FIONA MACLEOD AND HER CREATOR WILLIAM SHARP.*

BY CATHARINE A. JANVIER.

In December of the year 1894, my husband and I were living in Saint-Remy-de-Provence, an out-of-the-way little South-French town where nothing ever happened. So uneventful was the passing of time that my memory holds firm to a day when the Postmistress—the Post-office stood next door to our dwelling-place—sent word that she would be glad to see me for an affair of importance.

As I entered her office, she stepped forward and, with a smile and a little bow, handed me a registered foreign package—this was the affair of importance—and with it a foreign letter superscribed in the familiar handwriting of our long-time friend, William Sharp. The package was addressed in the script—then strange to me—of his sister, Miss Mary B. Sharp: the script that later came to be known as the handwriting of Fiona Macleod. It contained a slim green book, inviting to the eye and to the touch, belonging to the "Regent Library" series published in Derby by Frank Murray—a series with which I was familiar through "Vistas," sent to me in the preceding March by its author, William Sharp. The little pale-green book was entitled: "Pharais: A Romance of the Isles, by Fiona Macleod." Of this writer I never had heard. No inscription indicated the sender of the book. Laying it aside, I opened the letter, which had been written in South Hampstead, and bore the date of December, 1894.

After wishing a Happy Christmas to me and to my husband, Mr. Sharp continued: "Herewith I am sending to you, through

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my sister in Edinburgh, with whom I left it the other day, a copy of a book which has made a deep impression here. I know the author: and wish you would tell me just what you think of 'Pharais.'"

Before recording my answer, I pause and—in a somewhat personal digression—I will tell of a wandering letter bearing on "Pharais" *before* the time of Fiona Macleod.

In the spring of 1893, my husband and I left New York; and, mainly in search of health for me, we went from seashore to mountain, and again from mountain to seashore, at last returning for a while to New York: whence, in 1894, we sailed for what was expected to be a summer's stay in Europe. The summer's stay lengthened into a seven years' absence, and it was near eight years after it was written that I found and consciously read this letter. The postmarks on it show how it had followed us from place to place in America; but I have no recollection of ever seeing it, nor do I know how it found its way into a bundle of family papers sent to a storehouse for safe-keeping during our absence.

When—nine years after it was written—I showed this letter to Mr. Sharp, he was much surprised at its mention of "Pharais"; for he had as totally forgotten the writing as I had the reading—if ever I did read it—of that mislaid letter which here is quoted. It is dated St. Andrews, 12th August, 1893:

"Your letter from Narragansett has just reached me. . . . The white flowers you speak of are the moon-daisies, are they not?—what we call moon-flowers in the west of Scotland—and ox-eye daisies in England—and marguérites in France. Your description of them as seen in that nocturnal glamour is worthy of any Celtic poet from Muireadach Albannach down to Duncanban MacIntyre—a seven-centuries compliment!

"It is very strange that you should write about them to me just as I was working out a scene in a strange Celtic tale I am writing (called '*Pharais*') wherein the weird charm and terror of a night of tragic significance is brought home to the reader (or I hope so) by a stretch of dew-wet moon-flowers glimmering white through the mirk of a dusk laden with sea-mist. Though this actual scene was written a year or two ago—and one or two others of the first part of 'Pharais'—I am going to rewrite it, your letter having brought some subtle inspiration with it.

"'Pharais' is a foil to the other long story I am working at. While it is full of Celtic romance and dream and the glamour of the mysterious, the other ["Wives in Exile"] is a comedy of errors. . . . In both, at least the plot, the central action, the germinal *motif*, is original: though I for one lay little stress on extraneous originality in comparison with that inner originality which alone has the invincibility of individual life."

Quitting now the letter telling of the writing of "Pharais," I return to Saint-Remy and to the book purporting to be written by Fiona Macleod.

In my first reading of this romance of the Isles, I could not pause for critical observation, so swiftly was I carried on by a current of astonished interest. In an attentive rereading, here and there I was arrested by a familiar trick of word or phrase. When I read of Lora and of Alasdair entering the mist-veiled "sea of death-white blooms," my mind flew back to a time when *I* had seen a field of tall white flowers fading dimly into moon-rayed mist, and it came to me that once I had described those mist-veiled daisies to William Sharp. Conviction flashed into my mind: I wrote saying that, for sure, William Sharp and Fiona Macleod were one. The answer came swift:

"LONDON, *January 5th, 1895.*

"Early to-morrow morning I leave for the Isle of Wight for a fortnight. . . . I hope to send you a letter soon from the beautiful place by the sea where we are going to. It will be a letter from Fiona Macleod.

"Yes, 'Pharais' *is* mine. It is a book out of my heart, out of the core of my heart. I wrote it with the pen dipped in the very ichor of my life.

"It has reached people even more than I dreamed of as likely. . . . Ignored in some quarters, abused in others, unheeded by the 'general reader,' it has yet had a reception that has made me deeply glad. It is the beginning of my true work. Only one or two know I am Fiona Macleod. Let you and my dear T. A. J. preserve my secret. I trust you. . . . You will find more of me in 'Pharais' than in anything else I have written.

"Apropos of what you say about the 'Chant of Women,' I had a letter (or, rather, F. M. had) the other day from Wm. Yeats. He wrote for himself and for Dr. Douglas Hyde, the famous Celtic critic. They say that if the 'Chant of Women' is ancient, it is the most remarkable thing in Celtic literature: if my own, that it is 'convincing proof of rare genius.' I tell you this frankly, for I know you will be glad.*

". . . Let me add that you will find 'The Mountain Lovers' (at which

* It is with Dr. Hyde's permission that this quotation is reproduced.

I am now working when I can) more elemental still than 'Pharais,' while simpler. In the late spring an American firm is to publish a volume of six strange Celtic short stories by me (F. M.) which will be called after the first, 'The Sin-Eater.'

"Do write to me more fully about 'Pharais,' as you promise. It will help me in more ways than you know."

I wrote, and in my letter I asked why he—a man—chose to send forth good work under the signature of a woman. The answer to this question was:

"I can write out of my heart in a way I could not do as William Sharp, and indeed that I could not do if I were the woman whom Fiona Macleod is supposed to be, unless veiled in scrupulous anonymity. . . .

"This rapt sense of oneness with nature, this *cosmic ecstasy* and elation, this wayfaring along the extreme verges of the common world, all this is so wrought up with the romance of life, that I could not bring myself to expression by my outer self, insistent and tyrannical as that need is. . . . My truest self, the self who is below all other selves, and my most intimate life and joys and sufferings, thoughts, emotions and dreams, *must* find expression, yet I cannot, save in this hidden way."

And to this hidden way he adhered steadfastly until the end.

Although taken from a later letter (July, 1896), I give here this reference to the name—Fiona Macleod:

"The *name* was born naturally. Of course, I had associations with the name Macleod. Fiona's is very rare now. Most Highlanders would tell you it was extinct—even as the diminutive of Fionaghal (Flora). But it is not. It is an old Celtic name (meaning 'a fair maid') still occasionally to be found. I know a little girl, the daughter of a Highland clergyman, who is called Fiona."

In April of 1896, there had come to Saint-Remy a letter telling of the dedication of "The Washer of the Ford," and saying: "If a book can have a soul that book has one." This volume of Fiona's work should have reached Saint-Remy at Bealtaine; but it did not arrive until the 12th of May, and in its stead there came, on the 1st of May, an especially printed and bound copy of the Prologue, and a letter stating that the Prologue had been "materially improved and strengthened and largely added to."

I refer to this because a little later Mr. Sharp gave me the original draft of this Prologue, written partly with pen and partly with pencil.

For the student of Fiona Macleod it is instructive to compare draft and printed page; to note the precise choice of word, the careful ordering of phrase and placing of paragraph. This same painstaking precision is shown in some other manuscripts and corrected proof in my possession. Never was there a more careful writer than Fiona Macleod, while of her creator this cannot always be said.

In December of 1896—preceded by the announcement that he was old and gray-haired—William Sharp, superb as a young viking, burst in on us in quiet Saint-Remy.

After the excitement of the first joyous meeting was over, it was plain to see that this magnificent presence gave false promise. He was exhausted by the long strain of double work and had been ordered away from the smoke and fog of London to the sunshine of the Riviera, there to seek the rest he nowhere had found.

While with us strange moods possessed him; and, perhaps because of these, strange things happened. At times it was as though he struggled against an evil influence; was forcing back a dark tide ever threatening to overwhelm his soul. Warring presences were about him, he thought; and he believed that these must be conquered, even at the risk of life. The culminating struggle came, and through one winter night my husband watched over him as he battled against some unseen but not unfelt influence. The fight was won, the dark tide stemmed, but at great cost of vitality, his victory leaving him faint and exhausted. "Nevermore," he told us, "would he tamper with certain forces, for such tampering might mean destruction."

Now, in different mood—he was a man of many moods—he began to take great comfort in our quiet little town with its pretty old-fashioned ways. The quaint Christmas doings were a delight to him; but when Christmas was over—in pursuance of his doctor's orders, which he had disobeyed by remaining in colder Saint-Remy—he left us for the warmer Riviera, where he wandered restlessly from place to place. The opening of the new year of 1897 found him at Sainte-Maxime, where seemingly he craved help and companionship in a way foreign to his self-sufficing nature. He wrote that he felt lonely; and he ended a pelting shower of telegrams by reappearing in Saint-Remy with

the statement that he wished to be looked after and to be made much of.

During this second stay with us, he was utterly unlike the mystery-surrounded, dual-natured dreamer of his previous visit: he was William Sharp, and William Sharp in his blythest mood. Though Fiona might smile, it is impossible to imagine her as bursting into a hearty laugh; while her creator could be the gayest of companions, full of fun and frolic, displaying at times a Pucklike impishness worthy of a twelve-year-old boy. He left our town in this joyous trim, waving his blue béret from the carriage window until the train was out of sight.

Not long after the appearance of Fiona's first publications, the assertion was made by some of her critics that her books were read only in a small literary set: a possibility that to her creator —who above all sought to reach the hearts of his own people— at times was deeply depressing. In one of these seasons of discouragement, by a fortunate chance, he was cheered and heartened by a little happening in which I had a share.

In 1898, we had joined Mr. and Mrs. Sharp in Scotland. One day, in quest of some Fiona lore, Mr. Sharp and I rowed to a point of rocks jutting out into the Clyde — "Ruadh nan Eoin" he called it. As we rounded the point, we saw lying at anchor a fishing-boat painted white; and as we neared her I made out what looked like Fiona lettered on her bow. I did not think this possible, and concluded it must be Flora; but on closer view we saw plainly the unusual name, "Fiona." And then, as we came beside the supposedly empty boat, we were a little startled by the slow uprising above the rail of a man. He was a pleasant-faced fisher who readily answered all our questions.

Mr. Sharp said to him: "That's a pretty name of your boat. For sure, it's a real name?"

The man answered in a very soft, agreeable voice: "Oh yes; for sure it's a real name."

"And will it be the name of some one you know?"

"Ay, I've heard that the daughter of Mr. McLane—the minister out Iona way—is called Fiona."

"Ah then, it will be after her?"

"No, no; for sure, it wasn't after her."

"Then it will be after your wife or your sweetheart?"

"Ah, no, it only will be after a writing lady, a great Highland lady."

"Oh, a writing lady. Who will that be?"

"Well, she will be called Miss Fiona Macleod."

"Oh, then you know Miss Macleod?"

"No; but I read a story of hers in the Oban 'Times,' or in some other paper; and, after, I read one of her books about Iona —and so I just called my new boat for her. Oh, she's a great writing lady! And for that, sure, I'm a Macleod, too."

"Oh then, are you a Macleod?"

"Oh yes, my mother was a Macleod."

"Slain leibh!"

And, well content, we rowed to shore.

During the years immediately following the appearance of "Pharais," much work was produced under the signature of Fiona Macleod. In 1895, "The Mountain Lovers" and "The Sin-Eater" were published. In 1896, "The Washer of the Ford"; a romance entitled "Green Fire"; and a volume of poems: "From the Hills of Dream"—"the sacredest of all Fiona's books," wrote the author. In 1897, "The Laughter of Peterkin," some new tales and several rearrangements and reprints of old ones, came out.

While these years passed away bearing their tale of work by Fiona Macleod, William Sharp in rapid succession had brought forth books, essays, critical and other articles. So great was the amount of this double work that it disconcerted those seekers who, suspecting the identity of the two writers, would pry into the secret of Fiona's existence. Well that so it was, for the discovery would have put an end to Fiona's work. Her creator was wont to say: "Should that secret be found out, Fiona dies."

After recording this emphatic saying, I think it pertinent to mention that it is at William Sharp's request that I have kept the letters and papers which I cite. On several occasions I spoke with him concerning their ultimate disposition. The last time of speaking was on the 25th of November of 1904 in New York: when he answered decisively, after careful deliberation: "Keep all these papers. Who knows what may happen after my death? These letters and papers—should proof ever be needed—are proof positive that I am Fiona Macleod."

It was but a little more than a year after this conference that the sudden revelation of the identity of William Sharp and Fiona Macleod surprised many people; and, most of all, Fiona's numerous correspondents. Women, I take it, were not displeased to find that they had been writing to a man; but for men, I fancy, it was an unpleasant shock to discover that Fiona was one of themselves.

The revelation has given rise to much lively discussion concerning the work put forth under the two names. Many suggestions have been made as to the explanation of its double character. It has been hinted that William Sharp was one of those beings of double consciousness who live two separate lives: the one life having no remembrance of the actions performed in the other. This notion is untenable, and is disproved by the letters herein quoted. The letter of the 12th of August, 1893, shows how long "Pharais" was in the writing, and also proves that the name under which it was published was an afterthought.

In a way, Fiona was evolved gradually; and, did space permit, it would be interesting to trace in full her evolution: very easily traceable, it seems to me, through William Sharp's earlier work. Already in "The Human Inheritance" (1882) faint echoes of Fiona's voice come to listening ears. In "Earth's Voices" (1884) and again in "Romantic Ballads and Poems of Fantasy" (1886) her low tones are heard. In that *tour de force,* "The Pagan Review," she inspired several pages; while in some of the papers afterward put together in "Vistas," and in "Ecce Puella," and also here and there in the "*Sospiri di Roma,*" the touch clearly is hers.

As the years went on, the scope of Fiona's writing was greatly widened; and, toward the end of William Sharp's life, work that —to my mind—she could not have done was produced under her name. Once I called his attention to this: asking him how he could account for the extraordinary erudition of this Highland lady, and questioning how it was possible she could have so perfect a familiarity, not only with Greek and Latin writers, but also with authors scarcely known save to especial students. "You will betray," I said, "that it is William Sharp who writes." He took my remonstrance with the utmost good-humor and acknowledged the justness of it; but, so far as I have seen, he never lessened the extent of Fiona's learning.

In her early writings, Fiona made no display of this diffuse erudition. What she then published had a strong Gaelic or Celtic trend; to use her own words, it "was lighted by a Celtic torch." And all of this work differed so greatly in style from anything that William Sharp had produced that the unlikeness was pointed out in triumphant refutation of the two writers being one.

There was interest in watching, as sometimes we could do, the growth of a Fiona story. In Saint-Remy, during his visits to us there, Mr. Sharp wrote and read to us some of Fiona's work. Again, during an August our two families spent together at Southwold, he did much writing under conditions apparently adverse to poetic or mystic production.

He was fond of working in the open air; and, when the mood seized him, he would sit for hours just outside of the cottage (which had no garden in front), with people passing to and fro, calmly writing—generally with pencil—on a pad of green or of blue paper. Should one of us approach him, either a restraining hand repelled us, or he beckoned us to come near. When his writing was finished, we listened to the Fiona tale or poem or essay. We women commonly had little to say except in praise, but the two men often wrangled hotly over word or form of sentence.

It was strange how, among us—who knew of her non-existence—Fiona little by little grew to seem a real personage. This was the more so because, principally to guard against any betrayal of the secret, we and others made a point of speaking of Fiona by name. "What is Fiona doing to-day?" one of us, with unconscious gravity, would ask her maker; and with equal gravity he would tell what Fiona had in hand.

Now and then, indeed, her creator's sense of fun, and his delight in mystification, carried him far away from any gravity. In these freakish moments, he would tell to us—and, no doubt, to others—wild tales of the doings of this Highland lady: who to him was a real person; or, as it might more correctly be stated, was a real dominating influence. Yet the true Fiona mood or inspiration could not be compelled. It was a wind of the spirit that came and went as it listed. Its presence was evident, though at times its manifestation was in words which were spoken, not written, and so were lost.

As long ago as the Autumn of 1895, William Sharp wrote:

"Sometimes I am tempted to believe that I am half a woman, and so far saved as I am by the hazard of chance from what a woman can be made to suffer if one let the light of the common day illuminate the avenues and vistas of her heart."

Fancifully as this was meant, to those who knew him well there is deep insight in these words, and in others of a like sort that he uttered—almost tempting one to believe that two differing influences did impel his complex being, or as though some far-off, unknowable pointsman shunted thought from one line to another. At times the wished-for way was closed to him. Despondent, he writes in 1896: "To-day there is sad need of inspiration, perhaps F. M. is dead." But soon comes the triumphant disclaimer: "Will and Fiona are well, eager, hopeful. No, you are right: Fiona is *not* dead!" Again and again he writes of this definite Fiona mood or inspiration, and now and then discourses seriously on the possibility of a man's and a woman's soul dwelling in one body. This is debatable ground, into which I do not propose to enter. What is certain is that William Sharp had no common nature, and that those in close relationship with him now and then had glimpses of the strange workings of a strange mind.

From the beginning, he took a serious view of his poetic work. I am permitted to quote from a letter referring to the time shortly after the publication of his first volume of poems in 1882:

"You ask about our acquaintance with Willie Sharp. Yes, we knew him well in the days when we all were gay and young. . . . . He was a very nice-looking amiable young fellow whom every one liked, very earnest and with great notions of his own mission as regards Poetry, which he took *very* seriously. He used to have the saving grace of *fun* —which kept him sweet and wholesome—otherwise he might have fallen into the morbid set."

This feeling of responsibility, of having a message to deliver, he shared with many poets and imaginative writers. He felt himself to be but a transmitter, a magic wire through which nature, and perhaps a power beyond nature, were flashing a message to man's cognizance; and eventually he came to feel that certain tidings were to be delivered only in Fiona's words. From Ireland, in October, 1897, he wrote:

"I hope to be dreaming in that old castle in what the Gaels called Far Connaught. Think of me there at the extreme verge of the passing Celtic world. There I know that some spiritual tidings or summons await me."

To him spiritual tidings always were very real; and gladly, through Fiona, he gave them to the world—where they have reached receptive minds. With the passing of time the message has been more and more fully delivered. Fiona's mystical essays, her poems and her romances, gain wider and wider spread of effluence, so reaching unexpected strands.

In order to describe the characteristics of the mind of the creator of Fiona Macleod, it hardly seems necessary to recur to any mysterious or out-of-the-common explanation. A visionary trend of spirit surely is normal in one who truly felt himself to be kindred not only to "the wild beast and the wood-dove," but "to the green tree and the green grass, to the blue wave and the flowing wind, the flower of a day and the granite peak of an æon."

From childhood to boyhood, from boyhood into youth, William Sharp lived in rare communion with nature; with "Madonna Natura," whom lovingly and reverently he invoked in "Earth's Voices" published as long ago as 1884. And, in return for his love and worship, Nature departed from her reserve and taught him what seldom she teaches man; vouchsafing him glimpses of mysteries jealously shielded from human sight. Cathal of the Woods she made him: giving him clear vision of the green life; tuning his heart-strings so that they would thrill to the rapture of the wilderness, to that ecstasy of wind and wave known to so few of us. He writes of himself as one who "is really an estray here from another time and people, with a life strangely different from others, and having a close kinship with, and knowledge of certain mysteries of nature."

In youth and in young manhood romance and wild adventure sought him out in Highland and in Lowland, in the arid plains of far Australia, in lonely coral-cinctured islands and in crowded Europe. When young manhood had fled and full manhood was come, Madonna Natura plucked him away from vain delight and bade him enter the austere service of that Beauty who the master—Plato—tells us, "is not like any face or hands or bodily thing; it is not word nor thought; it is not in something else, neither living thing, nor earth nor heaven; only by itself in its own way in one form it forever is."

For a while he stood bewildered, uncertain how this service must be rendered. He looked about him until, nature-taught, he

knew. In the wane of a long past year he wrote, modestly, yet with conviction: "I stand at the verge of great things. I know it now and have dreamed overlong, and I have had so much to learn and to unlearn." Upheld by this right understanding, his way was clear before him, and it was with strong heart and steadfast purpose and consistent design that he began his new work. In his own words: "When once the Spirit of Beauty has entered into the inward life, there is no turning from that divine service, whatsoever of hard patience or long sorrow be involved." With the share of sorrow that must come with all divine service, William Sharp possessed that "certain infinite patience of the will which has a power beyond expression"; a power compelling nature to teach all things to those who know how to seek her.

Here there is neither time nor space to refer to the principal characters in Fiona's works, nor to speak of the admirable delineation of women in them. All of the women—even the wholly savage ones—are possible women, not the lay-figures so often seen in stories and romances. Her romantic heroines are fine, strong, brave creatures to whom a lover well may sing:

> "Sweet Heart, true heart, strong heart, star of my life, oh never
> For thee the lowered banner, the lost endeavour!"

But leaving aside the principal characters of Fiona's stories and romances, I fain would draw attention to the careful limning—often with but a few light strokes—of some lovable and simple women, minor personages in her work. One of these women is Anne Gillespie, who first appears in the "Dan-nan-ròn." Serenely unconscious of sinful strife; standing out against her dark background of murderous hate and cold malice, she treads her chosen way. In "Pharais"—while Lora's vain struggle against the slow advance of merciless fate is the main theme of the book—Mary Maclean redeems the piteous tragedy by her always calm, strong and tranquilly helpful presence. In her eyes was "the secret home of peace, and perhaps, deeper, the unveiled beauty of the serene and lovely soul."

In "Pharais," also, appears Ealasaid—the first of the old women so tenderly depicted by Fiona—who later, in "The Anointed Man," tells how fairy hands, reaching up through heather bloom, touched the eyes of Alison Achanna, so that ever after he saw

beauty where other eyes saw naught but ugliness. This same nature-touch gave power to Fiona to catch the gleam of a white soul through the dark smirch of sin; to perceive beyond the dreamy lives, the bitter loneliness, the bitter patience of life-weary old women, the hidden loveliness of old age. Gazing out on bleak sodden pastures of life, Fiona could cry with Alison: "Oh God, how beautiful is this lovely world!"

She shows us the gentle soul of lonely old Ealasaid, the widow of Duncan Mac Aodh, as she kneels in prayer: unknowing that her shamed death-wishers are watching the look of "pathetic yearning as it strains a white and beautiful peace from unrepining grief."

Sheen Macarthur is as a clear lamp shining through the tragic mirk of the "Sin-Eater." In her forlorn life (with no shirking of sordid detail), wet and draggled, bowed down under her burden of peat, the patient, weary, old woman comes before us. "The rain trickled down her withered brown face, over which the thin gray locks hung limply. It was only in the deep-set eyes that the flame of life still glimmered, though that dimly." To a nigh-distraught man, Sheen yields her poor bed and her poor food and —supreme sacrifice—she gives him her Sunday pipeful of tobacco, her one solace in the long weary week: "She held a burning peat to his mouth, and hungered over the thin rank smoke that curled upward."

In this the clear sight of the true seer pierces to eternal truth. Place and time are immaterial; the much-talked-of "Celtic glamour" is but an accident. Fear-chased, distraught, self-tortured minds are found elsewhere than in Celtdom, and old Sheen is in all lands.

Surely one of the loveliest of old women is the mother in "The Fisher of Men" — Sheen nic Leoid, the "grey sweetheart" of her son Alasdair; Sheen, whose white soul went forth to meet Iosa Mac Dhe in the Shadowy Glen.

The time drew near when William Sharp must pass through this same Shadowy Glen to where:

> "The moonlight of a perfect peace
> Floods heart and brain."

Mind and body had been strained to the utmost by the past years of intense mental activity, of stress of spirit and also of hard

and frequently incongenial task work. A great weariness came upon him. He craved rest, but took little of it. Toward the end, his illness became very evident; yet so wonderful was his vitality and so extraordinary his power of steady labor, that it seemed impossible that his ardent life could be quenched. If at times his buoyant nature was submerged by pain and weariness, bright hope soon rose afresh: stimulated by his healthful love of life, and still more by his love of—to use his own phrase—"art, the quintessence of life; a grave ecstasy." In August, 1891, he wrote:

"Life is so unutterably precious that I cannot but rejoice daily that I am alive: and yet I have no fear of, or even regret at the thought of death. . . . There are many things far worse than death. When it comes, it comes. But meanwhile we are alive. The death of the power to live is the only death to be dreaded."

Twelve years later, in 1903—after three days of torturing surgery—he wrote:

"You are not to worry yourself about me. I'm all right, and as cheerful as a lark—let us say as a lark with a rheumatic wheeze in its little song-box or gout in its little off-claw. . . . Anyway, I'll laugh and be glad to take life as I find it, till the End. The best prayer for me is that I may live vividly till 'Finis,' and work up to the last hour."

This prayer was granted; and his gay defiance of physical suffering, and his scorn of yielding to it, stayed with him until the end. The last word I have in his handwriting is dated the 9th of December, 1905. After briefly telling of his illness, he continues: "I hope and expect to be all right before Tuesday;" and in a letter dictated on the 11th of December—the day before he died—he added: "There is no need for anxiety, the worst is over and I soon shall be up again."

Despite this indomitable cheerfulness, he long had known how death ever lurked very near to him. But he feared death not at all. He regarded the quitting of life with a serene curiosity, looking upon it as the means of solving many problems that had puzzled him. Also, he took a grave interest in learning just how the great change would come as he passed away. In this calm view there was nothing morbid. His lifelong outlook upon death—or, rather, upon the continuance of conscious life after death—consistently continued to be that which he proclaimed in the strength of his joyous young manhood:

"Each death is but a birth, a change—
Each soul through myriad byeways strange,
Through birth and death, doth upward range."

During the passing years, William Sharp under his own name, and later—through Fiona Macleod—again and again repeated that to die is to pass into new life. In 1899, through the medium of "The Divine Adventure," he soberly, deliberately and conclusively has set forth his affirmative answer to the oft-asked question as to the existence of conscious life after death. Five years later, in "The Winged Destiny," he repeated in other words the truth so evident to him; and in a letter written but a few weeks before his death, he said to me: "To die is to pass to a fuller, deeper life."

William Sharp died on the 12th of December, 1905. On the day after his death, his wife wrote telling us of the peaceful ending of that ardent life; of the quiet going of that passionate soul, that fared forth into silence with the glad words: "All is well."

CATHARINE A. JANVIER.