**Shane Leslie to Montgomery Hyde**

**3 July 1959**

**Letter in University of Texas, Austin archive on diaries, FJ Bigger etc.**

5 Morpeth Mansions

SW

July 3, 1959

Dear Montgomery Hyde

Thank you for the two volumes which I am glad to keep. I crossed pens with V. O’Sullivan in America forty years ago. As for the Black Diaries – Ichabod!

I hardly know what I feel or what to say about the proud auto-condemnation which they reveal. The ordinary sodomite is shameful and unhappy and hides his tracks but Casement gloried in his and kept a list of his victims like a game book recorded by a sportsman. The only plea that his admirers can cling to now is that he was a case of “criminal imagination”. Priests sometimes have to deal with women who confess appalling Lesbianism and harlotries only to find they are desolate old maids or insane schoolgirls. I always doubt if St Augustine could have been such an appalling evil-liver and concupiscent madman as he confesses.

It is true my poor friend Biggar fainted when he read the Diaries left in his care and like a gentleman burnt them I believe using the tongs. The curious thing is that though Casement had embittered enemies in every country there was no charge of the kind which could have ruined him in the way that Oscar’s enemies deliberately and unnecessarily ruined him. No boy or even minion was produced or named or whispered in Belfast or Dublin. After all imagination and lying diaries do not come under the criminal law. The Police were fools not to catch him with boys and avoid hanging him. Both Ireland and England have to suffer for his fantastic gallantries.

I do not know how the final revelation can be broken to the Irish people who too easily passed him into their Martyrology. If his ashes were handed to the Dublin Govt. it would settle everything and finally send Casement to oblivion. He could not help feeling the motives of a sodomite which he was born as we, who are normal as Parnell or Daniel O’Connell, cannot help feeling towards the fair sex and being commended for our respect, ability and social decency thereby –

The odd thing is that Casement qualified at different times for Westminster Abbey or Glasnevin!

Thanking you sincerely & hoping we can have a chat in room 15 one day as well as venerate poor old Redmond’s bust – yours

Shane Leslie