

LIFE: 1887-88

In the spring of 1887, Sharp replaced his friend Eric Robertson as Editor of the “Literary Chair” in *The Young Folk’s Paper*, a widely-circulated weekly paper for boys. This appointment brought “steady work” and, according to EAS, “a reliable income, a condition of security hitherto unknown to us, which proved an excellent tonic to the delicate Editor” (*Memoir*, 127-28). Sharp’s job was to read, evaluate, and respond to “efforts in prose and verse of the Young Folk who wished to exercise their budding literary talents.” With the help of EAS, he printed the best pieces in the paper “prefaced by an article of criticism and instruction written.” Improved finances enabled the Sharps to move, at the close of 1887, from Talgarth Road in West Kensington to a larger house in South Hampstead where they were near their friends, the Cairds, and where “the air was purer and access to green fields easier.” This house, which the Sharps leased for three years, had a sunny study on the first floor so the “invalid” would not have to deal with stairs. Sharp’s health improved in the new location; EAS hoped “it would before many months be practically reestablished.”

The subject of Sharp’s health leads to his relationship with Hall Caine, chronicled in a group of letters from Sharp to Caine which have surfaced recently. In the years prior to his death, Rossetti welcomed first Caine and then Sharp into his circle, mentored them, and depended on them for companionship. When he died in 1882, both men embarked on a book that drew upon their personal relationship with the great man. Since Sharp’s letters to Caine were not available to EAS for the *Memoir* and since Caine is largely absent from that work, it has been assumed he and Sharp were estranged after Rossetti’s death. The letters show, on the contrary, that while there was a brief period of strain in the summer of 1882, Sharp cleared the air in a July 1892 letter which assured Caine the book he was writing for Macmillan was not a biography, such as Caine was writing, but a book that focused on Rossetti’s paintings and poems. With the breach healed, Sharp was soon confiding in Caine, to a far greater extent than with his other correspondents, about the true state of his health. On 15 June 1884, for example, while suffering intense fever and chills in a rented room, he asked Caine to put him up the next night since he had nowhere else to sleep. Having suffered that afternoon “a narrow escape from the rheumatic fever,” he told Caine: “Can’t say how thankful I am to have escaped this sharp and sudden attack, & there’s no saying what a second bout would do. Excuse a hideous scrawl, but my hands are so chilled and pained I can hardly hold the pen – have to write at a distance.”

In 1887, after more than a year of illness, Sharp sent Caine in September a frank and detailed statement about what it was like to live with angina pectoris: “The agony of it is sometimes too great for conscious endurance, and over one’s head always hangs the shadow

of sudden death. ... Sometimes I awake at night with the dull gripping pain which is ominous of attack, and as I lie by my sleeping wife I do not know if I shall ever see the morning's light. ... I betray nothing of all this to anyone. . . . And after all, my complaint may be kept in check: five, ten, even twenty years may yet be mine. ... You are the only one of my friends to whom I have written this – but you drew it from me by your brotherly sympathy.” Thus we have a glimpse of the pain and fear that gripped Sharp through most of 1886 and on into the fall of 1887. Indeed, the rest of his life was marked with the recognition that each day might be his last.

Despite the illness, Sharp continued to work and travel. In the Spring of 1887, after resting for a time at the Caird's country house in Hampshire, he and EAS went to Paris in early May to attend the salons and describe them in the *Glasgow Herald*. On April 28, before leaving for Paris, he asked Ford Madox Brown, who was in Manchester painting the Town Hall Frescos, if it would be convenient for him to stay with him on May 16 or 17. He planned to be in Manchester for the Exhibition. He also told Ford he had just finished what turned out to be a long and laudatory introduction to a volume of Phillip Marston's work called *For a Song's Sake* which was published by the Scott firm later in the year. Along with his articles and editorial work on *The Young Folk's Paper* and for the Walter Scott firm, Sharp's main endeavor of the year was a monograph on Shelley for Scott's *Great Writers Series*. He corresponded with Shelley experts, chief among them Edward Dowden and Richard Garnett, and devoted a great deal of effort to the book. EAS's description of her husband's choice of Shelley for his first Great Writer's book is telling in the light of the turn Sharp's life took in the 1890s. Shelley had been the inspiring genius of his youth, and “He was in sympathy with much of Shelley's thought: with his hatred of rigid conventionality, of the tyranny of social laws, with his antagonism to existing marriage and divorce laws, with his belief in the sanctity of passion when called forth by high and true emotion”(Memoir, 131). By mentioning these points in the context of the Shelley biography, EAS was preparing readers for the change that would come about in their lives in the following decade.

In the fall of 1887, in a letter to Chatto and Windus, Sharp said he would like that firm to publish a romance he was writing called *Sampriël*, after the heroine's name. The firm accepted the offer and published it in 1889 under the title *Children of Tomorrow*. The love affair at the center of that romance embodies many of the Shelleyan ideas enumerated by EAS and demonstrates they were much on her husband's mind as he worked on the book in late 1887. They were surely brought to the forefront by his work on the Shelley biography. They were also stimulated by his close friendship with EAS's girlhood friend and now their near neighbor, Mona Caird. Mrs. Caird was a strong and influential advocate of marriage reform; she championed that cause relentlessly in essays and novels. Sharp's letter to Chatto

in fall 1887 follows, he said, another letter in which he urged the publication of a work by Mrs. Caird.

Two letters to an unknown Mr. Clarke in December 1887 demonstrate the strength of his convictions regarding women's rights. He called the views of women in a poem Clarke had sent him "absolute lies and absurdities." In a second letter to Clarke, he affirmed the influence of Shelley as follows: "instead of my reverence for true womanhood falling off[,] it is yearly growing more strengthened, till now with Shelley it is one of my cardinal faiths – the equality of the sexes." Writing to Alfred Miles on December 31, 1887, he said he had just returned from the Isle of Wight where he had gone, he wrote to Le Gallienne in January, to recover from an inflammation of the lungs. Ill-health continued to dog him through 1887.

Sharp's health improved in 1888, and he was able to produce a great quantity of work. His third volume of poetry, *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*, was published by the Scott firm in the spring. The limited first edition sold quickly and received favorable notices. In the preface to this volume, Sharp said "a Romantic revival is imminent in our poetic literature, a true awakening of genuine romantic sentiment." Underlying this prediction was his hope that through this volume he would be recognized as a leader of the new movement. Though the volume contains better work than he had produced before and several poems that foreshadow the poems of Fiona Macleod, the volume did not have the broad impact Sharp anticipated or bring him the fame he sought.

In early 1888, Sharp wrote prefaces for a book of odes and for an anthology of American sonnets, both of which were issued in Scott's *Canterbury Series* for which Sharp served as General Editor. He contributed reviews and critical articles to several periodicals, among them the *Academy*, the *Athenaeum*, and the *Literary World*. During the summer he wrote a book-length study of Heine which appeared in Scott's Great Writers Series in the fall. In the spring, after settling into the house they called "Wescam" in South Hampstead, the Sharps initiated their Sunday evenings at home, which attracted many well known writers and artists. They were attended, according to EAS, by "all those with whom we were in sympathy," and the list of guests she provided in the *Memoir* constitutes an impressive cross section of London's literary elite. Through his editorial work and EAS's friends and connections, the Sharps positioned themselves at the center of London literary life. In mid-May, they spent a long weekend with George Meredith at Box Hill and, while there, called on the Grant Allens in Dorking. As the correspondence indicates, Sharp and Le Gallienne became closer fiends as the year proceeded. At Christmas the Sharps went to Tunbridge Wells to visit Mathilda Blind and stayed through to the New Year. The two years – 1887-88 – were marked by serious illness, hard work, close and caring friends, improved financial circumstances, and, finally, acceptance and respect within the London literary establishment.

LETTERS: 1887-1888

To J. Stanley Little, January 3, 1887

46, Talgarth Road, | West Kensington, | W. | 3:1:87

My dear Sir,

Herewith I enclose my cheque for one guinea -being my subscription to the “Shelley Socy” for 1887.

I am engaged on a volume on “Shelley” for the new series *Great Writers*¹ - so wd. be obliged if I could have the Socy publications now due *as soon as practicable*.

Yours faithfully, | William Sharp.

Jas. Stanley Little Esq. | Hon Secy

ALS Princeton

To J. Stanley Little [January ?, 1887]

46, Talgarth Road, | West Kensington. | W.

Dear Mr. Little,

I am much indebted to you for sending me your treatise on aspects of art.² I already knew it, and admire and agree with it heartily. You take the manly and honest, and as it seems to me, the only true view of art in its widest sense. Some of the chapters are particularly noteworthy. I trust the book has had a wide sale: the more widespread the influence of such teachings the better for all workers in Art, Poetry, and Fiction C in all the Arts: and for those to whom these workers appeal.

With thanks, and kind regards,

Yours very truly, | William Sharp

ALS Princeton

¹ *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Great Writers Series (London: Walter Scott, 1887).

² *What Is Art?* (1884).

To Richard Le Gallienne,³ [late February, 1887]

46, Talgarth Road. | West Kensington, | W.

My other vols (original I mean) are not easily procurable now, but if you have not seen my last vol. of poems (1884) – “Earth’s Voices - Sospitra - etc.” I should be glad to send a copy to so kindly and sympathetic a reader.

Believe me,

Yours very truly, | William Sharp.

P.S. I have just finished an article upon Rossetti for the March number of *The National Review*, in a footnote to which I have referred to poor Philip Marston’s death, and quoted Rossetti’s sonnet to him - which I see you know.⁴ I have forgotten to say that I am interested about your own poems. Are you going to publish in London? If so, you may have to come to town - pray come and see me, if you do.

ALS(fragment) University of Texas at Austin

To James Cotton,⁵ [Spring, 1887?]

Thursday

My dear Cotton,

My memory is so infernally bad just now - & I find I forgot two things when I saw you today. One was to give you a copy of the reissue of “Sonnets of This Century” in its cheap form. It is now thoroughly revised - & contains 12 sonnets not in other editions. In this - practically the ninth - I have put two of my own: I always refused to do so hitherto.

³ Richard Le Gallienne (1866-1947) was, along with Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Arthur Symonds, W.B. Yeats, and others, an original member of the Rhymers’ Club. He went to London in 1889 to act as literary secretary for Wilson Barrett, an actor-manager who wrote a successful play, *The Sign of the Cross*. He and Sharp became good friends. After several visits to America, he settled there in 1903. In 1927, he began to visit Paris for long periods of time and moved permanently to France in 1930. His early publications include *My Ladies’ Sonnets and Other “Vain and Amatorious” Verses, With Some of the Graver Mood* (1887) and *Volumes in Folio* (1889). See Richard Whittington-Egan and Geoffrey Smerdon’s *The Quest of the Golden Boy: The Life and Letters of Richard Le Gallienne* (1962).

⁴ ‘Rossetti in Prose and Verse,’ *National and English Review* (formerly *The National Review*), 9 (March 1887), pp. 111-24. Sharp’s footnote (pp. 122-123) reads as follows: “One of these [sonnets] may now be quoted with exceptional propriety. Since this article was written, Mr. Philip Bourke Marston - a well-known poet and Rossetti’s most ardent disciple - died suddenly, though after prolonged ill-health, at the early age of thirty-six. [Marston died on February 14, 1887.] As many will know, Mr. Marston was afflicted from childhood with blindness. Rossetti had for him a sincere regard: and in the collected works appears the following sonnet, which has hitherto been printed only in a critical biography of the older poet. The names of Mr. Marston’s three books of poetry are *Song-Tide*, *All-in-All*, and *Wind Voices*.” Sharp then reproduced Rossetti’s “To Philip Bourke Marston.”

⁵ Editor of the *Academy*.

And for half a dozen special friends I have had inserted as frontispiece a silhouette of myself done by my wife.

The other was to ask you if you would care to edit a vol. sometime in the *Canterbury Poets*? It does not pay when there is much trouble, but when it simply means a little arrangement (perhaps not even that) and a short introduction, it is sometimes worth while. As your tastes are scholarly it struck me that you might care to do a nominally classic vol. I think a reprint of Chapman's *Homer* would be interesting. What think you?

Before I saw you today I called on Marzials,⁶ prepared to throw up my book on Shelley: but he very kindly shifted it on till August.

Robertson saw my cousin⁷ in Bombay: he does not seem to have improved in health.

Yours ever | W.S.

ALS Huntington

To May Clarissa Gillington, [?Spring, 1887]

46, Talgarth Road, | West Kensington. W.

Dear Miss Gillington⁸

I am glad that I have been able to be of any encouragement and help to you.

Under the circumstances I think I may venture upon a certain explanation. Some months ago Mr. Eric S. Robertson - who was one of my chief friends - gave up the Literary Editorship of *Young Folks Paper* on his appointment as Professor of Literature at the University of the Punjab in northern India. At the time you receive this he will be lecturing to his students at Lahore!

On his resignation, the Editorship was offered to me by the Proprietor of the paper, and I accepted it. While Mr. Robertson was getting ready to start, your MS. vol came to him, and was by him passed on to me. At the time I did not know your work, and took the vol. indifferently - for I am afraid that having reviewed in our chief literary journals many scores of books has made me somewhat more callous than I used to be. The night before Mr. Robertson sailed I dined with him, and then told him that I had looked into your vol., & your

⁶ Sir Frank Thomas Marzials (1840-1912) succeeded Eric S. Robertson as editor of the Great Writers series for the Walter Scott firm. Marzials wrote the volumes on Dickens and Hugo and co-authored the volume on Thackeray (with Herman Charles Merivale). Robertson, mentioned in the next sentence, was a close friend of Sharp's. (See note to Sharp's letter to Hall Caine dated 15 June 1884.) He had recently gone to India to occupy a chair of Literature and Logic at the University of Lahore (*Memoir*, 127).

⁷ Identify.

⁸ May Clarissa Gillington's *Byron's Poems* was published by Elliot Stock in 1892. In addition to poetry, she wrote several books for children, as did her sister Alice E. Gillington.

poems in back nos. of the Y.F.P. and was really impressed by the genuine poetic impulse they betrayed - in fact, that I had a distinctly higher opinion than he himself had formulated.

Since then I have thought often of your work. Editorially I always strive to be absolutely just - as perhaps you have inferred! Although, comparatively speaking, a young man myself, it is now many years ago since I fairly made my debut in literature - and it is the memory of my own experiences which makes me glad to be of any assistance to those whom I consider to be *genuine* poets at the outset of their literary life.

I was in So. Hampstead the other day and thought of calling upon you to talk over your poems but found time press me too greatly to enable me to do so.

When you and your sister are next in town perhaps you will let me know (writing to me under my own name, & to my private address.)

Since you are so pleased at my having inserted a sonnet of yours in the latest edition of my "Sonnets of this Century"⁹. I think you will be gratified also at a letter you will likely receive ere long from my wife, who also is somewhat of a victim to *cacoethes scribendi*.

The more I think of it the more I am convinced of the advisability of your and your sister's bringing out a vol. of poems conjointly. I should like to talk the matter over with you before you "proceed to extremities". I am glad to hear that your sister is also a sea-painter. As an art-critic this interests me and I hope that some day I may encounter her work professionally.

There are good reasons why an Editor as far as possible preserves his "incognito", therefore kindly consider my confidence as strictly private, i.e. to go no further. Except when addressing me privately and to this address, I must remain the Editor of Young Folks Paper.

With sincere good wishes, | Yours most truly, | William Sharp

ALS Princeton

To Richard Garnett, [Spring, 1887]

Northbrook House | Micheldever | Hants

Dear Dr. Garnett

I was in town a day or two ago for a few hours, and among various letters & packets found your "Carlyle"¹⁰ which you so kindly sent. I am looking forward to reading it

⁹*Sonnets of This Century*, edited and arranged with a critical introduction on the sonnet by William Sharp (London: Walter Scott, 1886). Two more editions of this successful anthology appeared in 1886 and a fourth in 1887. The fourth edition included a sonnet by May Gillington with the following note by Sharp: "A Miss Gillington has written and published some poetry of very considerable promise, for the most part as yet marked by a certain immaturity. A passion for the sea is manifest throughout her verse" (p. 289).

¹⁰ Richard Garnett, *Carlyle*, Great Writers series (London: Walter Scott, 1887).

tomorrow. As I had already ordered a copy, I gave the one you sent into the hands of my wife - as from you - knowing how much she would value it. From a hasty dipping into the book it looks most entertaining, and satisfactory to the Carlylean. But I shall let you know again what my impressions are. I suppose you received the copy of *Sea Music*¹¹ which Mrs. Sharp sent to you? I liked all of yours therein, but especially the very beautiful "When shall we cross the sandy bar?" - which, if I am not mistaken, was published in your poems.¹²

Hoping you and yours are well

Sincerely yours | William Sharp

Shelley¹³ is almost out of my hands.

ALS University of Texas at Austin

To Ford Madox Brown, [April 28, 1887]

46, Talgarth Road | West Kensington | W.

Dear Mr. Madox Brown

You were so good last year as to ask me to stop a night with you if I were in your neighbourhood. I intend to be in Manchester for a day or a night about the 16th or 17th of May - for the Exhibition - and it wd be so very pleasant [for] me to pay you a visit if it were convenient for you.

My wife and I go over to Paris (for the *Salon*) on Saturday morning, and we shall not return till about the 14th.

Hoping you are well and that your work at the Manchester Town Hall Frescoes is progressing satisfactorily.

Sincerely yours | William Sharp

P.S. I have just finished the memoir of poor Philip Marston to precede his forthcoming volume of stories.¹⁴

Transcript of ALS sold by Sotheby's on December 18, 1995. Perhaps bound for the Victoria and Albert Museum.

¹¹ An anthology of poems about the sea arranged by Elizabeth A. Sharp for the Canterbury Poets series (London: Walter Scott, 1887).

¹² The reference here is to Garnett's *Io in Egypt and Other Poems*, which was published in 1859. It was revised with additions and published as *Poems* in 1893.

¹³ Sharp's *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* was published as number 11 in the Great Writers Series (London: Walter Scott) in the autumn of 1887.

¹⁴ Philip Bourke Marston - the blind poet, protégé of Rossetti, and close friend of Sharp - died after a prolonged illness on February 14, 1887. He was thirty-six years old. Sharp wrote a laudatory and moving memoir as the introduction for a collection of Marston's works which Sharp prepared for publication by the Walter Scott firm under the title *For a Song's Sake*.

To Edward Dowden, [June 7, 1887]¹⁵

46 Talgarth Road | West Kensington | London. | W.¹⁶

My dear Dowden

Just a line to let you know how greatly one of your readers has enjoyed your most able and brilliant article in the current "Fortnightly" - the best article of the kind which I ever remember to have read.¹⁷ It has been much admired by others also, I can assure you from my own knowledge. What pleases me most is its broad outlook - its wide survey - no mere platitudes of generalization, but the genuine all-embracingness of fine vision. But I am also delighted with its moderation, tolerance, wide sympathy, and high tone. Even an editor can wax enthusiastic over it (or one practically an editor) for Verschoyle¹⁸ was speaking to me about it the other day in no measured terms.

I hope you are to be in London this summer. Did you ever meet a Mr. Silsbee?¹⁹ I had a long talk with him at his rooms the other day. He has resided for some years with Claire Clairmont - & has several Shelley MSS. He told me several unpublished stories about Shelley. I wonder if Claire Clairmont's statements are quite reliable.²⁰

Hoping you are well, and writing some poetry (which, though I admire all you have written, is the *foremost* thing)

Sincerely yours | William Sharp

¹⁵ Date from postmark.

¹⁶ Printed on stationary and crossed out: New Athenaeum Club, | 26, Suffolk Street, | Pall Mall.

¹⁷ [Identify article]

¹⁸ [Identify]

¹⁹ Edward Silsbee was a sea captain from Massachusetts and an admirer of Shelley's poetry. "Many acquaintances called him 'Shelley mad' . . . Richard Garnett, however, considered this maritime eccentric the best critic of Shelley he had heard" (Robert Gittings & Jo Manton, *Claire Clairmont and the Shelleys 1798-1879*, New York: Oxford U. Press, 1992, p. 235). Silsbee visited Claire Clairmont (see following note) in Italy in 1872 determined to gain access to her Shelley papers. Unable to purchase them, he moved into her apartment to read and study them. His efforts to obtain the papers, and the determination of Clairmont's niece, Paula, to marry Silsbee were described to Henry James by Eugene Lee-Hamilton. James drew upon the incident for his novella *The Aspern Papers* (1888) (Gittings, p. 236).

²⁰ Clara Mary Jane Clairmont (1798-1879), who called herself Claire, was a step-daughter of William Godwin and step-sister of Mary Godwin. When Shelley and Mary Godwin eloped, Claire accompanied them to the continent and remained with them throughout their excursion. That brought her in contact with Byron, of course, and their relationship produced a daughter, Allegra (1817-1822), who died of typhus after Byron assumed responsibility for her and placed her in a convent school. Clairmont traveled widely in Europe and became fluent in five languages. She lived in Russia, Germany, and France, before settling in Florence in 1870. She contemplated writing a book to illustrate, from the lives of Shelley and Byron, the dangers and evils resulting from erroneous opinions on the subject of the relations between the sexes. (*DNB*)

P.S. I sent you a copy - a fortnight ago - of poor Philip Marston's posthumous vol, with my Memoir of him: which I hope duly reached you.²¹

They say that only ladies go in for PSS, but I find I must add another: - I had a letter some time ago from an unknown correspondent about my "Sonnets of This Century" wherein she mentioned that she had been so much struck by your sonnets, theretofore unknown to her, that she had purchased your "Poems."

W.S.

ALS TCD

To Louise Chandler Moulton,²² [?July 3, 1887²³]

Sorry to have had to leave your charming "afternoon" so abruptly today. I will explain to you *how* imperative the reason was, another day. If I had stayed, I wd. have had to have been rude (unavoidably) & this I wished to avert.

You were looking "blooming". I am glad to see you so well. The "Song's Sake"²⁴ is going well (Roberts Bros. have sent a preliminary order for 250) but, the publisher tells me, almost solely on a/c of the Memoria. The stories have not taken very well, as yet. Reviews all very flattering: one just to hand says P.²⁵ was at least fortunate in death in having such a biographer. I'm so glad.

W.S.

ACS Louise Chandler Moulton Collection, Library of Congress

To Edward Dowden, [? August, 1887]

16 Rosslyn Terrace | Kelvinside | Glasgow²⁶

Dear Mr. Dowden

Thanks for your note, forwarded to me from London to above address (good, for letters, throughout Augt. & Sept?).

²¹ See note to Sharp's April 28 letter to Ford Maddox Brown.

²² Ellen Louise Chandler Moulton (1835-1908), a writer of poetry, fiction, and children's stories, was married to the journalist and publisher William U. Moulton (d. 1898) who was also the editor of a weekly paper in Boston. She was prominent in literary and cultural circles in Boston where she lived and in Europe where she spent many summers. Her works include *Juno Clifford* (1855), *Bed-Time Stories* (1873), *Poems* (1877), *Swallow Flights* (1878), *Miss Eyre from Boston, and Others* (1889), and *At the Wind's Will* (1899).

²³ Tentative date from blurred postmark.

²⁴ See note to Sharp's April 28 letter to Ford Maddox Brown.

²⁵ Philip Marston.

²⁶ "Obertoun, | Dumbartonshire" is printed on the stationary and crossed out.

I should be very glad to have the loan of Tyler's unpublished Essay as you kindly offer - if you care to entrust it to me and to risk postal mischances.²⁷

No, thank the Gods, whatever my demerits I have not yet died - only succumbed to a different kind of 'fatal dart': but I shd. much rather have died than have written the volume to which you refer, by someone of the same name whom oblivion hath mightily overtaken.

If you can spare time I shd. be most glad to hear from you again, but dont want to be a nuisance.

In extreme haste | Sincerely yours | William Sharp

ALS TCD.

To Hall Caine, September 1, 1887

St. Margaret's | *North Queensferry* | *Fife* | N.B. | 1:9:87

My dear Caine

I was very pleased to receive your sympathetic letter. I think you are the only one of my friends who has recognised what a secret enemy my ill-health is. I look so robust, and (often at a great effort) try to be cheerful and sanguine that many think I have little to complain of. *You*, however, realise something of what I have really to endure. There are perhaps few people who know what "angina pectoris" really is, though "snake in the breast" gives them some idea it is not pleasant. If from hereditary taint it sometimes attacks the most robust natures, & is then deadliest. The agony of it is sometimes too great for conscious endurance, and over one's head always hangs the shadow of sudden death. The doctor has warned me it may come at any moment; I may stoop too suddenly, may fall, may receive startling news - anything of the kind may bring about instant death. This, added to the precariousness of the literary life and its incessant hard work, gives me many a dark hour. Sometimes I awake at night with the dull gripping pain which is ominous of attack, and as I lie by my sleeping wife I do not know if I shall ever see the morning's light. Then I think of the hard struggle of life, and what my death would mean to my wife, and - well, I needn't dilate on the subject.

But partly because it is my natural bias and in great part because I have trained myself to this kind of self-control, I betray nothing of all this to any one. The other day a friend remarked to my wife that I was looking so well and was so cheerful & confident that I must surely be exceptionally well - and yet this was shortly after an attack so violent and dreadful that it was sometime before I came round. If, however, I did not keep this 'brave front'

²⁷ Essay on Shelley by _____ Tyler. [Identify in Shelley bibliography.]

before the world, I would give way to the shadow that dogs me always. I *never* allow it to overcome me: if it be too appellant I face it and as it were frown it down. I have no fear of death, which the soul in me knows to be but the gate of life. The world is so very beautiful, and full of such transcendent hints of the divine, that death should be as welcome to all as the first breath of summer to the hillslopes and meadows. Yet oh I do cling to life too! There is so much I want to do, so many dreams which I would fain should not all pass oblivion ward unaccomplished.

And after all, my complaint may be kept in check: five, ten, even twenty years *may* yet be mine. The doctors are very hopeful that my almost phenomenal vitality and recuperative power may enable [me] to triumph over my insidious enemy.

You are the only one of my friends to whom I have written this - but you drew it from me by your brotherly sympathy. And now having read my words destroy and forget them. I do not complain, and would fain not be thought one of those who wail against inevitable laws. The gods have given me so much in my life, that if I were not brave & hopeful under my petty troubles I would be very poor stuff indeed.

After two or three happy days in the Border country (close to Abbotsford) I am now at one of the loveliest estates in eastern Scotland. The grounds are wild & beautiful, and the views oversea and land are divine. I have been in a strong mental and spiritual ferment lately, and I think I shall speedily write something I have long had in my mind.

Please do as you suggest about Appleton's. Their reprints are to be better than ever, and, as you know, they were at all times better than Harpers'. I can pretty safely give you the assurance up to *at least* £15. (Harper's only give from £8 - to £10). Please tell Leng[?] & Co. you are dealing direct, and kindly send me the "copy" at your early convenience (no pressing hurry) of course. The interest grows keener & keener. It is a *great* romance, I believe - a book it will be impossible to overlook.²⁸ Every word seems to have come through the crucible of pure emotion: higher praise I could not give.

Ever | dear friend | Sincerely yours | William Sharp

PS I shall be here till Wedny or Thursday next - thereafter for two or three weeks, at least, my letter address will be Glen Cottage | Murrayfield | *Edinburgh*

ALS Manx Museum, Isle of Man.

²⁸ Caine's *The Deemster: A Romance in Three Volumes* was published by Chatto and Windus in London in November 1887. This book was very successful in English (52 editions by 1921), and it was translated into nine foreign languages. Sharp is proposing the sheets be sold to Appleton's, for whom Sharp served as an agent in these matters, and published simultaneously in the United States in order to establish U.S. copyright.

To J. Stanley Little, [mid-October?, 1887]

Monday Afternoon

Dear Mr. Little

Thanks for yr Card. I sent you a line yesterday to yr Forest Hill address.

By the by, is the *Epipsychidion* reprint out?²⁹ In sending back the proofs of the Shelley bibliography to the compiler, I told him not to include the “*Epipsychidion*” unless he knew it to be out. Yet here it is, and in 1886! As I have never recd any copy, there must be a misunderstanding somewhere.

I regret that my incessant and overwhelming work forces me to decline any promise as to a Shelley paper for 1887-1888. If you are a busier man than I am - well, I pity you! I seldom work for less than 10 hours a day, sometimes for 12 and even 14 - i.e. at fiction, criticism literary and artistic, general literary work, and editorial.

In great haste and with best regards,

William Sharp

ALS Princeton

To J. Stanley Little, October 27, 1887

46 Talgarth Road | West Kensington | W. | 27:10:87

My dear Mr. Little,

It is very kind of you to suggest that I should use your Hogarth ticket, but I can only consent to do so on the distinct understanding that you really do not wish to utilise it yourself.

I know your brother's work very slightly, and do not think that I have ever noticed it journalistically - and I should certainly much like to see his portrait of Haggard.³⁰ But just do as you feel inclined; for I could doubtless obtain a ticket otherwise

Hoping your indisposition is of a slight and transitory nature, I am,

Yours Sincerely, | William Sharp

P.S. I wanted to send a copy of my just-issued Shelley to the Secy of the Socy, but as I had mislaid the new address and as G. White³¹ could give me no other than your present one, I took the liberty of directing the publisher to send a copy there.

²⁹ *Epipsychidion*, ed. by S. A. Brooke, A. C. Swinburne and R. A. Potts, was published by the Shelley Society in 1887. The bibliography in Sharp's biography of Shelley published in the fall of 1887, gives a date of 1886 for this work.

³⁰ George Leon Little (1862-1941) was a landscape and portrait painter and the brother of J. S. Little. He painted the portrait of Ryder Haggard in 1886.

³¹ Probably Joseph William Gleeson White (1851-1898) who edited *Ballads and Rondeaux; Chants Royal;*

To J. Stanley Little, [October 31, 1887]

New Athenaeum Club, | 26, Suffolk Street, | Pall Mall.

My dear Mr. Little

I was not fortunate enough to encounter your brother last night at the Hogarth, but enjoyed seeing his portrait-picture, which seemed to me very good indeed,

Some day, when in the neighbourhood of Portugal St., I hope to look you up.

Hoping you are having a pleasant stay in Surrey,

In haste,

Sincerely Yours, | William Sharp

To Hall Caine, [Fall, 1887]

46, Talgarth Road, | West Kensington. | W.

My dear Caine

I was unable to go to the theatre last night, but my wife went for me. She is a good substitute, as she is well qualified for that kind of work.

Herewith I enclose her brief report.

I have taken a most delightful house in Goldhurst Terrace, at South Hampstead (Finchley Rd. Station), & we move in at Xmas-tide. If you are coming to this part of the world do come to So. Hampstead. You can get really delightful houses, on short leases too, from ,50.³² It would be delightful to be near neighbors. It is well sheltered from fog & east wind - is otherwise healthy - & is not inconvenient. Try & come.

I have rapidly run thro' the *Athenaeum* review of Austin. It seems to me very acute, and, I must say, just. But I'm going to read it properly tomorrow.³³

I am very curious to know what you will think of the notice of the *Deemster*³⁴ in same issue. Meanwhile "I reserve my own opinion."

Sestinas; Villanelles; Etc. for Walter Scott (Canterbury Poets) in 1887 and *Book-Song: An Anthology of Poems from Books of Modern Authors* for Elliot Stock in 1893. In 1896 and 1897 he served with C. H. Shannon as editor of *The Pageant*.

³² Next to this paragraph, Sharp wrote in the margin: "Our house, larger & better than the one at West Kensington, is only £60."

³³ Must be a Caine review of Alfred Austin's *Poetry* in *Athenaeum* of 1887. Date of review will help date letter more precisely.

Thanks for all your kind expressions, my dear fellow, & believe me ever,

Affectly yours | William Sharp

I am going to speak as much as possible to the numerous people I meet, abt. the “Deemster” so as to make them ask at Mudies’.

ALS Manx Museum, Isle of Man.

To [Richard Garnett], [Fall? 1887]

Wescam | Goldhurst Terrace. | S.H. N.W.

Cher Ami

I have finished your Emerson.³⁵ I think it is a most able piece of work - quite the best study extant of the man and his work. Greatly as I like the Carlyle I think that on the whole I consider the Emerson finer. I agree almost *in toto* with what you say about his philosophy – altho’ on some minor points I differ from your estimate of some of the poems. I think your remarks on the Essays on History and Art are particularly to the point.

As for the charming close, I can call to mind nothing more delightful. How I envy you those last two sentences. Happy man, that your “Exhibit” be of such haunting, unforgettable kind.

Ever cordially yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

To Edward Dowden, November 14, 1887

46, Talgarth Road, | West Kensington. | W. | 14:11:87

My dear Dowden

Have you made any arrangements for the American public’n of your “*Victorian Literature: and Other Essays*.”³⁶ And are you free to do so?

If so, if you could let me have advance sheets, possibly Appleton & C! - for whom I have agreed to act (when it suits me!) as literary agent in this country - [will] reprint the book - thus saving it from the pirates and putting a small sum in your pockets.

³⁴ Caine’s popular novel *The Deemster* (see note to Sharp’s 1 September 1887 letter to Caine) was christened by *Punch* “The Boomster,” and that name came to be applied also to its author as his fame grew, fed in part by his talent for self-publicity [Viven Allen, *Hall Caine*, Sheffield: Sheffield, 1997, p. 188]. *The Deemster* was successfully adapted to the stage in 1888, where it was titled *Ben-my-Chree*, and the play was revived several times over the next twenty years.

³⁵ Richard Garnett’s *Emerson* and *Carlyle* were both published in 1887 in London by Walter Scott as volumes in the Great Writers series.

³⁶ Bibliog reference? Was it published by Appleton in US? See Dowden Biog and Biblio.

I hope you duly received the copy of my “Shelley” which I sent to you over three weeks ago: also that the “note” (the nearest to a dedication I was allowed) pleased you.

Sincerely yours | William Sharp

Have just issued a 3 vol novel *The Sport of Chance*³⁷ written 3 or 4 years ago, & been running serially.

ALS TCD.

To _____ Clarke,³⁸ [December 19, 1887]

Monday

My dear Clarke,

I have read your poem. It is damned rubbish.

Yrs faithfully | William Sharp

P.S. Of course you will understand by “damned rubbish” I mean the statements you put forward. After making all due allowance for cant that is often talked about women, purity, & so on - the statements you make are absolute lies and absurdities.

Of course it wd. not be yours if it were not well put together, but this makes it all the worse. I trust you’re not going to insert it in yr. book. It is a clever firework, mon cher ami, - nothing else - save that it might fall on some fool’s head and make him sillier than before.

W.S.

N.B. This is not a poem you can disavow by saying it is from another point of view, not necessarily yr. own opinion, etc.- hence the foregoing.

ALS American Antiquarian Society

To _____ Clarke, December 20, 1887

The Fine Art Society | (Limd.) | 20:12:87

My dear Clarke,

Glad to find you were not offended by the somewhat blunt expression of my sentiments.

Of course, I know well (indeed, one unfortunately can’t go through the world without knowing) that your strictures are often deserved - but when I said your statements were

³⁷ This novel was published by Hurst and Blackett, Ltd in late 1887 or early 1888 after running serially in *The People’s Friend* (in Dundee) under the title *A Deathless Hate*. The dedication to the three volume set: To | Theodore Watts | Poet-Romanticist-Critic | These Pages | are | Affectionately Inscribed.

³⁸ [Identify.]

absolute lies and absurdities I meant only as applicable to womankind in general. In one sense, therefore, I withdraw the term absolute. Only when I speak or think of womankind I do not think of prostitutes or fools, any more than when speaking of our noble English Literature I think of Ernest Wildings or the "authors" who hatch their filth in Holywell St. It is for this reason I don't think your verses justifiable - they apply only to a very small and worthless portion of womankind and not to womankind in general. It would not be a bit more absurd to say that all men are without reasoning powers, because in your or my or anyone's experience all the men who had come into contact with us seemed devoid of mind.

If I had seen the poem at yr. diggings, I should simply have dissented from it, at the same time being amused & taken with its point of forcibleness - for then I should simply have looked at it as written from momentary spleen, or as a clever jeu d'esprit. But printed and circulated lines are a different thing altogether.

If they really represent your opinions I am honestly sorry - for I like you personally and think highly of your powers - but I could not disguise from myself the *impossibility* of any man rising to lasting worthy reputation who kept insistently to such necessarily degrading and "un-man-ning" a belief.

If in the meantime you really hold to them I believe & hope you will in time come to a somewhat truer and higher belief in your fellow creatures. You must have had an exceptionally unfortunate experience: *possibly*, I have had the reverse: but from experience alone I can flatly deny yr. statements as *general* statements.

I am no longer at the age, you know, where every young woman seems an angel of innocence and ignorance, nor when love or passion blinds the eyes to visible defects, yet instead of my reverence for *true womanhood* falling off it is yearly growing more strengthened, till now with Shelley it is one of my cardinal faiths - the equality of the sexes. In the past I prefer to be, however humbly, in the company of Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats - and in the present with Tennyson, Browning, and Rossetti - than with the Wycherleys and Congreves, the Rochesters and Sedleys, or the luscious-and-lust poeticules and the Swinburnes.

If Browning and Rossetti & Victor Hugo had had the same views on women as Swinburne, they might still have been greater - but not so immeasurably so as they are.

If I did not think well of you & your powers I should not give the matter a second thought - leaving both author and verses to well merited damnation: - as it is I do hope you won't be so rash as to publish them in yr. book.

In haste | Yrs ever sincerely | William Sharp

To Alfred H. Miles,³⁹ December 31, 1887

Wescam | 17a Goldhurst Terrace | South Hampstead | N.W. | 31/12/87

My dear Sir

On my return from the Isle of Wight I find your letter awaiting me. I have known for some time about your forthcoming book - in fact, I have on one or two occasions acted as literary judge as to the selections.

I am of course complimented that you should wish to include anything of my verse: and since you do me the courtesy of permitting me to indicate my own preferences I shall be pleased to name a few poems for you to select from.

I think the best (all round) selection that has been made from my writings is in the latest volume of Mr. D. H. Edwards' "Modern Scottish Poets"⁴⁰ - I forget whether the 9th or 10th, but the same vol as that in which Robt. Louis Stevenson, Wm. Black, & others appear.

I am at present staying with friends while "house-moving" (the address I have given is that of my new residence) and have none of my books within reach. Tomorrow I go to Essex (The Mill House, Felstead, Essex) for a week or ten days, and on my return to my new house would be pleased to see you there at any time. In any case I shall ask your acceptance of my second book of verse (the first, *The Human Inheritance*, was sold out some four years ago) - but if you wish to select *at once* I will direct a copy to be sent to you. Otherwise I shall wait till you find it convenient to call - best by appointment.

Yours very truly | William Sharp

Alfred H. Miles Esq

ALS University of British Columbia

To _____, [? early 1888]

Wescam | 17a Goldhurst Terrace | So. Hampstead | NW | Sunday

My dear Sir,

I shall be glad to make your personal acquaintance. But I never am at "Warwick Lane" which is only an agency and not an editorial or managerial office save when Mr. Scott's manager chances to be in town.

³⁹ Alfred H. Miles (1848-1929) compiled and edited *Poets and Poetry of the Century*, nine volumes of which were published by Hutchinson between 1891 and 1894. Several were reprinted in later years.

⁴⁰ [Identify]

I am dining out tomorrow (Monday) evening - but would be pleased to see you in the afternoon, anytime between 3 o'clock and 5:30, or up to 6. This is the only opportunity, I fear. I am always at work in my study in the mornings. If, however, you are to be in town on Tuesday, I could arrange to meet you at my club, as above, around 4:30. At least, I *think* I could, tho' I cannot say yet, definitely.

But it wd. be more convenient if you could come out to So. Hampstead tomorrow: that is, if it be not too far for you to come.

If you come from London itself come by *Metropolitan Ry* (via Baker St) to "*Finchley Rd., So. Hampstead.*" Goldhurst Terrace is 3 minutes walk from the station. If you come from Holloway your quickest way, I fancy, would be by NorthWestern Ry to *Loud[?] Rd.*, which is about 5 minutes from us in another direction - or if the L.&N.W. Ry is not available, then by the North London Ry via Kentish Town etc. to *Finchley Road*. This is the first station beyond "Hampstead", on the North London or Midland, and is about 4 minutes further west than the Metropolitan Finchley Rd..

Yours faithfully | William Sharp

ALS Fales Library, New York University

To Richard Le Gallienne, [late January?, 1888]

Wescam. | 17A Goldhurst Terrace | South Hampstead | N.W.

Dear Mr. Le Gallienne

I am ashamed to have so long kept you waiting for an answer - but the truth is that all of my correspondence is so hopelessly in arrears that I expect weeks must elapse ere in my brief leisure moments I shall be able to materially reduce its appalling bulk.

I have long - how long I dread to think - owed you a letter about your charming volume of poems,⁴¹ but alas, have never yet done what should have been a pleasant duty. As regards the Canterbury application, my excuses are illness, absence from town, and house moving. In the early winter I got inflammation of the lungs & had to knock off work & go to the Isle of Wight: since Xmas we have been house-moving⁴² - an experience more dire than ever befell Ulysses in all his wanderings.

⁴¹ Probably Le Gallienne's *My Ladies' Sonnets and Other "Vain and Amatorious" Verses, with Some of Graver Mood* (Liverpool: privately printed, 1887).

⁴² Although Mrs. Sharp states that they took the house at 17a Goldhurst Terrace in the spring of 1887 (*Memoir* 141), this letter and Sharp's use of the Talgarth address in October, 1887 indicate the move did not take place until December 1887.

I regret that I find myself unable to entertain your friend's proposal: pray assure him of my regret when giving my thanks for the offer.

As for your own proposal I have to say what amounts to the same thing – tho' with the addition that *ultimately* it is possible I might be able to commission the volume. Meanwhile the publisher wishes me to make no more arrangements, as we have already enough on hand to keep the series going for two years.⁴³

Is there any chance of your being in London this half-year? If so, I trust to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance in person. The above is my new address - and here you are likely to find me anytime till the end of July - save the first fortnight of May, when my artwork calls me to Paris.

With best wishes | Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

*To the Editor of the New York Independent,*⁴⁴ [January or February, 1888]

Wescam | Goldhurst Terrace | *South Hampstead* | London | N.W.

Dear Sir

Could you undertake a serial that has already begun to appear in an English periodical? My Romance of Adventure, entitled "*The Secret of the Seven Fountains*" commenced in the Xmas number of *Young Folks Paper*,⁴⁵ and will conclude about the end or middle of April. (34 Chapters)

It has, so far, I am told, proved a great success. It is a story of exciting adventure, for the first half laid in the little known Fen Lands of East Anglia, and thereafter in Turkey and the Danubian principalities. The central motive is a clue to immense treasure - the clue being the Secret of the Seven Fountains. The interest is continuous and cumulative, and the mystery is preserved to the concluding chapter.

Again, do you ever reprint stories that are unknown in America? Last year I wrote serially an historical romance dealing with the discovery of the Pacific⁴⁶: and the previous year a boy's romance entitled "The Great Pearl" (Jack Noel's Legacy)⁴⁷ which took so well

⁴³ One hundred and four volumes appeared in the Canterbury Poets series between 1884 and 1922. Sharp became general editor of the series in 1885 and served until the early 1900s.

⁴⁴ [Identify]

⁴⁵ Vol. XXIII, 943-59.

⁴⁶ *Under the Banner of St. James: A Romance of the Discovery of the Pacific*. (London: James Henderson and Sons, Ltd, 1887). Published serially in *Young Folks Paper* (XXI. 891-907) in 1887.

⁴⁷ *Jack Noel's Legacy: A Story for Boys*. (London: James Henderson and Sons, Ltd, 1887). Published serially

that the publisher paid me a considerable amount over the very fair sum originally arranged. Would it be any use sending either of these to you for publication?

Again, would you care for any regular literary letter (or London correspondences) from me, if your present arrangements do not preclude any such agreement? I am the London correspondent of one of the chief Scottish papers - on the staff of *The Academy*, *Athenaeum*, *Scot's Observer*, etc. etc. and have, I may add, quite exceptional facilities.

Believe me | Yours faithfully | William Sharp
Author of "The Sport of Chance" (3 vols) "A Venetian Idyl" etc. etc. "Life of Heine", "Biography of Shelley" (Great Writers) "Rossetti: A Record and a Study", "The Human Inheritance: and Other Poems", "Earth's Voices: Sospitra: Transcripts from Nature": "Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy": "A Memoir of Philip Bourke Marston": etc. etc. and Editor of "*Sonnets of this Century*" etc - General Editor "The Canterbury Poets" - etc.

The Editor | *The New York Independent*

ALS Pierpont Morgan

To _____ Anderson of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution,⁴⁸ February 10, 1888

Wescam. | 17A. Goldhurst Terrace | South Hampstead. | N.W.

Dear Mr. Anderson,

If there are any vacancies on next winter's lectures-list, do you fancy the Committee would care to have a lecture by me?⁴⁹ If so, I may add that it would have to be before or about Xmas - as I intend to accept the invitation to lecture in New York, Boston, etc. early in 1889. The lectures I would prefer to deliver in Edinburgh (unread elsewhere) would be: -

(1) *Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Painter and Poet* (or, more explicitly, "*Rossetti's personality as displayed in his Poems and Pictures*")

(2) *The Great Russian Novelists* Nikolai Gogol - Count Tolstoi - Ivan Turgéniev - and F. Dostoëvsky.

With best wishes for your health and welfare throughout the year that is still "new" -

Yours sincerely | William Sharp

ALS by courtesy of the Edinburgh City Libraries

in *Young Folks Paper* in 1886.

⁴⁸ Perhaps John Anderson (1833-1900), a scientist who resided in Edinburgh.

⁴⁹ This request must have been turned down as there is no record of Sharp having given the proposed lectures.

To Richard Le Gallienne, [early May, 1888⁵⁰]

Wescam. | 17A Goldhurst Terrace, | South Hampstead. | N.W.

Dear Mr. Le Gallienne

After over 48 sleepless hours of work, travel, and work again (for I have only this morning returned from Paris) I find your letter among a host of others awaiting attention.

Herewith I send “Wind-Voices”⁵¹ which please return when done with, as it was given me by P. B. M. himself and I do not wish to lose it. I am glad you are to notice the Poems in the *Academy*, for I know you appreciate P. B. M.’s poetry.⁵²

My forthcoming booklet⁵³ is but a tiny affair - though of condensed romanticism, I hope and venture to believe. You shall have a copy when it *does* appear. Probably 10 days, or *perhaps* less, hence.

I am very pleased to hear that you are to be in town in June. Let me know a week or more beforehand if possible, as my time is always difficult to arrange. As a rule I am always engaged Wedys and Sunday evenings. We must have a dinner & chat, if you are to be in town for any length of time.

Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

To Frederick Shields, [early May, 1888⁵⁴]

Wescam. | 17A. Goldhurst Terrace. | South Hampstead. | N.W.

My dear Shields

I have just returned from Paris where I have been “doing” the Salon. It is, I fear, the resort of the evil rather than of the good spirits of art.

Sir Noel’s⁵⁵ son never answered a letter of mine of a fortnight or so ago - so I presume is away somewhere.

⁵⁰ This letter was probably written after Sharp’s return from reviewing the Paris Salon in April.

⁵¹ Philip Bourke Marston’s *Wind-Voices*, published by Stock in 1884.

⁵² Le Gallienne’s review of Philip Bourke Marston’s *Song-Tides: Poems and Lyrics of Love’s Joy and Sorrow*, edited with an introductory memoir by William Sharp (London: Walter Scott, 1888) appeared in the *Academy*, 33 (May 19, 1888), 337-338.

⁵³ Sharp’s *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* was published in the spring of 1888.

⁵⁴ The Sharps lived at Wescam from late 1888 to Summer, 1890. The letter was probably written in early May, after Sharp returned from his annual trip to Paris.

⁵⁵ Sir Noel Paton.

I am very sorry indeed to hear that the Manchester journey was so unproductive. I have spoken to various friends about your "Death and Love", but as yet apparently without success. However, I still venture to hope that fortune lurks in Scotland.

I shall be very pleased to receive the little volume to which you allude.

I am very very busy just now - and much worried by some troublesome matters of a private sort: but otherwise, I am thankful to say, things are well with me.

My wife joins me in ever kind remembrances -

In great haste

I am ever, dear Shields, | Affectionately Yours | William Sharp

ALS Spencer Library, University of Kansas

To Richard Le Gallienne, [May 19, 1888]

Wescam | 17A, Goldhurst Terrace. | South Hampstead. | N.W.

My dear Mr. Le Gallienne

It is midnight, and I have just returned from dining out and found my *Academy* here with your most sympathetic and friendly article.⁵⁶ I'll write to you in more detail in a day or two C tho' if you do not hear from me till Tuesday do not think it negligence. I'm going to spend my Whitsuntide⁵⁷ at Burford Bridge with George Meredith, but will be back by Monday evening most likely: but I may be able to write before then.

Meanwhile, with thanks for your friendly allusions to myself in your excellent and critical article on P. B. M.,⁵⁸

Believe me, | Most cordially yours, | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

To Richard Le Gallienne, [May 22, 1888]

Tuesday Night

Dear Mr. Le Gallienne

I have just returned from my delightful visit to the loveliest part of the loveliest country in Southern England - and with glorious weather & such a host as George Meredith I need not say that I have enjoyed the last few days immensely.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ See note to early May, 1888 letter to Le Gallienne.

⁵⁷ Whitsuntide fell on May 20th in 1888.

⁵⁸ Philip Bourke Marston.

⁵⁹ Mrs. Sharp states that on this visit Meredith and Sharp would have long conversations in the day, and at night Meredith would read to them from his novels: "The reader's enjoyment seemed as great as that of his audience, and it interested me to hear how closely his own methods of conversation resembled, in wittiness and brilliance, those of the characters in his novels." (*Memoir* 45)

When are you coming to town: I remember you said you wd. be here ere very long? Please give me as much warning of your visit to London as practicable: for while I much look forward to the pleasure of seeing you I am so much engaged in every way just now that I have generally to arrange my plans well beforehand.

Your Marston-review in the *Academy*⁶⁰ afforded me - as I have already told you - much pleasure. I am glad you agree with me in thinking that his lyrics have the true Elizabethan note and, broadly speaking, perhaps his sonnets: and of course it is doubly pleasant to have a review from the pen of one who is not only an admirer of Philip Marston but who is himself a true poet.

Yesterday I walked over from Burford Bridge to look-up Grant Allen,⁶¹ & there I found Cotton of the *Academy*.⁶² I told him how pleased I was with your article - the first, I fancy, you have done for the *Academy*.

In a few days I shall be able to send you a booklet of my own "Romantic Ballads: & Poems of Phantasy", in which I hope you may find something to care for.

In great haste | Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

*To Theodore Watts, [May 23, 1888]*⁶³

Wescam. | 17A. Goldhurst Terrace | South Hampstead | N.W. | Wedny Night

My Dear Watts

You did *not* dream, but understood in all verity that I am Messrs. Appleton's literary deputy, or rather agent, in this country. I have all along been hoping that you may come to some arrangement with Appleton's. Did you ever see their reprint of "The Dreamster" - a much better get up than any of the other houses who reprint English books. Is there any chance of your being Chancery-Lanewards tomorrow (Thursday). I intend to be at Cotton's⁶⁴ at or shortly before 3: and could meet you anywhere in that neighborhood if you wired to me early in the forenoon (Wescam, Goldhurst Terrace, Hampstead is sufficient for telegrams.).

⁶⁰ See letter to Le Gallienne dated 22 May, 1887.

⁶¹ Charles Grant Blairfinde Allen (1848-1899) published 43 works of fiction and numerous other writings. He sometimes used pen names such as "Cecil Power," "J. Arbuthnot Wilson," "Martin Leach Warborough," and "Olive Pratt Rayner." His best known work of fiction, *The Woman Who Did*, was published under his own name in 1895.

⁶² James Sutherland Cotton (1869-1916) became editor of *The Academy* in 1881.

⁶³ The Wednesday after the Sharp's visit to Meredith at Box Hill was 23 May 1888 (*Memoir* 145).

⁶⁴ James Cotton, Editor of the *Academy*.

The weather was so glorious that we were persuaded by George Meredith to remain yet another day - and I enjoyed it immensely. He read me some exceedingly fine poems, far surpassing anything he has yet done in verse - and also a considerable portion of a new novel.⁶⁵

On Monday by the by I walked over to Dorking & called on Grant Allen. He was very sorry that you had not called on him when in the neighborhood, but I explained that, in the circumstances, it was impossible - & that you were as sorry as he could be. I found Cotton there, and he and I walked back in company and he made Meredith's acquaintance.

What a charming fellow G.M. is - is he not? The more I see of him the more I admire and like him.

The enclosed brief beginning of a short note I had yesterday from Caine is all the direct news I have had - tho' I hear that the play is a great success.⁶⁶

Tomorrow - or next day - I shall send you a copy of my little book of "Romantic Ballads". I hope - as it is maturer work - it may satisfy you more so far as execution is concerned. In substance it is imaginative in the truest sense - as I do not hesitate to say. It honestly seems to me that with all its demerits there is stuff in it of the purely imaginative kind such as you will not easily find in the work of other contemporary minor poets. Of course I shall be disappointed if no one likes it, or thinks highly of it - but for the first time in my life I am indifferent to adverse criticism: for I feel well assured that the little booklet is sterling - and with this assured confidence a bad reception can at the worst be but unfortunate and disagreeable.

However, you will soon be able to see and judge for yourself. A few of the poems have already been seen by friends. Of a short one entitled "The Death-Child" Stedman - for instance - writes that he knows nothing more weird and original & imaginative in recent modern poetry. It is certainly original - whatever else it may be. But the strangest work is in "The Weird of Michael Scott" - particularly in Part III.

Even if you care for the book very much I do not urge you to review it - as I know your kind friendship will prompt you to do - for I know how busy you are: but do you think you could persuade MacColl⁶⁷ to let someone give it a separate notice? I shall not send a review copy to the *Athenaeum* till I hear from you.

⁶⁵ EAS identifies the novel as *One of Our Conquerors* which was not published until 1891 (*Memoir* 145). Two of Meredith's novels were published in 1890: *The Case of General Ople and Lady Camper* and *The Tale of Chloe: An Episode in the History of Beau Beamish* (1890).

⁶⁶ The opening night of *Ben-my-Chree*, the adaptation of Hall Caine's *The Deemster*, was on May 17, 1888. See note to Fall, 1887 letter to Hall Caine.

⁶⁷ Norman Maccoll (1843-1905) was editor of the *Athenaeum*. His publications include *Greek Sceptics from Pyrrho to Sextus* (1869), *Select Plays of Calderon* (1888), and *The Exemplary Novels of Cervantes* (1902).

I had originally intended to issue only 100 copies, as I thought there would be no demand for such a little book (only some 80 pp including Preface, Title-Pages, etc.) - but there has been such an unexpected and gratifying anticipatory demand (all the more so as - being privately printed - the price is unknown. Of course I've made it small C 2/6 or 3/-) that I have agreed to a larger edition - most of which is already engaged.

If you are not to be in town tomorrow you might drop me a line - or, perhaps, after receipt of my booklet, which, however, may not arrive till Friday or Saturday, tho' I *expect* one or two early copies tomorrow.

Ever yours affectionately | William Sharp

I am so glad to hear that you are going to publish the poem you recited part of to me the other day. It was *exceedingly* fine.

ALS British Museum

To Mr. Osborne,⁶⁸ June 4, 1888

Wescam,⁶⁹ | 17a Goldhurst Terrace, | South Hampstead. | London, N.W.

Dear Mr. Osborne

The only *influential* member of the Reform Club whom I can call to mind just now as an acquaintance is Sir James Caird, the well-known Agriculturist and Land Commissioner. I will see what can be done with him.

Best wishes for your success. If fortune favour you let me know, so that I may be among the first to congratulate you.

In great haste | Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ALS, UWM Library.

To Richard Le Gallienne, [early June, 1888]

Wescam,⁷⁰ | Goldhurst Terrace | So: Hampstead | N.W.

Dear Mr. Le Gallienne

If you have not made any other arrangement could you come here on Sunday evening next?

⁶⁸ [Identify]

⁶⁹ The main letterhead of this stationery reads (left) Walter Scott, Publisher; (center) The Canterbury Poets, General Editor, William Sharp; and (right) 24 Warwick Lane, London, E.C. Below that at left is William Sharp and the return address given above.

⁷⁰ Although this letter is written on 46, Talgarth Road stationery with the old address crossed out and the Wescam address written over it, it appears to postdate the letter of May 22, which mentions Le Gallienne's anticipated trip to London and promises to send Le Gallienne a copy of *Romantic Ballads* "in a few days."

We don't "dress" on Sunday evenings, as friends sometimes drop in then promiscuously: and indeed on Sunday next we are, I believe, to have "high tea" in place of dinner, for the sake of domestic convenience of some kind.

If you could be with me by 6 o'clock we could have an hour's chat ere "appeasing the demon" as the Japanese say. At 7 o'clock Mr. & Mrs. Tomson will look in. "Graham R. Tomson's" name you doubtless already know as that of one of the most accomplished of the ballade and rondeau singers (though she has done other & far stronger [unpublished] work).⁷¹ She is a lovely creature and a genuine poet. Her husband, Arthur Tomson, is one of the coming men among our younger artists. They "move" to our neighborhood this week, to our great pleasure.

Thereafter we may or may not be alone: Walter Pater or some other literary or artistic friend may drop in⁷² C but if you are not pressed for time you can stay after any casual visitors have gone. But to make sure, try and come about 6, when I shall be alone and disengaged.

I don't know from what part of the town you will be coming - but it may be as well to tell you that our station is *Finchley Road (Metropolitan)* (South Hampstead), and that you will *have to change at Baker Street*.

When you leave Finchley Rd. Station turn down to the right into Broadhurst Gardens, & below its left (east) end you will see two terraces meeting at an angle - that to the left is Goldhurst T.

Let me know if you can come on Sunday. By the by a copy of my book⁷³ was sent to you today.

Yours sincerely | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

*To Richard Le Gallienne, July 7, 1888*⁷⁴

Dear Mr. Le Gallienne

I meant to write to you yesterday but mislaid the card with your address - which I have only now found.

⁷¹ Sharp's brackets. Graham R. Tomson was the pseudonym for Rosamund Tomson (1860-1911), wife of J. Arthur Tomson. In 1888 she edited *Border Ballads* for the Canterbury Poets series. A collection of her poems appeared in 1891 entitled *A Summer Night and Other Poems*

⁷² Mrs. Sharp indicated (*Memoir* 140) that Walter Pater was one of the Sharps' frequent guests at their "Sunday informal evening gatherings" at Wescam. He came "during his Oxford vacation" in 1888 and, probably, at other times in 1888, 1889, and 1890.

⁷³ *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* (London: Walter Scott, 1888).

⁷⁴ Date from postmark.

Owing to the sudden “flopping” upon us of a friend from Germany - & other reasons as well -- I much regret the unlikelihood of our meeting again during this visit. I may add, however, that we are always “at home” to any visitors on Sunday evenings (about 8), and also on Monday afternoons (4 to 6). Just do as you feel inclined. In great haste, & with best wishes,

Sincerely Yours | William Sharp

ACS University of Texas at Austin

To Richard Garnett, [Fall, 1888]

Wescam | Goldhurst Terrace | So. Hampstead | N.W.

My dear Garnett

In the case of exceptionally noteworthy books it is in my power to dilate upon them in the “London Letter” of the *Glasgow Herald* - which, as I daresay you know, is the most influential paper in the North. While a “London Letter” notice does not preclude another review in ordinary course, it is very much more serviceable owing to the prominence it gives, and the greater number who see it - and also from the fact that the literary items of the G. H.’s London Letter are copied by other papers throughout the north.

I therefore read thro’ the “Twilight of the Gods”⁷⁵ on the evening I received it - and as soon as possible sent off the enclosed to the G. H. office here. I hope it may prove serviceable to the book.

I am just bolting off to the Press View at the Grosvenor - so must postpone further remarks about your new book for a little. But I cannot close without telling you again that it is very long indeed since I have had such a literary *festa*. The book is a delight to me from the first page to the last - and both in matter and style it seems to me a volume that will take very high rank indeed. It is *literature*. I did not know that you had the rare and delightful Heinesque genius in prose composition - greatly as I knew you to be in sympathy with Heine. Any book so original as well as so charming *must* be sure of its place - and I congratulate you most heartily.

Again thanking you for so kindly giving me a copy (I shall ask you to “inscribe” in it someday)

In haste | Most sincerely yours | William Sharp

I had sent Unwin a P/Card, telling him of the notice - in case he shd. be in need of something to start with as a quotation from the Press.

ALS University of Texas at Austin

⁷⁵ Richard Garnett’s *Twilight of the Gods: and Other Tales* was published (London: T. Fisher Unwin) in 1888. An “augmented” edition was issued in 1903 (London and New York: John Lane).

To _____ Chatto, [Fall 1888]

Wescam | Goldhurst Terrace | So. Hampstead

Dear Mr. Chatto

As I am writing at any rate about Mrs. Caird⁷⁶ I take the opportunity to broach another matter.

I am engaged upon a romance (for *one volume* issue) which I believe to be a book which could not be overlooked.⁷⁷ (You will excuse the inevitable seeming arrogance - but this is a matter of assured conviction with me). It is the outcome of much into which I need not enter, except to say that it is an attempt toward further stimulating the advent of the *true* romantic sentiment. It is not, I should explain, a romance of the adventurous mind: it is, in spirit, a romance, say for illustration's sake, of the "*Scarlet Letter*" or Oliver Madox Brown's "Black Swan" type. I have critically and otherwise identified myself very closely of late with the new romantic movement which is in the air, and, I believe, is destined to revolutionise average contemporary fiction. To enable you to more clearly comprehend what I mean I send you a copy of my last vol. of verse,⁷⁸ in the preface of which you will find my "pronouncement".

The edition was sold out within a few days of publication, and I have only one or two reserve copies left - but it would afford me pleasure if you would accept the one I send.

As for the romance, it is called "*Sanpriel*" (from the heroine's name.) The idea of heredity is at the base of it, though more as an occult than a specified or obviously-worked out motive. It is but fair to explain that it would have one very strong situation near the close - an episode that would invite, no doubt, as much antagonism as appreciation. I know that I can rely upon your keeping strictly to yourself the basis of the episode in question. To a certain extent you will be able to infer it from the incident related by Pope to Lady Mary Wortley Montague, and upon which Sir Stephen de Vere wrote a little lyric entitled "On Two Lovers Killed by Lightning".

"The summer sun is passed and gone
Again shines out the summer sun
On lips that are, tho' pale and dead,
With living smile still garlanded.

⁷⁶ Mona Caird.

⁷⁷ The romance became eventually *The Children of Tomorrow* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1890).

⁷⁸ *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy* was privately printed for Sharp by Walter Scott in 1888.

They lived, they loved, and loving died,
By God's own lightning purified.
He saw their truth, and, pitying, gave
At once a bridal and a grave."

I have, I should explain, a standing offer from a publisher for this romance, whenever I finish it, at a very fair royalty.

Now of course I cannot expect you "to jump at" a book of which your reader has seen nothing - but what I wish to ask you is if you care to consider the following suggestions: -

That you should nominally commission this romance of "Sanpriel", to be placed in your hands by the *end* of February. That in consideration of my finishing it by that date (earlier than I should otherwise do) and giving you the right of publication, you guarantee me £50 on receipt of completed MS. If you decide to take it, after inspection, we can then come to terms as to the sum you feel inclined to offer: in which case the £50 to be reckoned as on account.

If, after consideration, you decide against publication, then I to return you half of the guarantee-amount, viz £25.

I should like very much to publish with you - and to convince you that my proposals are not unreasonable I may add that in addition to the Royalty-Promise alluded to I have a private assurance from another house of inclusion of the book (about which nothing is known, however; save that I have put my heart into it, as the saying is) in a series of one-volume novels, at a sum-down of £300.

Please consider all I have written as strictly private.

The reason why the earliest date for delivery of MS. would be Feby 28th is that I have not yet finished a serial romance (of an entirely different kind) which is to commence at Xmas: and I have in the meantime to cease working at "Sanpriel".

If you would like to see me further on the matter, perhaps you could call on me at my club (the Grosvenor Club, 135 New Bond St.) on some specified day, at any hour convenient to you after 2 o'clock, except Mondays.

In any case, I dare say you will be able to say yea or nay very shortly.

Believe me | Yours very truly | William Sharp

ALS Pierpont Morgan

To Richard Garnett, [Fall, 1888]

Wescam | Goldhurst Terrace | So. Hampstead | NW

My dear Garnett

My friend Mrs. Graham Tomson, to whom you wrote consenting to the inclusion of some of your epigrams in the Canterbury vol. of the Greek Anthology selections,⁷⁹ is anxious for a reader's ticket at the Museum. She is not up to the mark at present, and so cannot apply personally. I forget what is the present procedure in the matter, but it would much oblige me if you would send me the necessary paper to sign, which I should take to Mrs. Tomson.

She also wants to meet you C and I told her that some day ere long I would go with her to the B.M. and introduce her to you.

By the way C I am to review the "Twilight" elsewhere, but not for a fortnight or three weeks yet.

In haste | Sincerely yours | William Sharp

ALS University of Texas at Austin

To Richard Garnett, [Fall, 1888]

Wescam | Goldhurst Terrace | So: Hampstead

My dear Garnett

I was in St. Edmund's Terrace to say au revoir to Miss Blind,⁸⁰ and simply called at your house on the off chance of seeing you. I thought the opportunity also would be a good one to tell you how I like your new book⁸¹ more and more. I have recommended it to several people, though I refuse to lend it, partly because I don't like lending author's copies, and partly because those who wish to read it should buy it or get it from the library. I also wanted to ask you if you could tell me anything about Azrael, the Talmudic angel of death. I want to find something that would justify the relevancy of "The Wing of Azrael" as title of a novel - something in the sense of "The Shadow of Death", "The Shadow of Fate", "The Sword of Damocles", or the like.

Perchance you know or can put me on some clue. There is, however, no urgency. Anytime within a week or so would do, if you should happen to light upon anything accidentally.

Yours most sincerely | William Sharp

I hope the "Twilight" is going on propitiously. I do not think Unwin advertises enough: but I am only judging from what I happen to see. | Tomorrow or next day I hope to send you a copy of my Heine.⁸²

⁷⁹ Graham R. Tomson's (pseud. for Rosamund Tomson) *Greek Anthology*, trans. by Garnett and Lang, etc. (London: Walter Scott, 1889).

⁸⁰ Mathilde Blind.

⁸¹ Garnett's *Twilight of the Gods and Other Tales*.

⁸² Sharp's *Life of Heinrich Heine* was published (London: Walter Scott) in the Great Writers Series in fall, 1888.

By the way, I had a note on Saturday from Olive Schreiner.⁸³ Her address is Hotel Mediterranie, Alassio, Italy. She intends to be in London for a few weeks next May, and will, I hope, stay with us for a day or two.

ALS University of Texas at Austin

To A. Williams,⁸⁴ [?November, 1888]

Wescam | Goldhurst Terrace | So. Hampstead | London N.W.

My Dear Sir,

I thank you very much for sending to me the very kind and appreciative criticism from the N. Wales Express on my "Heine"⁸⁵ - and my indebtedness is the more emphatic if you are the writer as well as the transmitter of it.

Heine is so seldom understood in this country that I am most pleased with the tone as well as the criticism of the article.

Believe me, | very truly yours, | William Sharp

It may interest you to hear that the book is selling rapidly, and that it is shortly to be translated into German, and perhaps into French.

A. Williams Esq

ACS Pennsylvania State University

To _____, [late 1888]⁸⁶

. . . Frontispiece with vol. of Marston's tales; published a year or so ago (with an earlier version of my memoir) by Mr. Walter Scott at a small sum, 3/6 I think or perhaps 4/6. The book is called "For A Song's Sake: and Other Stories."

Friends of "Y.F.P." are always cropping up unexpectedly. I am glad you are one of them. It is a good paper and the Olympic is doing a really good work. I certainly don't regret

Garnett wrote to Sharp on November 11, 1888 (*Memoir* 143-4) to say he had finished reading it and to congratulate him on the work.

⁸³ Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) was a South African novelist, political critic, and feminist. She had published *The Story of an African Farm: a novel in two volumes* under the pseudonym "Ralph Iron" in 1883. Schreiner also wrote *Woman and Labor* (1911), *From Man to Man* (1926), and *Undine* (1928).

⁸⁴ [Identify Alfred Williams?]

⁸⁵ Sharp's *Life of Heinrich Heine* (1888).

⁸⁶ This is a fragment of a letter probably written to a subscriber to the *Young Folk's Paper*, a weekly paper for boys, of which Sharp was the editor of the "Literary Chair" from 1887 to about 1890 (see *Memoir* 127-8).

the time I have given and give to it – tho' after all it occupies but a small portion of my busy life.

Yours very truly

William Sharp

P.S. Yes - the romance entitled "Aylwin" is by Theodore Watts.⁸⁷ Though well known to many literary friends, and in type, it has not yet been published. I understand that it will be issued early in 1889.

W.S.

ALS Princeton

⁸⁷ Watts' *Aylwin* was not published until 1899 by Hurst and Blackett, London.