Shaw's Sculptress – Kathleen Scott

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Abstract: *GBS once told Kathleen Scott, widow of the Antarctic explorer, who was sculpting Shaw, that the nearest he ever came to homosexual feelings was his love for her. She understood. Because of her vocation she seldom wore anything feminine – overalls at her vocation, sack-like garments with no adornment of any kind when at leisure. Beautiful, bohemian and uninhibited, with a host of male admirers from H. H. Asquith and David Lloyd George to James Barrie and Gordon Craig, she nevertheless reserved herself for a yet-to-be-found hero figure – who turned out to be explorer Robert Falcon Scott.*

Barrie would tell her that she was half man and half woman, but that the female half was twice as feminine as that of most women.

She was in her middle twenties and as yet unmarried when Shaw first met her. He saw her often after her widowhood. A neighbor of his was a survivor of Scott's last expedition. She had visited Apsley Cherry-Garrard, and Shaw was there. He made no secret of his feelings, and became the grandfather figure her little son, Peter, never had. During the Great War, Shaw saw much of her and Peter, as she turned to temporary war work, finally in Whitehall. As Lady Scott – a title she received as a widow – she could have had nearly any wartime job she wanted yet began in a munitions factory.

In the 1920s, even after she married one-armed Great War hero Hilton Young, who became Lord Kennet, and had a late second son with him, Wayland Young, Shaw continued to remain a close friend. She was a guest at Lady Astor's estate when Shaw read to the group, laughing at his own jokes, his new play The Apple Cart*, which has two women Cabinet ministers who may have some of Kathleen's traits. Even earlier, in one of his segments of the futuristic* Back to Methuselah*, the only sculptor in all of his plays, the cocky, self-confident Pygmalion, may also have some satiric touches at her expense.*

Although Kathleen, according to Shaw, "never played the grief-stricken lonely widow," he never would tell her his true feelings about Scott's "folly": that the stubborn Scott died on his Polar journey and others with him because he "did what was done last time; and every thing he did was wrong."

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When she died in 1947, before Shaw, she had long been Lady Kennet, and the difficulties of travel during World War II, and Shaw's great age, and her declining health, had long kept them apart. When Lord Kennet wrote to him of her long-expected death, Shaw answered that he had heard of it on the radio, on his 91st birthday, and the news "instantly reduced the monstrous pile of letters and cards to dust and ashes. But it did not hurt. I rejoice in Kathleen, dead or alive. I never grieve; and I never forget."

Many years into their long friendship Bernard Shaw told Kathleen Scott (she had sculpted him, wearing then-unfeminine coveralls or slacks), "No woman ever born had a narrower escape from being a man. My affection for you is the nearest I ever came to homosexuality."[1] Lady Scott, widow of the Antarctic explorer, nevertheless always had trouble deflecting admirers. Nor did she try very hard. Devotees often became subjects for her chisel, and if not then, they became helpless with admiration as they sat for her.

A friend late in her life, who would write Kathleen's obituary in advance for *The Times* in 1937, ten years before she died, called her "alleged vamping of distinguished men" empty charges that were "rubbish." Rather, "famous men sought K. out, even those who were not being modelled," and she would claim in pleased vanity that she had "volumes" of letters from them.(Lees-Milne, 8-16) Shaw's alone would make a small volume.

G.B.S. met Kathleen Bruce in the early 1900s. Born on March 27, 1878, she had studied with Rodin when just out of her teens. At work in England later, Kathleen mingled with politicians and artistic people in circles that intersected with Shaw's own. Her admiration of Shaw was so complete that when she was hospitalized for surgery, and "half-expected to die," she became even more certain of that when a nurse asked her if she would like to have a clergyman visit. No, she said, she would rather see Bernard Shaw. (Young, 77)

Her personal world found a focus when she met naval captain and explorer Robert Falcon Scott and determined to marry him. He was forty and she was thirty. She had waited almost in eugenic Shavian fashion until she had found the man she wanted to sire her sons (she was sure they would be sons). Scott succumbed.

Peter Scott was born before his father left to search for the South Pole in 1910; and with Scott gone, Kathleen resumed much of her former life despite the intrusions of her new celebrity. Later she recalled that among her own searches for excitement she had been the second woman in England to fly, going up in a biplane with dual controls with Thomas Sopwith, and getting her now-familiar face – but to her relief, not her name – in an issue of *The Aeroplane.* Shaw's characters were often real-life composites, and Kathleen may have contributed to the personality of Shaw's daring aviatrix in his farce *Misalliance* (1910), who flies tandem with a male companion, and turns men into

helpless worshipers. In 1911, while Scott was contending with Antarctic extremes which Kathleen could hardly imagine, she went to the opening night of Shaw's next comedy, the feminist *Fanny's First Play*, after which she chatted happily with G.B.S., who was "awfully hilarious."

Scott, who reached the Pole in January 1912, perished with the team struggling back after the final push. Even making it had been less than a triumph. Arriving at ninety degrees south they had discovered that Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian explorer, had beaten them by a month and left the evidence. It was almost as if Scott's party would be dying twice.

For Kathleen it was not the way she wanted to become a titled Lady, but she was authorized to use the style that would have been her own, had her husband been knighted on a triumphant return. Sculpting commissions – including an inevitable Scott memorial – increased with her widow's visibility, but when war came the next year she sought appropriate work.

Lady Scott was persuaded to take a job with the Ministry of Pensions. She became private secretary to the Permanent Secretary, Sir Matthew Nathan, for whom she was working when, at Christmas 1916, she and Peter visited Apsley Cherry-Garrard for the holidays. "Cherry" had survived the "Terra Nova" expedition, not having been among the four that died short of rescue. Shaw's country neighbor at Lamer Park in Hertfordshire, Cherry-Garrard had lived at the idyllic Garrard estate since he was six, when his father inherited it and accordingly hyphenated his name. Cherry blamed himself rather than circumstances for not having returned with supplies for Scott in time.

Cherry-Garrard invited the Shaws to join them for Christmas Eve, and Kathleen noted in her diary, "Shaw was enchanting; told me I had the blue eye of genius, what he called the Strindberg eye." ("He always flatters me a good deal," she confessed.) On Christmas Day 1916 she and Peter (whom Kathleen dressed for the occasion as a miniature Father Christmas) took several books as gifts to the Shaws at nearby Ayot St. Lawrence – less than a mile down the lane. G.B.S. asked them to stay (with Peter as the excuse) so that he could read to them "what he called a children's story, [although] it was a hyper adult story." It imagined an encounter between the Kaiser and a waiflike girl somehow exposed at night on a Flanders battlefield. Shaw had written it for a gift book in aid of a Belgian children's charity.

Kathleen was still fixated on death and sacrifice, as were the many who mourned loved ones lost in the continuing carnage of the war It may have seemed to her as if Shaw, anticipating Joan of Arc's death, had suggested what the Maid of Orleans was like when she was a girl. Simple yet shrewd, and irreverent toward authority figures, the child is the Kaiser's intellectual match in their brief exchange, and the blustering Wilhelm II is seen as the helpless pawn of his position. As they debate amid the shellfire, a round explodes nearby, obliterating the child but leaving her disembodied voice, in which fashion she reappears to him as if in a waking dream. Although the bewildered and bespattered monarch remains alive, he is now alone. The child has been "set free by the

shell" from the pain and privation of existence much in the manner the lively Joan of the epilogue of Shaw's play to come (in 1923) is freed from the body by her burning.

Sixty, but younger in heart when it came to attractive women, even when he thought of them only as daughters, G.B.S. was exhilarated by reading the story to Kathleen and her fatherless little son. He would see much more of her through the war years and later. When she learned that he was going to Flanders by army invitation in January and February 1917, which he would write up as "Joy-Riding at the Front," she used her connections to get him a follow-up invitation to visit the Austro-Italian lines. He knew it would disappoint her, but he responded to the British Military Mission that although the Trentino in the spring was a pleasant thought, he would be of no propaganda use there. Few Englishmen were involved in the fighting, and the public considered the war in Italy a sideshow to the main stage.[2]

Kathleen would be among the select few in Shaw'sAdelphi Terrace flat late in the afternoon of June 8, 1917 when he read scenes of his newest play, *Heartbreak House*, taking all the roles himself. "Very, very funny," she noted in her diary about the first act. Halfway through came tea, and the remainder of the play followed, but while others stayed to the end, Lady Scott had to return to her office at the Ministry of Pensions to work late.

The next day Shaw traveled to Lamer with her, and after Peter had gone to bed that evening, G.B.S. read to her and to Cherry parts of what she had missed. She was baffled by it, its dreamlike elements escaping her: "All the people develop as you least expect." On Sunday she and Peter lunched at the Shaws, and afterward as she dozed intermittently in the sunlit garden, G.B.S. completed his reading, more for himself, it seemed, than for her. According to one of her diary entries in May 1917, after lunch at Ayot, G.B.S. walked back with her to Lamer, "and we discussed the propagation of the race." The new play he was planning, the *Back to Methuselah* cycle, would deal in part with longevity and futuristic evolution, and he was apparently trying out ideas with her.

He would see a lot of Kathleen. She often frequented Lamer Park. There was almost always Lady Scott on weekends. She had emerged as a trusted figure in whom he could confide those things he was reluctant to tell Charlotte. Once, encountering Kathleen and Peter on the train, he "descended from first class to third class to play with us." At Lamer he would turn up for tea, and remain for the evening, telling bedtime stories for Kathleen's son which he would invent on the spot. Ever since he was very little, Shaw explained to Peter, he always told himself a story each night before he went to sleep, some of them continuing as serials over several nights. He repeated his favorite stories, Shaw confessed, over and over again.

One evening that November, after Peter went off contentedly to bed, the Shaws and Kathleen had dinner with Cherry, at which G.B.S. confessed for reasons unknown that he had never learned to dance. Kathleen offered to give him a lesson, and he glided across the floor with her to music from Cherry's phonograph, pleased with himself. While Charlotte watched placidly (she bridled at his attentions to other women, yet never to Lady Scott), Shaw happily went through his paces with Kathleen. "To begin to

learn to dance at sixty-one is rather delicious," she had written in her diary two weeks earlier. "I love old Shaw."

Late in December 1917, she became a war casualty, falling ill from overwork. She had often worked at the Ministry far into the evenings, and loathed her dull job, considering it "very little different from a grave." On January 8, 1918, Shaw visited and sat for hours at her bedside, returning two days later, after which she was able to pen a diary note, "Still in bed, fainting a good deal. Bernard Shaw came, and we discussed dreams, deliriums, and happiness." He often told her his dreams, never revealing them to Charlotte.

Shaw often visited, alone, at Buckingham Palace Road, dining with her and reading scenes from his overly talky new play about characters based on her friend former prime minister Asquith and his successor, David Lloyd George. "Ll.G. the bouncing rhetorical fraud, and Asquith, the bland, benign old gentleman – very funny, but not quite right," she observed loyally about the ousted Asquith. When she next went to Lamer, this time without Peter, Shaw was again there because he expected her. Shaw "amazed me," she wrote. "I have known him for fifteen years, and this was the first time I knew he sang. He went almost through the score of Rheingold on the piano, singing in a charming baritone voice. He plays amazingly well. He is a marvellous man." Alone with her, he often reminisced about his past indiscretions – his affair with actress Florence Farr, whom Kathleen met only after her looks had faded; children's writer Edith Nesbit's failed passes at him; his own frustrations in trying to seduce "Mrs. Pat" Campbell, his Eliza in *Pygmalion.*

What Shaw did not tell Kathleen – if he knew himself – is that he may have put aspects of her into a character in the next futuristic playlet, after the Asquith – Lloyd George segment, in his *Methuselah* cycle, "The Thing Happens." It includes a female Domestic Minister, perhaps a promotion from Kathleen's job at the Ministry of Pensions, who wears a tunic and dresses "*not markedly different from [...] the men.*" Mrs. Lutestring, who, from experience, discusses, among other matters, "Old Age Pensions," is "*a handsome woman*, *apparently in the prime of life, with [an] elegant, tense, well held-up figure, and the walk of a goddess."* Among men she inspires *"instinctive awe."* Although never an artist, her late husband was "a great painter." Only the smallest of hints, perhaps, but the stately Cabinet Minister may be a Shavian bow to Lady Scott.

For July and August, 1918 Kathleen rented Streatley Vicarage in Berkshire, up the Thames from London, using it also as a studio. Shaw agreed to visit and pose for her while she did a statuette. While Charlotte went off to visit her sister in Ireland, Shaw paid visits to Kathleen. G.B.S. remained for ten days, swimming in the Thames when the sun shone, sitting for a statuette when it didn't. And he wondered to her whether an artist's own gender and character revealed itself in the work, guessing that in her androgynous case it did not. Although husbandless since 1912, Kathleen was unconcerned about having Shaw on the premises, however her neighbors might talk. Their relationship was father-daughter.

Shaw was to travel further, by bus and rail, to visit Beatrice and Sidney Webb in Wales. Since that meant lunching en route, Kathleen asked her cook to pack cucumber sandwiches for Shaw. When he unwrapped the first one he discovered that the thoughtful cook had enhanced the dreary vegetarian repast with potted meat. G.B.S. threw them away and hungered all the way to Wales. He was in Ireland with Charlotte when Kathleen went to the pre-opening of the International Art Show in London, where her already completed bronze statuette of Shaw, standing, with arms folded across his chest, appeared to her "alone on the central table of the principal room, looking very small." After seeing it, Shaw would call it "a masterpiece."

To G.B.S., Kathleen could do no wrong – unless it was her marrying Scott. To her second husband, who was not amused, Shaw would confide indiscreetly that Kathleen should have only been "secondarily famous as the wife of the world renowned wonderful Scott." Her authentic achievement was in art. "Now Scott was not wonderful: [...]

> and he was so unsuited to the job he insisted on undertaking that he ended as the most incompetent failure in the history of exploration. Kathleen, on the other hand, was a wonderful woman, first rate at her job, adventurously ready to go to the ends of the earth at half an hour's notice with no luggage but a comb with three teeth left in it, and always successful. Scott's best right to his celebrity is that he induced her to marry him.

Although in part Shaw was indulging in his love of paradox, Kathleen would have remained far less friendly had she known of Shaw's private disloyalty to Scott, and how Cherry, with Shavian assistance, was treating her hero in the memoir he had begun early in 1917 as *Never Again: Scott, Some Penguins, and the Pole*." Cherry had been invited by the Captain Scott Antarctic Fund to write the official history of the doomed second Scott expedition. The Shaws lunched with Cherry-Garrard nearly every Sunday they were in the country, and on one crucial Sabbath he revealed the offer. But he was no explorer, he said dismissively: he had only been the young naturalist of the expedition, who as a boy had "a taste for snails and solitude." G.B.S. and Charlotte urged him to undertake it although he had never written for publication. He felt daunted by the prospect, but Shaw offered editing help, and Charlotte even promised to correct his proofs.

Kathleen was delighted. In the circumstances, she felt, loyally, how could the result be anything but a masterwork? But Shaw saw the project as more than a saint's life. First he set down for Cherry a half-page rules of punctuation, Shavian style, that emphasized the colon and semi-colon. Then Shaw criticized the text, Cherry noted, "as it was written, word by word and chapter by chapter." As self-appointed editor, he asked questions to establish clarity, as in "What is pack?" Some of the questions, as this one, became rhetorical devices, as it introduced an explanation of pack ice. Beyond the pathetic end for Scott, Shaw also saw a drama in the race to the Pole.

Cherry, Shaw recalled at the start, "still retained his boyish notions of Scott and his expedition [...]. One day, in his library, I asked him if there was any extant account of Amundsen's venture." Roald Amundsen, the Norwegian adventurer who had reached the Pole a month before Scott (as Scott discovered to his consternation), on December 14, 1911, had published a book about the enterprise, *The South Pole*, in 1912. Cherry took down the book, which Shaw guessed he had not been opened. "I read it and found he was an explorer of genius, who had got to the Pole and back without losing a single man, having found a new route [...] by two inspired guesses and taking two big chances, and knowing exactly how to treat his men. Everything he did was original and right: Scott did what was done last time; and everything he did was wrong." Thus Cherry writes, undoubtedly with Shaw's hand guiding him, of Amundsen's "sort of sagacity that constitutes the specific genius of the explorer," and that his expedition "was more highly endowed in personal qualities than ours."

G.B.S. had been drafting and rewriting passages for Cherry, and both Shaws, as Cherry wrote, made marginal comments and textual emendations. (The plethora of full colons is also likely to have been Shaw's hand, as well as the discussion, recalling *Man and Superman*, of exploration as "the physical expression of the Intellectual Passion.") Shaw even arranged with his own printer, R. & R. Clark in Edinburgh, and his long-time publisher, Constable, for publication, and the proofs of the book were delivered on April 9, 1920. It was, Cherry concluded, "the worst journey in the world." "There's your title," said Shaw.

As the book moved closer to publication, G.B.S. deflected Cherry's request that his considerable assistance be acknowledged. "It would be fatal," he advised on April 26, 1922, "to make any suggestion of collaboration on my part. The book would be reviewed on the assumption that I had written all the striking parts of it, and that they were 'not serious.' Beyond proofreading work, and paraphrasing your conversation here and there," he downplayed, "I have done nothing that is not covered by your device of quoting the practical man. You should not be at all uneasy as to the integrity of your authorship." Cherry would confess about the Shaws, "They taught me to write," and among the well-chosen epigraphs to chapters of the book he included one from *Man and Superman*, in which Don Juan in the interlude in Hell declares that men can be driven by ideas – "I tell you, [...] if you can show a man a piece of what he now calls God's work to do, and what he will later call by many new names, you can make him entirely reckless of the consequences to himself personally."

That concept as it applied to Scott should have appealed to Kathleen, but since Shaw realized, too, how she would react to other implications in the book, he had, accordingly, kept his distance. She would never have any idea what Shaw's part had been in Cherry's book either, which among other things had included writing at least some of the lines that praised Amundsen at Scott's expense. (G.B.S.'s later role was a jacket blurb for the Chatto & Windus reprint that hinted only slightly at that. Compared with Scott's "extraordinary and appalling" expedition," Shaw wrote, "[...] Amundsen's victorious rush

to the South Pole seems as cheerful as a trip to Margate. Even Dante's exploration of the icebound seventh circle of hell shews that men cannot imagine the worst that they can suffer." In a way that toned down for Kathleen the criticism in the book itself.)

Kathleen's first postwar years included hectic travel which the war had precluded, in part to escape her past, in part to escape new and intent admirers [...]. But she wanted to remarry, and noted in her diary from Cherbourg, after travels across both Americas, "Lord will I ever find a man I altogether like – who do I want? No one will do. Maybe I am utterly and completely spoilt [...]."

Another aspirant, however, had emerged from her surfeit of adventurers and heroes. In November 1922 she had Shaw and H. G. Wells to lunch, when they learned about her betrothal by accident. Kathleen had Shaw promise to read his new and yet-unproduced *Saint Joan* to her, and she asked him "if he was never coming to an end." He confessed, "I thought I must have dried up after producing *Methuselah*, but to my astonishment I found the sap rising again." The discussion turned to her show of recent work at the Grosvenor Gallery, to which Wells had taken Shaw, and he was "awfully impressed," Kathleen noted, by her nudes, especially one she had titled, obscurely, *I Want.* Since she sculpted from life, he wondered about its origin. "Bill did it," she said.

Shaw looked puzzled. "Bill" was Edward Hilton Young, the Liberal M.P. But the statuette had two arms. In 1918 Hilton Young, then a naval officer, had lost his right arm in Belgium, and Kathleen had restored it in her bronze. She had felt immensely sorry for Hilton, and as her feelings for him intensified, Shaw tried to console her as he had done, wryly and unsuccessfully, with Robert Loraine. "I said," he recalled, his propensity for paradox again unsuccessful, "that as a man with two arms is not unhappy because he has not three, neither is he unhappy if, having one, he hasn't two, and she flew out at me so furiously that I discreetly shut up."

Kathleen was well past forty-four when she and Hilton were married in the crypt of the House of Commons by an Anglican bishop; he was younger by nearly a year. It was an opportune time for Shaw (March 23, 1923) to caution her as gently as he could about Cherry's just-published deflation of Scott, which Shaw had abetted but described to her as "a classic story of travel." Kathleen had the two-volume boxed set sent by Cherry inscribed "with very grateful thanks" and had already begun to pen "Rots!" in the margins.

Shaw wrote two long, delicate letters to Kathleen about Scott and the *Worst Journey*. "Keep this," he began one letter defensively, "for a quiet hour: it is about Cherry and old times and sorrows." The facts would come out by some means or other, and as in "Cherry's narrative" Scott would be proved "reckless in travelling without sufficient margins in provisions and fuel; and he had accepted the official scientific formula for rationing, which was of course all wrong, and produced a starvation which was disguised until it was too late." The book, he explained, gently but unpersuasively, in his second letter, was not "an act of personal disloyalty to [Scott]."

Loyally, Hilton was even more outraged than Kathleen, seeing on Cherry's part "a grievance against his late leader, whom he believed to have neglected his, C.G.'s,

merits, on the expedition." Although he saw Shaw's (and Cherry-Garrard's) undiplomatic assessment of Scott as irresponsible, it has stood up.

Shaw "seems unconsciously determined to make me angry and resentful against Cherry," Kathleen wrote in her diary, "a thing I do not want to be at all. I have never admired Cherry but I am fond of him and don't want to have to cease to be [...][but] his rendering of Con's character is so ludicrous it should not even make one cross, only Shaw seems determined I should be cross!" Scott had become a national icon for stoic endurance in terrible adversity, a quality glorified by a world war. Cherry (and Shaw) had tarnished the shining moment.

Kathleen's friendship with Shaw survived *The Worst Journey in the World* because she never knew the extent of Shaw's hand in it. Cherry-Garrard would see little of Kathleen afterwards, but he was gradually withdrawing into chronic, debilitating depression. "My own bolt is shot," he wrote near the close of his book; "I do not suppose I shall never go south again before I go west." He had not been able to save Scott's marooned team. The memoir had attempted to explain why, but it could not purge him of his demons. One of the few people he was willing to see over the full course of his forty-six post-polar years was Shaw.

In August 1923, at forty-five, after four days of difficult labor, Kathleen gave birth to her second son, Wayland. The late, risky pregnancy had not kept her from working. That Armistice Day, a cold, sunny morning, her war memorial, a larger-than-life brooding soldier, was unveiled at Huntingdon. Shaw remained in her life, now given over substantially to her husband's career in the Commons. "I was awfully pleased to see him," she wrote of Shaw on March 11, 1924. "He sat holding forth on life, politics, and the drama, with our babe comfortably tucked up on his arm. There's summut [Scots for *something*] in a white-haired old man with a little baby that stirs all my heart."

In 1926, Hilton Young switched allegiance to the Conservatives, and politics became more intrusive in Kathleen's life. It was hard to be a sculptor, she wrote, when "there are [...] political parties in the world." People were beginning to forget exactly who her first husband was, other than that he was somehow connected with polar exploration. At a political dinner party in the Commons, a guest greeted her with, "I knew your dear husband [Ernest] Shackleton." (At Charles Shannon's house a servant once asked him, as he ushered G.B.S. out, "Excuse me, sir, is that the gentleman who wrote Shakespeare?") Despite her remarriage she could not escape Scott's shade, even when it was misindentified.

With Hilton's change of party he was now seeking a seat from the Sevenoaks division, and early in 1928 Kathleen made speeches for him while he was on political business in East Africa. She served her "lord god" by hosting dinner parties, made time for overseeing her sons, now nineteen and six, and worked on statue commissions. At one party, she recalled, Mrs. Stanley Baldwin, wife of the Tory prime minister, "looked down her nose at Bernard Shaw, and didn't get hold of him at all." Shaw often came to

lunch, "which is fun," and on one occasion when she had the famous Portuguese cellist Suggia also as guest, the one-time music critic (as "G.B.S.") "chid Suggia teasingly for having such a cumbrous instrument as a cello. Why not a nice little fiddle?" It reminded Shaw of the elderly removals laborer who, while weighed down by a grandfather's clock he was carrying, stopped to ask, "Excuse me, but at your age, wouldn't you find a wristwatch more convenient?"

Shaw was again at Buckingham Palace Road in April 1929 to lunch with American banker Otto Kahn and several English politicians. Kathleen and Hilton "had a bet" as to whether Shaw or Austen Chamberlain would "talk the other down." To their surprise, Kahn "beat them both, and Shaw came in a poor third." On one occasion the millionaire playwright boasted to a party of economists and financiers that he was a communist, a paradox which Kathleen found "unconvincing." At another, in 1932 – he was often a raisin in her social cake – he brought her his newest book, the *Candide*-like *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Search of God,* and "got on like a house on fire" with fashionable conductor Malcolm Sargent. Afterwards she walked across Green Park with Shaw "at an immense rate." She was amazed at his stamina. "He is a grand old man [...]. May I be like him when I am seventy-five." Kathleen would have been peeved had she known that in Cherry-Garrard's gift copy of *The Black Girl* G.B.S would write,

> For Cherry and Angela
> Greatest of my friends. (Cherry-Gerrard, xxiv)

In 1938, when Shaw was eighty-two, she had Shaw sit for a head-and-shoulders sculpture. She was sixty, and in dark slacks and blouse she looked youthful. Watching her results, Shaw, who materialized under her fingers with his head in his hands, framing his face, deplored it facetiously as "a Shakespearean tomb." It did look remarkably like the iconic portrait of the Bard. For it (and her) Shaw wrote a rhyming commentary, on green paper, beginning, "Weep not for old George Bernard: he is dead" – a copy of which he sent to Lord Alfred Douglas, once Wilde's young friend and a minor poet. Kathleen, he wrote, rejected his "epitaph" (jokingly intended as inscription for a pedestal) as "nonsense verse" – which might have been too kind. He had once written of his bust in marble by Auguste Rodin that he – G.B.S. – would be known mainly as "subject of bust by Rodin." Now he closed by versifying that "Kathleen plied" at his head

> Until one day the Lord said "No, my lass:
>
> Copy no more. Your spirit shall be your guide.
> Carve him [...]
> So, when his works shall all forgotten be
> He yet shall share your immortality."[3] (Hyde, 98-100)

At the Royal Academy exhibition in the spring of 1940, while the *Luftwaffe* rained incendiary bombs on London, she exhibited in bronze what she called "a half-

figure, almost," pleased with the outcome. Under wartime restrictions, people got around far less, and Shaw saw little of Kathleen then and nothing of Peter Scott, who commanded a destroyer. Shaw lived largely in the country, as Charlotte was very ill, and the bombings made matters worse for her. Kathleen, too, lived more at Leinster Corner, the country place she and Hilton had acquired.

Charlotte died on September 13, 1943, at eighty-six. At the end of October, after her private funeral and cremation, Kathleen wrote, still maintaining her diary, that Shaw, eighty-seven, came to tea, traveling alone by tube. "He was more amazing than ever, and better company. He told us all about Charlotte's illness and death." Charlotte, G.B.S. told Kathleen and Hilton – he was now Lord Kennet of the Dene, and she was Lady Kennet – had illusions that the service flat in which the elderly Shaws had lived since the mid – 1920s was full of people who didn't belong there. "You must get up the housekeeper and the manager," Charlotte appealed. "We pay for the flat and it is very expensive: we have a right to have it to ourselves." Shaw explained the hallucinations to her imaginatively as her clairvoyance – "all these people existed but they were in Australia or Oxford or anywhere," and the manager would not be able to see them.

Three years later, after Shaw (then 90) had a fall, Kathleen went to see him, finding him sitting up in a dressing gown and "looking really very frail [...]. Oh dear he is the oddest maddest mixture. He told me yet again how [, since Charlotte's death,] many women wanted to marry him, knowing that they would only have to look after him for a year or two and then have his fortune." It was October 14, 1946. "He is ninety, but his mind and gestures are as active as ever and his memory for what we had said and done thirty years ago quite prodigious, and putting me to shame." Feeling his mortality, at his suggestion they talked of possible Shavian memorials, including her bust. "I tried to go lots of times, lest he should get tired, but he wouldn't let me. He was a little sentimental, finally. Waning is a sad, sad thing."

Kathleen said nothing about herself, but she was waning more seriously, stricken by painful angina. Soon after Christmas she was bedridden. A few months into 1947 she went into St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, realizing that it was the end. When she died on July 24, 1947, a year short of seventy, it was two days before Shaw would reach ninety-one. He wrote to Peter, now an eminent ornithologist, "The news from Leinster Corner reached me on my birthday, and for a moment struck it all of a heap. But I cannot feel otherwise than gladly about her, nor imagine her old. She was a very special friend."

At the time, Shaw was contemplating publication of his admittedly lightweight *Rhyming Picture Guide to Ayot Saint Lawrence.* He could not imagine a year without producing something between hard covers. Its origin, years before, had been picture-postcard doggerel verses for Ellen Terry. The last contribution to it was a photograph he had taken of Kathleen at Ayot. Accompanying it were his unmemorable yet deeply felt lines,

> Widow of Scott, whose statue [I] cherished
> She wrought when at the Pole he perished;

A later union of two hearts
Was with a man of many parts.
She wedded him, and then was seen Chatto and Windus, 1965.

It was the last book on which Shaw worked, published in December 1950, six weeks after his own death.

Notes

1 Kathleen recalled the remark in he diary for September 19, 1929. All her diary entries following, unless otherwise cited are from her *Self-Portrait of an Artist.*

2 Shaw's story of the Flanders episode as a war correspondent appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* on March 5, 7 and 8, 1917, later collected, with additions, in "Joy Riding at the Front," *What I Really Wrote about the War* (London, 1931), 248-79. That Lady Scott had procured the invitation is clear from Shaw's letter to General Delme-Radcliffe, April 23, 1917.

3 Shaw to Kathleen, November 12, 1938, in Mary Hyde (Ed.). *Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas. A Correspondence* (New Haven and New York, 1982), 98-9. The bust is illustrated on p. 100.

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