take as the waving of a hand in remembrance I have not forgotten."

That is how I will think of you always — and however we may differ as to the right road to the one goal we have in view I trust it will also always be the attitude you have, deep down to

Your friend, | Fiona Macleod

TLS Indiana University, Lilly Library

To Frederick Charles Charrington,²⁹ July 6, 1900

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood, Herts | 6/July/00

My dear Charrington,

After you left committee-meeting yesterday, we discussed further the difficult secretarial problem. I believe that a solution is to be had thus: — (and failure to find a solution involving the withdrawal of both Whelen and Williams³⁰ would mean collapse of the Stage Socy) that instead of our paying £150 a year to a capable Secretary, or to 2 clerks or assistants, we should pay £100 to Whelen as Secretarial Manager, with £50 for clerky help. If we do this, Ernest Williams is willing to remain Hon. Secy. & to give all assistance he conveniently can, for he can place implicit trust in Whelen, & so would not need to give the continuous supervision and daily time & labour he now does. Whelen on his part finds it quite impracticable to keep on as he has been doing — not only because of his marriage & now constantly interrupted home-life, but because of the actual loss involved, & his inability to add to his means. He is, however, willing to take over all the heavy administrative work, if we appoint *him* instead of an outsider.

So strongly do I feel that we cannot afford to lose Whelen (and with him, Williams) that, in the event of their withdrawal from the administration of the Stage Society, I would resign also, as I do not think the Society is strongly enough established yet to avoid collapse otherwise.

I hope, therefore, that you may see your way at our next all-important meeting (on Tuesday next) to support this (as I believe) auspicious compromise.

Cordially Yours, | William Sharp

ALS Yale University

To Standish O'Grady, July 22, 1900

Dear Mr. O'Grady,³¹

Yesterday the steamer-post brought to the remote place whence I write to you the copy of the "All Ireland Review" with the two papers on "The Divine Adventure."

Let me first say with what pleasure each week I read your paper, and how much I sympathise with you in your endeavour, and am glad of an obviously growing appreciation throughout Ireland and, indeed, elsewhere. There is more true poetry in the several verses in this week's issue than in any of the current great "weeklies" or "monthlies" I have ever seen. Having said this, let me thank "J. S." for his generous words about myself and what I have written, and you for your editorial courtesy and fairness in permitting opposing views to stand together.

Naturally, I read Mr. Russell's with deep regret, for personal as well as other reasons. It would be undignified and futile to quarrel or to recriminate. I must leave the issues to others; above all, to that Spirit which is now breathing in so many hearts, in so many places. I, as well as Mr. Russell, may feel assured that what is ill and worthless in anything I have written will soon be ineffective and forgotten.

So, when I write now, it is not to respond in anger or chagrin to one whose writings I so greatly admire and love. I am sorry that Mr. Russell finds me arrogant and shallow, and devoid of the faculty of judgment.

I do not find him shallow, even in this judgment of his, for I think he has written out of no ill-will to me personally, and even with no active contempt for my deficiencies, but out of a deep, not a shallow, love for Ireland and our common Gaelic ideals. And what of arrogance on his part there is comes, I hope, not from a surety that he must be right and I wrong, because he is a man and I he says deprecatingly, am a woman, because he is Irish and I am a Scot; but because he is so impassioned with the dream that inspires all of us of the Gaelic peoples that the vision of the heart and the vision of the mind are both, temporarily, a little blinded or perverted. Fortunately the point at issue does not lie either with Mr. Russell or myself, as might seem were he and I merely to dispute the other's assertions. In the generous and welcome second article in the same number of the "A. I. R." a quotation of the very sentences which have offended "A. E." is given. If some of your readers, after perusal of these quoted sentences, concur with "A. E." as to their intention and actual import, I can but express my sorrow, and feel sure that the fault must, in a measure, lie with myself in some unwilling perversion of words. I am convinced, however, that most of your readers will not take Mr. Russell's view either as to my intent or as to the actual import of what I have written.

Had this second article not appeared concurrently, I would have had to refute several points in Mr. Russell's. As it is, the quotations do that for me. But I may instance one lapse in fairness. "What are we to think of her when she declares that there is no racial road to beauty, or when she seems unable to distinguish English emotion from Celtic emotion or from Hindu emotion. She seems devoid of the faculty of analysis or the power of seeing distinctions, not even subtle distinctions, but glaring ones." If the reader will turn to the sentence indicated (the third as quoted by "J. S.") he will see, surely, that there is misunderstanding somewhere. Perhaps I have not been explicit enough; but, perhaps, Mr. Russell (I am sure unintentionally) has perverted my meaning. I am not speaking against nationalism; elsewhere in the essay in question I make it clear how essential and treasurable nationalism in literature is; but in the words alluded to I state a universal, not a parochial truth. Again, in a paper I have recently written for an American magazine the following passage occurs: "In the 'Celtic Theatre' many of us have a quick hope. I do not think those who do not intimately know Ireland and Gaelic

Scotland have any adequate idea of how deep is the desire for nationality to expression; how national this expression is rapidly tending to become; and how eagerly those of us who have this development at heart are striving to conserve, to evoke, to sustain in the Gaelic-natured and Gaelic-minded people of our mixed race those elements of national life in whose conversation, evocation, and sustenance lies the one possible road for that troubled spirit, *Anima Celtica*."

There, also, I speak at some length the truth, and I hope show, that because a certain language is the inevitable vehicle of thought and dreams, these dreams and that thought need not be the dreams and thought of the language-makers, but of the people, the separate nation, which uses that language anew and as its own.

Genius does not lie with any one race; there is no racial road to beauty; it is the same proposition differently stated, though perhaps I should have prefaced the word "exclusively" to racial. Surely Mr. Russell would not aver that genius is the inheritance of Ireland only? One may think the Greek genius supreme, another the Italian, another the Hebraic, another the English, another the German; but none says that one must be of the Gaelic peoples, or of the Greek people, or the Italian people, or the Hebraic or English or German people, in order to speak with the divine accent of genius. Genius is a calling of the Spirit to one soul here, another there; neither tribe nor clan has the divine mystery as its own. That is all I say. I do not think that, in what I wrote, there is anything to justify the assertion that I am unable to distinguish English emotion from Celtic emotion or Hindu emotion. Of my own all-dominating feeling — my passionate predilection rather — for Celtic literature as distinct from any other literature, I have written (as I thought, convincingly) in this very essay.

Am I the less a patriot, the less a Gael, with all the passion of sorrow and longing of the true Gael whether he speaks English and lives in Dublin, or speaks Erse only and lives in Connemara, or Gaelic only and lives in the remote Hebrides, if I avow my belief that in some things we are astray, that others, and the English in particular, are not invariably and inevitably in the wrong, and stupid and malevolent in that wrong? Again, am I "only a woman," and so, naturally, the advocate of a cheap peace between race and race, because I say that love is better than hatred, because I have an ideal for our broken and scattered race that may not

only uplift and ennoble but may bring about a great and wonderful regeneration? There is a peace which is death. Even a "woman" may know that. Perhaps in all history, certainly in our Gaelic history, it is not women who can be reproached with lack of heroism. An ancestral relative of my own, at the time of the last rising in the Highlands, had five sons. When the two elder were slain she sent the third "out," though she was told that peace could be had. "It is not a just peace," she said. The young man was hanged. She told her two remaining boys to take to the heather. "There's peace now," they told her. "It is not a just peace," she said. One of the boys was shot, the other escaped. Years later he came back, with a "pardon." She tore it up and threw it on the fire. "It is not a just peace," she said. There are women like that in Scotland and in Ireland still, as time will show, if the occasion demand. But if there is a peace that is death, there is also a hate that is death. If one sows that evil unjustly, the innocent must reap a bitter harvest and find it in the dust and ashes. It behooves us all that we do not cherish hatred and call it patriotism, that we do not nourish hatred and call it nationalism, that we do not inculcate hatred and call it wisdom. The gods work through our ignoble hates as well as through our lofty ideals and broken and contrite hearts; but now, as of old, and ever, they say woe unto those who, knowing evil, choose evil; who, knowing the darkness of the dark way, lead to that darkness and that starless road.

But I am writing you an essay rather than a letter, and straying, too, from my first purpose in writing. I may say truly that I would not write at all if it were of purely personal concern. But I have had many letters from Ireland and Irish men and women since the publication of "Celtic" in the "Contemporary Review," and in my book the "Divine Adventure." One or two of these have been hostile, but the others, and there are many, from all sources, have been animated by welcome words of sympathy and gladness. Among them are letters from several prominent Irish writers whose ardent patriotism none could possibly gainsay. And it is for this reason that I do not think that I should keep silent, as my wont is. Even a point so insignificant as that wherein "A. E." alludes to the chorus of approval of the British Press for what I wrote in "Celtic" should be refuted I realize. He may have sources of information that I lack, but I know of nothing to justify the phrase. A few papers have said moderately and modestly what they (or the individual writers) think.

One or two have expressed a genuine gladness at what holds out hope of at least spiritual understanding. In the main, even this essay shallow and arrogant and superficial as it is, has met with anything but a chorus of approval in the British Press. That anything of mine would meet with this would be a new experience for me. One important Scottish paper dismissed it as the vapourings of an irreconcilable Gael!

After all, it comes to this: as an individual, I must hold myself aloof; as in any sense "a representative voice" I have only this to say, at once, humbly and proudly, the old honour-cry, "God be with the right." I have little fear that spiritual influences, infinitely deeper and stronger than those which move any one individual, are moulding and achieving. And some day Mr. Russell and I will not be aloof the one from the other; he will not, knowing the truth, contemptuously call me a "foreigner;" and I, too, will have no shadow of resentment, have indeed none now personally, but only because that willing or unwillingly I stand for other Gaels as truly patriotic, eager, and passionately national as Mr. Russell himself.

Believe me, most cordially yours, | Fiona Macleod

All Ireland Review and TLS, New York Public Library, Berg Collection

To William Archer, [August] 22 [1900]³²

Wharnccliffe | Chorleywood | Wedny 22

Dear Archer,

You will already have received the book (which I sent on to you yesterday).

The mischance is obviously due to some stupidity at Grant Richards office. At any rate the book had his label on the cover.

I expect we are each in continual receipt of gifts of this kind — & take either receipt or miscarriage alike philosophically.

Yours sincerely | William Sharp

ALS State University of New York at Buffalo

To William Butler Yeats, [late August, 1900]

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood | Herts

My dear Yeats

Is there any chance of your being in Belfast or Dublin way about the end of September? I may be in Co. Down for a few days about that time. I would much like to see you if possible. You will, I have no doubt, [have] seen the A. E. & F. M. correspondence in O'Grady's paper.³³ Personally, I regret it. I would much rather Miss M. had not written — for although I am in the main at one with her I do not think any good end is served by this fatal appearance of disunion.³⁴ As for AE, I think I had better not say what I think: but of one thing I am very sorry, his inevitable loss of prestige among those of his own circle who like myself have thought so highly of him and his work. None can now accept him as a thinker, or as a fair and loyal opponent, however else one may regard him.

His last letter seemed to me deplorable in many ways.³⁵ I don't think Miss M. would have answered it, impulsive as she is: but, just on the chance, I broke a rule with her and telegraphed to her begging that she would not write again, and to my relief had a reply "anything else now would be impossible of course." Personally I wish Miss Macleod would never take any notice of anyone or anything. For several reasons I wish I had seen that long letter of hers first. And A.E., too, how I wish he would be content to be the poet and seer, and not turn aside to these unworthinesses.

What are you doing yourself? I hope you have had a fruitful time in Ireland in every way.

I (my wife and I) go to Buxton, for her sciatica next Monday for 3 weeks: & then to Scotland (only to Galloway tho') for a week or so.

I shan't now see Miss Macleod again till her return from Iceland, where she is about to sail, with her mind filled with saga-music. I don't suppose she'll be back till October, as she is to return by Norway: but she will be in or near London for a short time then, I hope: & I am eagerly hoping will come abroad for 3 mos. next winter where I am going. But all this of course is between ourselves.

If you are at Lady Gregory's please give her (& E. Martyn) my cordial remembrances.

Ever yours | William Sharp

ALS Yale University

To George Russell (AE), [mid-September, 1900]³⁶

Dear Mr. Russell,

You will have read the letter I have written to Mr. Rolleston.³⁷ I have only this to add (forgive a penciled line, as I am not well) — will you not help me to bury any resentment or misunderstanding for the sake of what we both have so passionately at heart.

We have both no other end or aim than the quest, and so far as in us lies the furtherance, of spiritual beauty: to be revealers and interpreters. I want to go with you, not apart from you. Will you not believe then, and let us each do truly in his or her own way accordingly to his or her inward star.³⁸

F. M.

ALS National Library of Scotland

John Stuart Verschoyle, [fall, 1900?]³⁹

My dear Verschoyle

By a telegram received from Miss Macleod, she suggests that I shd. introduce you to Mrs. Mona Caird (who also wants to meet you) as she is head of so important a section in the Crusade of Mercy⁴⁰ in which you are so interested. I have just seen Mrs. Caird (as I can't come in again just now) — so will you send her a line to say if you will go to her either at lunch or afternoon tea on Friday, either at Dysart Hotel (21 Henrietta Pl, Cavendish Square) or at the Sesame Club, (29 Dover Street) yourself naming the hour & place.

In Haste | Yrs Ever | William Sharp

ALS UCLA, Clark Library

To Edmund Clarence Stedman, September 28, 1900

Wharncliffe | Chorleywood | Herts | 28th Sept 1900 | for Oct 8th

My dear Stedman, Friend, & Poet

For so many years now I have always written to you for your birthday, and always on the 8th itself had a little celebration (sometimes *à deux*, or occasionally *à quatre, cinq, ou sept*) just because you are so fine a poet, so fine a writer, & so fine a man, that I am not going to lapse now even though I understand you are still too far below par to care about added correspondence. But then, you see, this is not a case of correspondence — for it is only a loving greeting from me to you, old friend — & calls for no acknowledgment of any kind: so don't give the matter another thought. I have never misunderstood your silence for a single moment: do indeed entirely understand & sympathize.

I pray that you'll have a happy, prosperous, pleasant, work-filled, & health-uplifted year (& many of the like to follow). I won't bother you about your or my literary doings — but only say that thro' causes of health I must winter-and-spring abroad this year. For the rest, all well.

Is your dear wife well? I hope so: & my affectionate remembrances. And your good friend & secretary, is she married yet?

Ever, dear Stedman, your loyal affectionate friend

William Sharp

ALS State University of New York at Buffalo

To E. C. Stedman, October 18, 1900

18th Oct/00

A loving word of thanks, dear Poet and friend, for your long & so welcome letter. By a happy chance it reached me on the morning of the 8th — so the day was doubly a festival. I was alone, in a remote place, and with the friend to whom you allude — but that evening we were back in London and with three other friends drank life & health & well-being &

fame to Edmund Clarence Stedman, our poet-friend oversea. I hope my own letter to you reached you on your birthday morning, as I tried to make sure by postal enquiries.

This is not a letter in response to yours, dear Stedman: I shall write later. It [this letter] is merely to acknowledge what I would at once have acknowledged but for a rapid journey (& complications) I had to make about the 10th. I reached London two days ago. (By the way, that old mother-in-law address, 72 Inverness Terrace, London, W., will always find me as quickly & safely as any other.) I shall, however, be in my “diggings” here (we have till last month nominally been residing at Chorleywood, beyond Harrow, not 25 miles out) till about 10th or 12th November.

Everything is stored & all “literary-post” connections relinquished — and again I am “Gypsy Bill” as my friends call me. I shall work hard when I am away — but in my own way. My wife and I go first to a little gay French town in the south of Provence, towards the Esterel-Aise, the old Troubadour capital — till the year-end, & after that God knows where or for how long, but for 3 or 4 months any way, & sun-ward, & with few cares & open hearts.

As you know, I love you & always shall. Good-bye for just now. I’ll write before long.

Ever loving and your friend | William Sharp

P.S. I have this moment heard that the anthology has just arrived. My many grateful thanks. I’ll write again before long, within a week I hope.

ALS Princeton University

To T. W. Rolleston, October 19, [1900]⁴¹

19th October

Dear Mr. Rolleston

Many thanks for sending me your interesting notice of *Carmina Gadelica*. It will, I am sure, please Mr. Carmichael.

My own long article ("The Gael and his Heritage") will appear in *The Nineteenth Century*, but (tho' I have just had proofs) not likely, I understand, till January or February.⁴²

I have not been well (as you know) and am on my way to a milder or rather less damp air than Scotland can provide at the wane of the year. I write this from London, where I arrived yesterday, and whence I go (to what destination is not yet fixt — I will let you know) probably on either Sunday or Monday morning.

In great haste, | Most Sincerely yours, | Fiona Macleod

P. S. I see your anthology is announced. I wish it a true success every way.

ALS National Library of Scotland

To George Russell (AE), October 20, 1900⁴³

20th October 1900

My dear Mr. Russell

I have been too unwell since I received your welcome note to attempt any correspondence, and now where of all places do you think I write to you — who dread and dislike it so — where but London! I am, however, only a bird of passage here. I arrived two days ago, have been resting, and leave England tomorrow. The sea and the sun are to heal me, so I am told. I think I hope so [sic]; though I seek a healing deeper than the one and beyond the other.

But I did not wish to leave without sending you this little word of thanks and of greeting before I left. Your spray from the sacred hill brought me not only a message from your inward self, but more than you could know perhaps. Some fallen link has been caught up through it — and, too, a truer understanding has come to me in one or two points where we have been at issue.

When in due course they appear (you know how uncertain as to date magazine-contributions are, even when proofs have been "passed") I

would like you to see my poetic play *The Immortal Hour* in a forthcoming "Fortnightly Review": and a forthcoming (December or January perhaps) article in "The Nineteenth Century" on "The Gael and his Heritage" dealing with the treasure-trove of the spiritual hymns and ancient lore in the Hebrides.⁴⁴

Before I left the isles I gathered a spray of fragrant lonroid (you call it bog-myrtle I think, or perhaps gale), of all wild growing things to me the nearest and dearest, and send it to you.⁴⁵

Your friend, | Fiona Macleod

P.S. I forgot to say that my letter-address till next Spring or Summer is that of my typist and agent; c/o Miss Lilian Rea, 2 Carlyle Square, Chelsea, London

ALS National Library of Scotland

To Grant Richards, October 20, 1900

c/o Miss Lilian Rea | 2 Carlyle Square | Chelsea | October 20, 1900

Dear Sir,

I write to you from London, and had it been practicable would have liked to explain orally what I must now communicate by pen. I am here only passing by, having arrived two days ago, rested, and am to leave England tomorrow for the fall of the year — probably for Tangier in the first instance.

Alas, I have had to relinquish much, and must meanwhile forego all my literary undertakings save what is all but done or awaits overworking or revision only. I have been seriously run down in health — and not only a southern air but as nearly as practicable absolute rest are imperatively prescribed for me. I have no option but to acquiesce. This, however, involves the relinquishment of all hopes to finish the anthology, *The Hour of Beauty*, by or before Christmas. Nor can I now attempt to work at it for several months to come: not till summer at earliest. It is only fair, therefore, first to let you know how matters stand; and, next, to give

you the option of now withdrawing from our agreement: (of course I reserve — as my own property — the title): or of letting the matter stand over indefinitely, till recovered health enables me to take up properly that which can be done only absolutely *con amore*, and with scrupulous judgment and care.⁴⁶

Having reluctantly written thus, may I now ask you if meanwhile, you would care to publish early next Spring a little volume of poetry? It would be called either *For a Little Clan* or else *The Immortal Hour* — the latter being the title of the greater part of the little book, a poetic old world drama, perhaps to be defined as “a symbolist drama” (though I dislike such designations) which is to appear in *The Fortnightly Review* either in November or December (or in both). The remainder of the book would consist of the few selected poems (all I care to preserve) from a volume of verse published some four or five years ago, *From the Hills of Dream*, with some new and uncollected poems.

I had half promised any such book elsewhere, but circumstances alter cases, and having meanwhile to disappoint you (and myself) about the anthology, I would be glad if you care for this other and feasible suggestion.

With you or any publisher I have one stipulation to make about it — namely its *format*. I want it to be a little book, and as nearly as practicable like one of the limp-leather or limp-cloth little volumes published by Mr. Dent, say his edition of Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*. If you agree, you would, I presume not object to advance me a small sum on the publication, say ten guineas — as in varying degree according to circumstances I always make an equivalent stipulation.

My address as above (that of my London typist and agent) will always speedily reach me.

Believe me, dear sir | Yours very truly, | Fiona Macleod

ALS Brown University Library

*To Grant Richards, October 31, 1900*⁴⁷

My dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your courteous letter. So be it: later I shall take up "The Hour of Beauty" to, I hope, our common advantage. I cannot *at present* send any "copy" for the volume of verse proposed: but may be able to do so from Marseille or Malta or Algiers (I do not know where yet) by the end of November. Meanwhile you can see the titular piece in *The Fortnightly* for November where it is *presumably* given complete, though possibly not.⁴⁸

Yours very truly | Fiona Macleod

ACS Private

*To R. Murray Gilchrist, [early November, 1900]*⁴⁹

My Dear Robert,

A little ago, on sitting down in my club to answer some urgent notes (and whence I now write) my heart leapt with pleasure, and an undeserving stranger received Part I of a beaming welcome — for the waiter announced that "Mr. Gilchrist would like to see you, Sir." Alas, it was no dear Peaklander, but only a confounded interviewer about the Stage Society! ...

Elizabeth and I leave England on the morning of the 12th — and go first to the South of Provence, near Marseilles: after Yule-tide we'll go on to Italy, perhaps first to Shelley's Spezzia or to Pegli of the Orange Groves near Genoa: and there we await you, or at furthest a little later, say in Florence. We shall be away till the end of March.

Meanwhile 'tis all unpleasantness and incertitude: much to do and little pleasure in the doing: a restlessness too great to be salved short of departure, and the longed for mental and nervous rest far away.

I have just returned from a flying visit to Dorset, and saw Thomas Hardy. He is well, and at work: the two happiest boons of fortune for all our kinship — and therein I hope you are at one with him. I wish you could run up and see our first Stage Society production this

weekend (Sunday) when we bring out a short play by Hardy⁵⁰ and R. L. Stevenson and Henley's "Macaire".⁵¹ (I resigned my Chairmanship but was re-elected: and so am extra busy before I go.)

Your loving friend, | Will

P.S. Miss Macleod's drama "The Immortal Hour" is in the November *Fortnightly*, also her article "The Gael and His Heritage" in the November *Nineteenth Century*.

And in addition to these a study on the Dramas of Gabriele d'Annunzio appeared in *The Fortnightly*, in September, signed "W. S."

Memoir, pp. 324–25

To Theodore Watts-Dunton, [November 12, 1900]

Poste Restante | Aix-en-Provence | France

My dear Watts-Dunton

Just a hurried line as about to leave. I return (with sincere thanks to you) Mr. Prothero's⁵² letter. I have heard from him too — a cordial letter, commissioning the Provençal article, & suggesting the possibility of the American one later.

I owe this to you, dear "Aylwin," & I am grateful.

By the time you get this, we shall be on our way to Provence.

Ever affectly yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Leeds, Brotherton Library

*To Dr. John Goodchild, November 15, 1900*⁵³

Nov. 15, 1900

Dear Dr. Goodchild,

I am glad that you have found pleasure in *The Immortal Hour*. I wonder if you interpret the myth of Midir and Etain quite differently, or if you, too, find in Midir the symbol of the voice of the other world; and what you think of Dalua, the Fool, here and elsewhere. Your earnest letter, written in spiritual comradeship, has been read by me again and again. I do not say that the warning in it is not justified, still less that it is not called for: but, on the other hand, I do not think I follow you aright. Is it something in *The Immortal Hour* (or in *The Divine Adventure* or more likely *The Dominion of Dreams*) that impelled you to write as you did: or something seemingly implied, or inferred by you? ...

We seldom know how or where we really stand, or the mien and aspect we unwittingly bear to the grave eyes of the gods. Is it the lust of knowledge, of Hidden Things, of the Delight of the World, of the magic of Mother-Earth, of the Flesh — to one or all — that you allude. The matter touches me intimately.

You have (I had almost said mysteriously, but why so, for it would be more mysterious if there were no secret help in spiritual comradeship) helped me at more than one juncture in my life...

Most sincerely, | Fiona Macleod

Memoir, pp. 318–19

To the Editor of The Topical Times, November 19, [1900]

Hotel Sextius | Aix-en-Provence | 19th November

Re: Censorship of Plays⁵⁴

Dear Sir,

Your communication has reached me in the South of France, hence my apparent delay in response. I cannot at present go into my reasons in detail, but I may say at once that I am absolutely opposed to an official censorship of plays. It seems to me the Civil Law can do, or be framed anew to do, all that is needful: namely, to interdict the further performance of any play which by its subject and treatment constitutes (1) *Lèse-Divinité* or (2) *Lèse-Décence*. If to this end, and in order to be effective and free from fussy abuse, the Law needs a censor to decide when it should be invoked, then let us have an official Censor but with functions limited solely to those (1) of an Arbiter in Appeal and (2) of a Public Prosecutor. Against any other Censor I am absolutely opposed, believing as I do that a Censor over dramatic composition is as incongruous as would be a Censor of Poetry, a Censor of Painting, a Censor of Sculpture, a Censor of Music, a Censor of Architecture. There exists already a well-understood collective Censorship — in England we name it often “Good Form” — which is, and I believe would continue to be, more effective than the Censorship of any one individual, however well-equipped with literary tastes, histrionic sympathies, cosmopolitan culture, and the obvious and necessary advantages of social position, he might be.

I speak of course for myself only, and not for my colleagues of the Stage Society, whose collective opinion, however, might be obtained at a later date.

I am, Sir, Yours faithfully | William Sharp |
Chairman of The Stage Society

ALS Theatre Museum, London

*To John Macleay, November 30, 1900*⁵⁵

Hotel Sextius | Aix-en-Provence | France |
Friday Evening | 30th November | 1900

Dear Mr. Macleay,

Your friendly note has reached me here, where I have been some time, this being my best centre in Provence at this season for my special studies in Provencal literature & history. My wife and I expect to remain here till about Christmas-time, & then to go on to Italy.

Pressure of urgent work — chiefly a lengthy volume of about 130,000 words on the evolution of the Fine Arts in the Nineteenth Century,⁵⁶ primarily for transatlantic publication — prevented my being much in Scotland this autumn. I was a brief while in Galloway visiting friends, & for a week or so at Portpatrick, and a few days in Edinburgh — c'est tout.

At one time there was a chance that I might be near Taynuilt, and I looked forward greatly to see Mr. Carmichael again. He is a splendid type of the true Highlander, and of a nature incomparably sweet and refined — & I have the greatest admiration of him in all ways. Mrs. Carmichael is a woman of fine character, too, and their daughter Ella has charm as well as character & intellect. A remarkable family, and I would to Heaven there were more such families in the Highlands now.

Yes, what a book *Carmina Gadelica* is!⁵⁷ It ought to become as precious to the Scottish Gael as the Greek Anthology to all who love the Hellenic ideal, but with a more poignant, a more personal appeal. I did the best I could to help it by presenting my early copy (subscribed for two or three years back) to Miss Macleod, after I had eagerly perused it from cover to cover, and persuading her to write publicly on it. I am glad you liked her article in the "Nineteenth Century," which seems to have attracted much attention.⁵⁸ Did you see the poetic drama, "The Immortal Hour," in the November "Fortnightly?" I am glad you are writing on "Carmina G." in the "Bookman" & "Good Words."

I can't tell you about Miss Macleod's historical romance for the good reason that I don't know anything about its present prospects myself. Personally I regret the long postponement, as I think (judging from what I have seen) that it would be a success as a romance of history.

Miss Macleod, however, became dissatisfied with what she had done, or its atmosphere, or both, and (I believe) has not touched it again for some months past — though the last time she spoke of the subject she said she hoped it would be ready by midsummer. I shall believe in its completion when I see it out!!

Ill-health, involving much absolute rest, and latterly change of climate, has prevented her doing all she had projected, but she has been & is writing, though leisurely and with great deliberation. In all probability she will spend the winter and early spring along the Mediterranean coasts. She wants much to go to Italy, but the doctors advised Egypt or Algeria, as drier & sunnier, & to vary this frequently with the sea she loves so well & which suits her splendidly. I saw her in Marseilles a week or two ago on her way south, and hope that, later, she may be able to pay at least a flying visit to Sicily (where later we hope to go) in February, as she will then be with yachting friends. It will depend on health and much else. I don't know where to address her at the moment (possibly now in Mustapha, near Algiers) — but in a few days shall be writing, & shall the forward your note. She will be very glad, I know, to hear about the *Highland News* (as I am) as well as about Mr. Carmichael's book. I do hope the H. N. may come under your control. It might be made the foremost literary and national representative of the North. If so, it w^d. be of signal importance to get some of A. C.'s⁵⁹ unpublished material.

You do not tell me of your literary work as distinct from your breadwinning work. I hope you will make time to fulfill the notable promise & accomplishment in what I have seen. What of your novel?

I am myself heavily engaged in work, including many commissions. I've finished an essay on "Impressionism" ("The Impressionist" I call it) for the forthcoming new monthly, "The New Liberal Review," & am now in the throes of a long "Quarterly" article.⁶⁰ Then I have a Provençal book on hand, and (interlusive) a Provençal romance.

You will, of course, keep all I have said of myself & doings, & still more importantly of Miss Macleod, to yourself. I don't think she wants anyone save friends & acquaintances to know that she is abroad, & for her health. And above all needing rest as she is, she dreads the slightest addition to a correspondence already beyond her capacities.

Before I left London I read with deep interest the opening installments of Neil Munro's new book *Doom Castle*.⁶¹ It promises, I think, to be his *chef-d'oeuvre*.

Write to me again soon, with news of your doings & prospects. My kind regards to your wife, though she does not know me — & my felicitations to you both on the safe advent of a young Highlander.

Yours sincerely, | William Sharp

ALS National Library of Scotland

To Mr. and Mrs. Coulson Kernahan, [December, 1900]

To Mr. and Mrs. Kernahan

With all good wishes and Xmas greetings to you both from Elizabeth and William Sharp, who leave Provence for Palermo on Xmas day.

ACS Princeton University

