Now, truly, is Dreamland no longer a phantasy of sleep, but a loveliness so great that, like deep music, there could be no words wherewith to measure it, but only the breathless unspoken speech of the soul upon whom has fallen the secret dews:

F. M.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

"How the man subdivided his soul is the mystery," wrote Mr. James Douglas. And in trying to suggest an answer I would say with "F. M."—"I write, not because I know a mystery and would reveal it, but because I have known a mystery, and am to-day as a child before it, and can neither reveal nor interpret it." For that mystery concerns the evolution of a human soul; and the part of it for which "the man" is consciously and personally responsible, is the method he used, the fiction he created and deliberately fostered, — rightly or wrongly — for the protection of his inner, compelling self.

This deliberate "blind"— which according to some critics "is William Sharp's most notable achievement in fiction rather than the creation of any of 'her' works"— is largely the cause of the sense of confusion that exists in the minds of certain of his friends, to whom he told the half but not the whole of

the facts. He purposely did not dispel the idea of a collaborator, an idea which grew out of the half veiled allusions he had made concerning the friend of whom I have written, whose vivid personality appealed so potently to a phase of his complex nature, and stirred his imagination as no one else had done.

In a letter to Mr. W. B. Yeats signed "Fiona Macleod," and written in 1899, about herself and her friend (namely himself) William tried "as far as is practicable in a strange and complex manner to be explicit." "She" stated that "all the formative and expressional as well as nearly all the visionary power is my friend's. In a sense only his is the passive part, but it is the allegory of the match, the wind, and the torch. Everything is in the torch in readiness, and as you know, there is nothing in the match itself. But there is a mysterious latency of fire between them . . . the little touch of silent igneous potency at the end of the match — and in what these symbolise, one adds spiritual affinity as a factor — and all at once the flame is born. The torch says all is due to the match. The match knows the flame is not hers. But beyond both is the wind, the spiritual air. Out of the unseen world it fans

the flame. In that mysterious air both the match and the flame hear strange voices. The air that came at the union of both is sometimes Art, sometimes Genius, sometimes Imagination, sometimes Life, sometimes the Spirit. It is all.

"But before that flame people wonder and admire. Most wonder only at the torch. A few look for the match beyond the torch, and finding her are apt to attribute to her that which is not hers, save as a spiritual dynamic agent. Now and then the match may have *in petto* the qualities of the torch — particularly memory and vision: and so can stimulate and amplify the imaginative life of the torch. But the torch is at once the passive, the formative, the mnemonic, and the artistically and imaginatively creative force. He knows that in one sense he would be flameless or at least without that ideal blend of the white and the red — without the match: and he knows that the flame is the offspring of both, that the wind has many airs in it, and that one of the most potent is that which blows from the life and mind and soul of 'the match'— but in his heart he knows that, to all others, he and he alone is the flame, his alone both the visionary, the formative, the expressional."

At the last, realising with deep regret that one or two of the friends he cared greatly for would probably feel hurt when they should know of the deception, he left the following note to be sent to each immediately on the disclosure of the secret:

This will reach you after my death. You will think I have wholly deceived you about Fiona Macleod. But, in an intimate sense this is not so: though (and inevitably) in certain details I have misled you. Only, it is a mystery. I cannot explain. Perhaps you will intuitively understand or may come to understand. "The rest is silence." Farewell.

WILLIAM SHARP.

It is only right, however, to add that I, and I only, was the author — in the literal and literary sense — of all written under the name of "Fiona Macleod."

In watching the development of the "Fiona Macleod" phase of expression it has seemed to me that the writer, in that work, lived a new sequent life, and passed through its successive phases of growth and development independently of the tenor of his ordinary life as "W. S." He passed from the youth in

Pharais and *The Mountain Lovers,* through the mature manhood of *The Barbaric Tales and Tragic Romances* to the greater serenity of later contemplative life in *The Divine Adventure, The Winged Destiny* and *Where the Forest Murmurs.*

In surveying the dual life as a whole I have seen how, from the early partially realised twin-ship, " W. S." was the first to go adventuring and find himself, while his twin, " F. M.," remained passive, or a separate self. When " she " awoke to active consciousness " she " became the deeper, the more impelling, the more essential factor. By reason of this severance, and of the acute conflict that at times resulted therefrom, the flaming of the dual life became so fierce that " Wilfion " — as I named the inner and third Self that lay behind that dual expression — realised the imperativeness of gaining control over his two separated selves and of bringing them into some kind of conscious harmony. This was what he meant when he wrote to Mrs. Janvier in 1899, " I am going through a new birth."

For, though the difference between the two literary expressions was so marked, there was, nevertheless, a special characteristic of " Wilfion " that linked the dual nature together —

the psychic quality of seership, if I may so call it. Not only did he, as F. M., " dream dreams " and " get in touch with the ancient memory of the race " as some of " her " critics have said; but as W. S. he also saw visions by means of that seership with which he had been dowered from childhood. And though, latterly, he gave expression to it only under shelter of the Fiona Macleod writings — as for instance in *The Divine Adventure,* because he was as sensitive about it as he was to the subtler, more imaginative side of his dual self — a few of his friends knew William Sharp as psychic and mystic, who knew nothing of him as Fiona Macleod.

I have said little concerning my husband as a psychic; a characteristic that is amply witnessed to in his writings. From time to time he interested himself in definite psychic experimentation, occasionally in collaboration with Mr. W. B. Yeats; experimentation that sometimes resulted in such serious physical disturbance that he desisted from it in later years.

In a lecture given by Mr. Yeats to the Aberdeen Centre of the Franco-Scottish Society in 1907 the Irish poet referred to his friend. He considered that " Sharp had in many ways an extraordinarily primitive mind.

He was fond of speaking of himself as the representative of the old bards," and the Irish poet thought there was really something in the claim. (In a letter Mr. Yeats had expressed his opinion that my husband was imaginative in "the old and literal sense of image-making; not like a man of this age at all.") He continued that W. S. "was the most extraordinary psychic he had ever encountered." He really believed that "Fiona Macleod was a secondary personality — as distinct a secondary personality as those one reads about in books of psychical research. At times he (W. S.) was really to all intents and purposes a different being." He would "come and sit down by my fireside and talk, and I believe that when 'Fiona Macleod' left the house he would have no recollection of what he had been saying to me."

It is true, as I have said, that William Sharp seemed a different person when the Fiona mood was on him; but that he had no recollection of what he said in that mood was not the case. That he did not understand it, is true. For that mood could not be commanded at will. Different influences awakened it, and its duration depended largely on environment. "W. S." could set himself deliberately to work normally, and

was, so far, master of his mind. But for the expression of the "F. M." self he had to wait upon mood, or seek conditions to induce it. But, as I have said, the psychic, visionary power belonged exclusively to neither; it influenced both, and was dictated by laws he did not fully understand. For instance, "Lilith," "The Whisperer," "Finis," by W. S. and "The Woman with the Net," "The Last Supper," "The Lynn of Dreams" by F. M., were equally the result of direct vision.

I remember from early days how he would speak of the momentary curious "dazzle in the brain" which preceded the falling away of all material things and preluded some inner vison of Great Beauty, or Great Presences, or of some symbolic import — that would pass as rapidly as it came. I have been beside him when he has been in trance and I have felt the room throb with heightened vibration. I regret now that I never wrote down such experiences at the time. They were not infrequent, and formed a definite feature in our life. There are, however, two or three dream-visions belonging to his last summer that I recollect. Two he had noted down in brief sentences for future use. One was:

"The Lily of the World, and its dark concave, dark with excess of light and the stars falling like slow rain."

The other is headed "Elemental Symbolism." "I saw Self, or Life, symbolised all about me as a limitless, fathomless and lonely sea. I took a handful and threw it into the grey silence of ocean air, and it returned at once as a swift and potent flame, a red fire crested with blown sunrise, rushing from between the lips of sky and sea to the sound as of innumerable trumpets."

One morning he told me that during sleep he had visited a city of psychic mechanism. In a huge building he had seen this silent mechanism at work; he had watched a force plunge into molten metal and produce a shaped vessel therefrom. He could see nothing that indicated by what power the machinery was driven. He asked his guide for explanation, and he was led along passages to a small room with many apertures in the walls, like speaking tubes. In the centre was a table, on a chair sat a man with his arm on the table, his head in his hand. Pointing to him the guide said, "His thought is the motive force."

In another dream he visited a land where there was no more war, where all men and

women were equal; where humans, birds and beasts were no longer at enmity, or preyed on one another. And he was told that the young men of the land had to serve two years as missionaries to those who lived at the uttermost boundaries. "To what end?" he asked. "To cast out fear, our last enemy." The dream is too long to quote in its entirety, for it spread over two nights, but one thing impressed him greatly. In the house of his host he was struck by the beauty of a framed painting that seemed to vibrate with rich colour. "Who painted that?" he asked. His host smiled. "We have long ceased to use brushes and paints. That is a thought projected from the artist's brain, and its duration will be proportionate with its truth."

Once again he saw in waking vision those Divine Forges he had sought in childhood. On the verge of the Great Immensity that is beyond the confines of space, he saw Great Spirits of Fire standing at flaming anvils. And they lifted up the flames and moulded them on the anvils into shapes and semblances of men, and the Great Spirits took these flaming shapes and cast them forth into space, so that they should become the souls of men.

He was, as Mrs. Mona Caird has truly said of him, "almost encumbered by the in-

finity of his perceptions; by the thronging interest, intuitions, glimpses of wonders, beauties and mysteries which made life for him a pageant and a splendour such as is only disclosed to the soul that has to bear the torment and the revelations of genius. He had much to suffer, but in spite of that — perhaps partly because of that — he was able to bring to all a great sense of sunshine and boyish freshness, of joy in life and nature and art, and in the adventure and romance of it all, for those who knew how to dare enough to go to meet it with open hands. He gave ever the sense of new power, new thresholds, new realms. His friendship was a spiritual possession." And though indeed, as Mr. Frank Rinder has written, "there may be those inclined to censure William Sharp for his silence about Fiona Macleod, yet, probably, had the world known, 'she'— for in thought it is always that — would have written no more. May we not remember Ossian and others who shrank from revealing to all their secret? . . . I can but bear testimony to the ever-ready and eager sympathy, to the sunny winsomeness, to the nobility of the soul that has passed. William Sharp was one of the most lovable, one of the most remarkable men of our time."

And, I would add,— to quote my husband's own words — ever, below all the stress and failure, below all the triumph of his toil, lay the beauty of his dream.

To live in beauty — which is to put into four words all the dream and spiritual effort of the soul of man.

F. M.