



W. B. Yeats

18 Dobson Buildings
Euston Road
London

Arranged by Algeyous

Cone Park
Gore-







**Irish
National
Theatre
Society.**

34 Lr Camden Street,
DUBLIN.



*in sheet
Gorgon by
W. H. G.*



The Irish National Theatre Society.

President: W. B. YEATS.

**Vice-Presidents: MAUD GONNE, DOUGLAS HYDE,
GEORGE RUSSELL.**

Stage Manager: W. G. FAY.

Secretary: FRED. RYAN.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY was formed to continue—if possible on a more permanent basis—the work begun by the Irish Literary Theatre, and it has grown out of the movement which the Literary Theatre inaugurated. Its objects are to endeavour to create an Irish National Theatre by producing plays in English and Irish, written by Irish writers or on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to educate and interest the public in the higher and more vital forms of dramatic art. The actors are all amateurs, though some have been engaged for a considerable time in stage-work; to this, however, they only devote their leisure time, as all of them are engaged at other avocations during the day.

The first performances with which the Society was associated were those of "Deirdre," by "A.E.," and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," by W. B. Yeats, produced in St. Teresa's Hall, Dublin, in April, 1902, under the auspices of *Inghiníre na hÉireann*. In October last, in the Ancient Concert Rooms, Dublin, the Society, in connection with the *Saibhán* Festival, produced "A Pot of Broth," by Mr. Yeats, "The Sleep of the King," a poetic allegory by Seumas O'Cuisin, "The Racing Lug," a short tragedy of fishing life by the same author, "The Laying of the Foundations," by Fred Ryan, and "Céití agur an Deán Dáipce," by P. T. MacGinley. In March last, "The Hour-Glass," by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and "Twenty-Five," by Lady Gregory, were performed for the first time, in the Molesworth Hall, Dublin. In the interval many of these plays have been repeated in Dublin and some provincial towns.

The principal hope of the Society is to discover and stimulate new work, and it has already elicited several promising plays by new writers, whilst owing to its circumstances the expenses of its experiment must be small. At present there is not a suitable hall available for dramatic performances in Dublin, and it is the desire of the promoters that in the near future they may be enabled to secure such a permanent home for national drama, in which performances could more regularly be given, and which would be the centre of the dramatic movement in Ireland.

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1903

The Irish National Theatre Society.

President, W. B. YEATS; Vice-Presidents, MAUD GONNE,
DOUGLAS HYDE, GEORGE RUSSELL; Stage Manager,
W. G. FAY; Secretary, Fred Ryan.

MOLESWORTH HALL,

Molesworth Street, Dublin,

SATURDAY EVE, 14th MARCH, '03,
AT EIGHT O'CLOCK.

The Programme will consist of

"THE HOUR GLASS,"

A Morality in One Act, by W. B. Yeats. (First time
on any Stage.)

— A LECTURE ON —

"The Reform of the Theatre,"

By W. B. YEATS.

A Play in One Act (for the first time on any stage,
entitled—

"TWENTY-FIVE,"

By LADY GREGORY.

Reserved Seats, 2s. Admission, 1s. & 6d.

Tickets may be had at office of THE UNITED IRISHMAN,
37 FORTRESS-STREET; from M. S. MacShibbigh, 18 High-
street; Colliad MacGuthrie, 19 North Frederick-street,
or on application by letter to the Secretary, 34 Lower
Camden-street.

We are informed that the Irish National Theatre Society will give a performance on March 14th, at the Molesworth Hall, Molesworth-street. The programme will consist of "The Hour Glass," a morality play written by Mr. Yeats last summer, and founded on an Irish folk-tale; "A Losing Game," a play of peasant life by Lady Gregory, written with wonderful naturalness and charm; and a lecture on "The Reform of the Theatre," by Mr. Yeats, a subject on which no one in Ireland is better qualified to speak. "The Hour Glass" will be staged on the decorative plan so long advocated by Mr. Yeats, and already applied to a great extent by Mr. Fay to "Deirdre." The costumes, which are being made in Ireland, will be very beautiful, and we think the play, which has been rehearsed by Mr. Fay, the stage-manager of the society, under the supervision of Mr. Yeats, will be impressive and moving. Another of Mr. Yeats' plays is in rehearsal, and the Society hopes to produce it before the end of the season. Needless to say, it is a work of great poetic beauty, and is receiving special care from the society's members who are to act it.

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W. G. FAY.

Programme.

MOLESWORTH HALL,

MOLESWORTH ST., DUBLIN.

Saturday, 14th March, 1903,

AT 8 O'CLOCK.

RESERVED SEATS, 2s.; ADMISSION, 6d. and 1s.

And Gló-Cumann, Gaelic Printers, Great Strand Street, Dublin.

Mr. W. B. Yeats is producing a new play to-night under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre Society in Dublin. It is called "The Hour Glass," and is in the nature of a "morality" play. The characters include a wise man, a fool, and an angel. A little play by Lady Gregory, called "Twenty-five," will also be produced.

PROGRAMME.

Production (for the first time on any stage) of a
Morality Play, in One Act, by

W. B. YEATS,

ENTITLED—

“THE HOUR GLASS.”

The Wise Man	-	-	J. DUDLEY DIGGES.
Bridget (his wife)	-	-	MAIRE T. QUINN.
His Children	EITHNE and PADRAGAN	Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.	
His Pupils	}		P. J. KELLY.
			SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN.
			P. COLUMB.
			P. Mac SHIUBHLAIGH.
The Angel	-	-	MAIRE Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.
The Fool	-	-	P. J. FAY.

LECTURE:

“The REFORM of the THEATRE,”

By W. B. YEATS.

Production (for the first time on any stage) of a
play in One Act, by

LADY GREGORY,

ENTITLED—

“TWENTY-FIVE.”

Michael Ford (a middle-aged farmer)	-	W. G. FAY.
Kate Ford (his young wife)	-	MAIRE Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.
Christie Henderson	-	P. J. KELLY.
A Neighbour	-	DORA HACKETT.
Another Neighbour	-	P. Mac SHIUBHLAIGH.

SCENE: Michael Ford's Kitchen.

The performance by the National Theatre Society, an advertisement of which will be found elsewhere, ought to bring a large audience to the Molewouth Hall on Saturday night. The programme is novel and attractive. "The Hour Glass," which, as already stated in these columns, was written by Mr. Yeats' collaborator, and is founded on an Irish folktale, is the first Irish Morality, and its production is being looked forward to with much interest, and will probably excite some discussion. The scenery, designed by Mr. W. G. Fay, is simple, restful and effective. The following is the cast of the "Hour Glass": "The Wise Man," J. Dudley Digges; "The Bridget (his Wife)," Malro T. Quinn; "His Children, Eunice and Patricia," Nic Shuibhéal; "His Pupils," P. J. Kelly, Seumas O'Sullivan, P. Columb, P. MacShibhlaigh; "The Angel," Maire N. Shuibhlaigh; "The Fool," P. J. Fay. "The Hour Glass" will be followed by a lecture by Mr. Yeats on "The Reform of the Theatre." In England the Theatre is dead. The great body of playwrights there will not tolerate Shakespeare or Sheridan or Goldsmith, unless some commercial-minded actor-manager expends thousands of pounds on scenery and dresses. For some time past a company of German actors have been playing in London, and astonishing the critics by their versatility, the man who plays the leading part one week playing a part of half-a-dozen lines the next, and they have been playing, not the sort of hackwork which the English dramatists turn out, but plays in which serious topics are discussed. Plays of this type are common enough on the Continent, where the theatre is looked on as something more than a mere place of amusement. It is hoped, then, to get the English to listen to the poetic drama, or the drama of ideas. But it is possible that in this matter Ireland will take her cue from the Continent. Mr. Yeats wrote admirably in the *Dome on the Theatre*, and of his lecture was reprinted in the first number of *Baldine*; it is a matter to which he has given a great deal of thought, and we are sure his lecture will be well worth hearing. The programme will conclude with the production—also for the first time—of Lady Gregory's little play, entitled "Twenty-five," which was published some months ago in the *Gael of New York*. It is a contrast to Mr. Yeats' sombre work, and with a cast which includes Mr. W. G. Fay, as "Michael Ford," with Mr. P. J. Kelly and Maire N. Shuibhlaigh, ought to be well played. Altogether it will be an interesting evening, and we trust the Society will receive the support it deserves.

Irish Times March 16

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE

TWO NEW PLAYS.

The Irish National Theatre Society announced last night in the Molewouth Hall, on Saturday evening, for the first performance of two short plays, one by Mr. W. B. Yeats, of the other by Lady Gregory. The first was entitled "The Hour Glass," and the second "Twenty-Five," and the audience was in a position to estimate to a fair degree the way in which the new plays of Mr. Yeats and the subjects "The Reform of the Theatre." That this "poetic" programme appealed to a considerable constituency was evidenced by the crowded state of the room; and that the gathering was well welcomed by the movement in hands was attested by the greeting of day and night. The programme was as follows:—
1. "The Hour Glass," a play in two acts, written by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and founded on an Irish folktale, is the first Irish Morality, and its production is being looked forward to with much interest, and will probably excite some discussion. The scenery, designed by Mr. W. G. Fay, is simple, restful and effective. The following is the cast of the "Hour Glass": "The Wise Man," J. Dudley Digges; "The Bridget (his Wife)," Malro T. Quinn; "His Children, Eunice and Patricia," Nic Shuibhéal; "His Pupils," P. J. Kelly, Seumas O'Sullivan, P. Columb, P. MacShibhlaigh; "The Angel," Maire N. Shuibhlaigh; "The Fool," P. J. Fay. "The Hour Glass" will be followed by a lecture by Mr. Yeats on "The Reform of the Theatre." In England the Theatre is dead. The great body of playwrights there will not tolerate Shakespeare or Sheridan or Goldsmith, unless some commercial-minded actor-manager expends thousands of pounds on scenery and dresses. For some time past a company of German actors have been playing in London, and astonishing the critics by their versatility, the man who plays the leading part one week playing a part of half-a-dozen lines the next, and they have been playing, not the sort of hackwork which the English dramatists turn out, but plays in which serious topics are discussed. Plays of this type are common enough on the Continent, where the theatre is looked on as something more than a mere place of amusement. It is hoped, then, to get the English to listen to the poetic drama, or the drama of ideas. But it is possible that in this matter Ireland will take her cue from the Continent. Mr. Yeats wrote admirably in the *Dome on the Theatre*, and of his lecture was reprinted in the first number of *Baldine*; it is a matter to which he has given a great deal of thought, and we are sure his lecture will be well worth hearing. The programme will conclude with the production—also for the first time—of Lady Gregory's little play, entitled "Twenty-five," which was published some months ago in the *Gael of New York*. It is a contrast to Mr. Yeats' sombre work, and with a cast which includes Mr. W. G. Fay, as "Michael Ford," with Mr. P. J. Kelly and Maire N. Shuibhlaigh, ought to be well played. Altogether it will be an interesting evening, and we trust the Society will receive the support it deserves.

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NEW PLAYS BY LADY GREGORY AND MR. YEATS.

Last night the National Theatre Society gave a drama rehearsal of two new plays, "Twenty-Five," by Lady Gregory, and "The Hour Glass," by W. B. Yeats. These plays are to be publicly produced, for the first time, to-night at 8 o'clock in the Molewouth Hall, although "Twenty-Five" appeared some months ago in "The Gael." They are both one-act pieces, and rather slight at that, but reinforced by a lecture by Mr. Yeats on the "Reform of the Theatre." They will fill out a theatre-evening of the usual length, and much better than the usual quality.

Lady Gregory's is a little, peasant-play written in Kiltannaish English. This, as everybody knows, is a real, rare, and musical dialect, which she has found in the mouth of her neighbours, and used in her "Cusham" and her latest book, "Facts and Dreams." The stanza for a great heroic poem like "Cusham" may perhaps be questioned, but it is evidently the right thing for poems like "Twenty-Five."

As the title implies, the play turns on a game of twenty-five, but it has come about strangely, and is played for strange stakes. The scene is laid in the kitchen of Michael Ford, a small farmer, who has met with many troubles, and is on the eve of selling his holding and his wife and child, and going with a young wife to Manchester. He leaves the house to call in a few neighbours to the farewell dinner, and while he is absent there enters Christie Henderson. Five years ago he had gone to America to make a home for his wife and child, but by hard work he has saved up a hundred pounds and has returned to claim Kate, only to find that she is married to Michael Ford. Not that she had forgotten the child, but while Christie was away his father died and she was left a burden to her mother. Michael Ford helped them to the utmost of his power and passed her persistently to marry him. But she refused. Christie Henderson and Kate both agree to live in the realism of "modern" domestic drama their way would have been plain and pleasant. But there is no question of taking it into their heads to reduce the balance of fate. Do you like Michael Ford," asks Christie. "Do you like me?" And the answer is, "I must, Christie! I must." Then Christie, hearing the neighbours that is hanging over the Ford's—her own more than fifty pounds—insists that Kate shall take the hundred pounds and set up house anew with it. She refuses, as she is bound to refuse, in spite of his passionate pleading.

But she and her neighbours return, do not recognise Christie, and she is given up, and represents himself as an emigrant who has come back with his pockets full of money. He jingles his sovereigns and fancies his bank-note, and at last asks for a game of twenty-five with the man of the house. Kate, seeing clearly that Christie means deliberately to lose his money, tries to stop the game, but her efforts are vain. Michael Ford and Christie Henderson play the game. Christie Henderson loses, and she is left with the hundred pounds. The fourth and holding are saved. Kate is saved, and Christie Henderson goes to the night. One cannot help thinking that it is a little strange that a man like Michael Ford to whom fifty pounds is life or death, should sit calmly down to play at cards at a sovereign's game. But, putting the odds, the play is a very good one. It is a very strong action should be made of Mr. W. G. Fay, as "Michael Ford," with Mr. P. J. Kelly and Maire N. Shuibhlaigh, ought to be well played. Altogether it will be an interesting evening, and we trust the Society will receive the support it deserves.

be possible or not depends wholly on the
public.

Expend 10'

THE IRISH NATIONAL
THEATRE SOCIETY

F. MC.

Irish Plays in the
Molesworth Hall

IRISH PLAYS IN THE
MOLESWORTH HALL.

LECTURE BY MR. YEATS.

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R. M.

The end of the play is inevitable, but the interest is kept up right through. The Fool plows on the dandelion, while the last grains

we mentioned. That is Stanislas O'Grady, author of "The Boy of Barra," "The Coming of Cuchulainn," "Pinn and his Companions," etc.—books the reading of which has made an epoch in many lives. He is distinguished "dramatic" writer with W. Yeats. They differ on many things, but they are friends. It is impossible to feel enmity towards Stanislas O'Grady. I heard two Nationalists talking about him the other night, and one said—

"I give him up. His Unionism knocks me out every time."

"But see," expostulated the other, "you cannot measure him by politics. Even in his Unionism there is something especially good-natured and high-souled. And when he is most erratic, and seems to observe gleams of a grand consistency about him."

"All very fine, but he shouldn't be making a puzzle of himself. I give him credit for all the good he has done, but as a riddle I give him up. He isn't worth a minute for such considerations. He couldn't be so bad if he kept clear of Journalism. But no; catch him to keep clear of it! He edits that All Ireland Review of his apparently for the purpose of keeping an open space for himself in which he can trample lead over heels two or three times a year."

"That mind you, his little paper has done a great deal of good."

"Oh, I know all about that. He helped to unmask the Irish political leech, or as he called it, 'The Great Enchantment.' But why on earth does he turn round and call it 'The King's Irish'? We are Ireland's Irish, and that is all about it."

"True, but Stanislas O'Grady says he is Ireland's too—and there is another nice little conundrum for you!"

Do you see that quiet-looking lady, dressed in black, to whom he is now speaking? It is Lady Gregory, author of "Cuchulainn of Muirtheamh." She is all Ireland's, if you like—a queen of Irish women, one of the brightest minds of the movement. I first became acquainted with her writing about three years ago. It was an article in the *Speaker* in which she described a meeting at Gort Court house in favour of the League. The style was so vivid and tangy, yet so simple and what so pure and exalting that it took my fancy by storm. When I was introduced to her I asked her if she remembered it and she smiled.

"Fancy my reading it so far away," she said, "but out there you people seem to have unfeeling matters from the very first. I wish all the Irish at home were like the Gaels of Argentina."

When I mentioned her great book "Cuchulainn," she merely said:

"Ah! if one could translate all the old legends and make them known to the people! But there is so much to be done and the need of workers is so great, and the years fly so quickly and leave us old!"

Later on I saw her engaged in quite an animated conversation with a youth who was more "preposterously young" than was any one around him—a mere boy in appearance and years. There he is now, by the way, in the fourth row of seats strangely quiet and dreamy-looking. It is Padraic MacCormack, a Gael whose poetry has already created a sensation. He won the prize given by Cumann na n-Gaedheal for a short drama. Mr. Fay tells me he will be one of the greatest of Irish dramatists. Am I dreaming as well as the rest of them? You ask me. No, I am awake and in my ordinary senses. I am merely sketching an imaginary world. I am telling of men and things that I see. But I cannot blame you for wondering if I am really awake. This movement is so remote with wonders that it often makes

you feel as if you are to speak, and penne yourself in order to make sure that you are not in a dreamland.

But here is a little picture that you must not miss. Do you see those three men yonder—two grey heads and a black head—two avatars in the evening of life and a third who is still relatively young with the lines of thought and power on his forehead? It is a group posing for your attention. The tall one, worthy of your attention, and with something of the eagle still in and with something of the eagle still in his glance is John O'Leary, one of the bitterest shakers of the scales—some of the leaders of the Fenians. The old man beside him, with glasses, through which his dark, dreamy eyes look out so languidly, has the air of a scholar. His fine head is thickly covered with long grey hair which is inclined to curl, his hair full beard and in repose; a very striking face even in motion; evidently a man of character, a man with a history. That is Dr. Sigerson, one of the strongest planks in the bridge between the future and the past. He is the man who has acted under the impetus of the Fenian movement and the Ireland in which we live today—author of "Kilencacht," "The Bards of the Gael and Gail," and, amongst other things, of a certain newspaper article which has fired the blood of two generations. It was he who wrote, "The Holocaust. We remember it with, 'his terrible refrain, 'dead, dead, dead'—and his measureless rage and hate.

The dark head is that of An creabhinne achille, or, to give him his other name, Dr. Douglas Hyde. O'Leary, Sigerson, Hyde—a trio representative of the best of the nation in the enjoyment of their life, that is, between the acts. But before you turn your gaze away from them, mark that lady who sits at Dr. Sigerson's left hand. It is Dora, his post daughter. She is here tonight with her husband, Mr. Clement Shorter, editor of the *Sphere*, who is attending the performance in his capacity of critic. From the way he has been applauding during the evening one may judge that his critique of these Irish plays is more than likely to be favourable.

That clean-shaven, rufous man near Dr. Hyde is he with the glasses—Mr. Edward Maura, who gave £10,000 this year for the purpose of founding a Palestine choir in Dublin. He is the type of

man that gives prestige to a movement—cultured, earnest, practical in a certain way, and ready to make sacrifices any day in the year for the cause. He is one of the stock of the real reality of Ireland and he is wise enough to see that Ireland and not England is his country. He has done more for the revival of Irish music and especially for the revival of Irish traditional singing than any man here; and he is still going ahead in this direction. He is just coming into his old age, but he is ample fortune, and many of the right ideas. He has done much good up to the present and will do more later on. He is also an author, and by no means a second rate one, amongst the writers of propagandist literature in connection with the Irish movement—and one of the most interesting men to meet.

In the shadow of the pillars, to the right of the stage, you see a lady who evidently wishes to escape observation. She is veiled and looks around her almost timidly as the nervous fingers, her glasses. If you have read "Irish Lyrics" you will find it a way made her acquaintance. You are looking at Jane Barlow, a writer who has touched and expressed the Irish heart as few have done of late years in the English language. The most extraordinary thing about her writing is that to a great extent it is intuitive. She has never lived amongst the people, and yet she writes with such sympathy

and truth. Her stories are, therefore, the inspiration of real genius in their clarity and insight. I remember with what pleasure and pain I first read a poem of hers that appeared in a few years ago. It was a beauty from out the *Comentaria*—a genuine and was called simply "A Misunderstanding." When I spoke to her about this she smiled in that gentle universally way of hers and said:

"Dear me! To think of it going to South America!"

"Yes," I added, "and touching many hearts of Irish exiles on the Pampas!"

You see, the SOUTHERN CROSS played it.

"Oh, isn't that a strong word!" she said archly. "I am only too glad to hear that they liked it."

She gave me a sign that any international question would be raised over the publication of her verses in Buenos Aires, without her knowledge.

Here are two men near the passage who have a claim on our notice. The tall, thin, high-souled man, bearded, spectacles, dark, distinguished man, in the one or several is "A. E." the author of "Poetries." He is a mystic. But he is a true poet and a writer of very powerful and very melodious prose. The fair young man with glasses who is smiling with him is Seamus MacManus, the folklorist and Dublin University—old enough to be with the shadow of his recent great sorrow on his soul, but holding bravely and successfully to fight it down and do a man's work still for the cause he loves. The man beside him is Stephen Gwynn, author of "The Old Knowledge," "Highways and Byways in Donegal," "The man with whom Mr. Gwynn is talking is he with the waxed mustaches, is George Moore, the novelist, who is too full for utterance just now, and all because he and Mr. Yeats have had a difference over Mr. Yeats's new play.

Mr. Yeats, you will observe, pervades the hall. He wanders about like a troubled soul in spirit, but in character. He is not dressed like anyone else, nor does he look like anyone else. And if he were dressed like anyone else he would simply be grotesque, for he was not meant for ordinary clothes. He is an original character. He has many enemies and many friends. Everything he does seems to stir up some reaction, and he is nearly always doing things. I have done my best to find out from my conversations with him whether he unconsciously goes around driving poles into beehives or whether he does it purposely, simply for the sake of notoriety. I have been unable to convince him of either purpose. He wanders in the realm of the mind, just as he does in the physical world—taking little pots of where his steps are leading him. He just goes on and on, treading on horns, and hitting up against prejudices, and cannoning against scruples, and wounding grooves and making laughing in the *Valley* but himself. He is intellectually proud, possibly without knowing it. He is a man whom you cannot judge by any conventionally or any ordinary standard. He evades analysis. You may think you have him proved beyond you or may be to be a great original thinker, when he will give you a ready reply deliver himself of some oracular absurdity, which causes you to reconsider

his case. He will then proceed to blow soap bubbles of fancy into the air until the sky is paved with them, and he will sportively pursue one bubble after another until he is tired of the sport. Then when you are on the point of convicting him of being a trifling trifler and a melodious alibi-blower, he will suddenly change his mood and talk with amazing brilliancy and force on the most elevated theme—talk with intense earnestness

THE REFORM OF THE THEATRE.

I have been asked by one of our players to read to THE UNITED IRELANDER the manuscript of my lecture on the Reform of the Theatre. I cannot do this, for I had no manuscript; I cannot even write out my lecture from memory, for I forgot most of the things that I wanted to say, and can remember only a little of what I did say.

I think the Theatre must be reformed in its forms, its speaking, its acting, and its scenery—that is to say I think there is something good about it at present. I should not think it worth while to write of general principles if we had not the opportunity, which England has not just now, of carrying them out in practice. Mr. Fay's National company has given to us the opportunity, which M. Antoine's company gave to Paris, of beginning a change that may make a general revolution.

1st. We have to write or find plays that will make the theatre a place of intellectual excitement, a place where the mind goes to be liberated, as it was liberated by the theatres of Greece and England and France at certain great moments of their history, and as it is liberated in Scandinavia to-day. If we are to do this we must learn that beauty and truth are always justified of themselves, and that their creation is a greater service to our country than any writing that compromises either in the meaning or service of a cause. We will, doubtless, come more easily to truth and beauty because we love some cause with all but all our heart, but we must remember that when truth and beauty open their mouths to speak all other mouths must become silent. They judge and are above judgment, they justify and have no need of justification. Such plays will require both in writers and audience a stronger feeling for beautiful or appropriate language than has been shown by the playwrights of the ordinary theatre. St. Bruno has said that there is nothing so immortal in literature as that style, and it is precisely this sense of style, not common among us, that it is hardest for us to recover. I do not mean by style words with an air of literature, about them, what is ordinarily called elegant writing. The speeches of Falstaff are as full of great style as the soliloquies of Hamlet. One must be able to make a king of Isary or an old countryman or a modern lover speak that language which is his and nobody else's, and speak it with so much of emotion and subtlety that the hearer may feel it hard to know whether it is the thought for the word that has moved him, or whether these could be separated at all. When one of our young poets a while back made a "poor scholar" mourn that that would remain of his teaching would be

In rustic speech some Attic phrase
As in wild earth a Grecian vase

to write a beautiful style, it was precisely of words like that word "wild," used in that way. Tennyson was thinking when he wrote "The Charge of the Light Brigade" in an "olden word." And I have seen plays of our country life by a new writer in which the personage spoke out of the most powerful passions, and yet never lost the country speech. Just now, when we read so many translations, we are in some danger of thinking that construction is everything and that words matter little; and forget that "ideas cannot be given except in their minutely appropriate words."

2nd. But if we are to restore words to their sovereignty, we are to make speech even more important than gesture upon the stage. I have no doubt of our being able to do this. For Mr. W. G. and Mr. F. Fay have already taught their principal actors better speaking than I have heard in any English theatre. Miss MacDonagh, when she said, "I am an angel of the Most High God," in her play of "The Hour Glass"; Mr. Digges, when he spoke his soliloquy about the seven sciences; Mr. F. Fay, when he spoke of "the fire that purifies, and the fire in which the soul reposes for ever," thrilled me as I have never been thrilled by any mere acting.

3rd. We must simplify acting—especially in its forms of drama which are like poetical drama, or like prose drama that is as remote from real life as my "Hour Glass." We must get rid of everything that is restless, everything that draws the attention away from the sound of the voice, or from the few moments of intense expression, whether that expression is through the voice or through the hands. We must, at times, substitute for the movements that mimic the surface of life those rhythmical movements which are the expression of the profound depths of life. This, too, I see being accomplished, and if those who take the smaller parts were as much masters of their high business as are the two or three chief actors, I would be confident that our generation was about to see the recovery of a lost art. I wrote a little time ago of my own art that a line

—may take an hour, maybe,
And yet must sound a momentary thought,
Or all that sinking and stretching's naught—

It is in the doing of these little things that an actor is best tested and should earn most praise, because he has not the enthusiasm of a great effort or the hope of a great success to sustain him.

4th.—When I have spoken from time to time of the scenery and costumes that I think suitable for plays that do not copy the surface of life, I have had to speak at considerable length, but a very few words will be sufficient now. The scenery and costumes of "The Hour Glass" have explained my meaning better than any words could do. Just as it is necessary to simplify gesture, that it may accompany speech, without being its rival, it is necessary to simplify both the form and colour of scenery and costume. We must give the actor a fitting background, and we must dress him in some

colour that will harmonise with this background, but there must be nothing unnecessary, nothing that will distract the attention from speech and movement. An art is always at its greatest when it is most human. Greek acting was great because it did everything with the voice, and modern acting may be great when it does everything with voice and movement, but an art which smoothes these things with head painting, with unnumbered garish colours, with continual restless mimicries of the surface of life, is an art of fading humanity—a decaying art.

W. R. YEAZ.

P.S.—A writer in a Public magazine says, but without disclaimer, that I began my lecture by saying that I did not care whether a play was moral or immoral. I said nothing of the kind, for I have always been of Vaudeville's opinion that a masterpiece is a portion of the conscience of mankind. My objection was to the rough-and-ready conscience of the newspaper or the pulpit, and I should think the man of letters who appealed to one or the other somewhat of a traitor to his order. Every generation of men of letters has been

called immoral by the pulpit or the newspaper, and it has been precisely when that generation was illuminating some obscure corner of the conscience that the cry against it has been most confident. The plays of Shakespeare had to be performed on the South side of the Thames, because the Corporation of London considered them immoral. Goethe was thought dangerous to faith and morals for two or three generations. Through every educated man knows how great a moral force the conscience of mankind is in Flaubert and Balzac, their books have been prosecuted in the courts of law, and I found some time ago that our own National Library, though it possessed two books on Flaubert's genius, had refused on moral grounds to have any books written by him. When the mob is right upon the moral question it is right by accident, and I should no more think of arousing it against a man whose play or book I disliked than I should think of arousing against him some blind, clawed beast. A subtle question of morals is not one of the questions on which the cats of Cruachan are very desirable allies.

THE THEATRE MOVEMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MAIL."

Sir,—I have had to say with very deep interest, and I feel sympathy, the article in last Saturday's "Evening Mail," in which Mr. Seamus MacManus promulgates the creed of the Gaelic League. As your leader writes very rightly says, "'O' and 'Mac' after all, do not determine the question of nationality," and under the circumstances an Irishman who can boast of neither the one prefix nor the other may express an opinion on one aspect of the Celtic Revival which he has been brought into contact, and which he takes an interest, but by no means a laudable interest—I refer to the play-writing and play-acting side of the movement. Some few months ago, through the courtesy of the management of the National Theatre Company, I was permitted to be present at the production of some plays, written both in Celtic and in English, at the "theatre" in Camden street, and I wrote a not unduly critical of the evening's work in your journal. I hope, sir, I shall not be thought discomfited if I say that were it not for the very important fact that this "theatre"—in plain English it would be called a barn—was one of the tabernacles from whence arose the doctrine of the Revivalists was preached, I would not have remained beneath its roof for two successive nights. Now, sir, what is my reason for this confidence? I may say that it is not that either of the plays written in English was poor, or that the acting was unimpressive—a matter of fact, both the play-writing and the play-acting were up to a very reasonable standard of interest. There were other reasons, however, and one of them was the extraordinary poverty, and, as it seemed to me, the deliberate disappointment of the entire surroundings. Now, sir, everyone knows that, from the moment of its inception, the play-writing stage-setting and the play-acting of the Irish Literary Theatre—an object which was achieved when "The Heather Field" and "The Gaelic" were produced at the Antient Concert Rooms, and at which the "Theatre of the Bough" and "Mae" were staged in the Gaiety Theatre. The old Literary Theatre is, however, now no more. Mr.

March 10 - 1903
Mail

TOWN HALL, LOUGHREA.

EASTER MONDAY EVE., APRIL 13th 1903,

AT 8 O'CLOCK.

THE Irish National Theatre Society

President: W. B. YEATS

Vice-Presidents:

MAUD GONNE, DOUGLAS HYDE, GEORGE RUSSELL

Stage Manager: W. G. FAY Secretary: FRED RYAN

PROGRAMME.

❖ DEIRDRE. ❖

A Play in Three Acts, by "Æ."

Deirdre	-	Maire T. Quinn.
Lavacram (Her Foster Mother, a Druidess).	-	Maire Nic Shiúbhlaigh.
Fergus	-	P. J. Kelly.
Buinne	-	W. J. Tunney.
Illau	Sons of Fergus	Seumas O'Sullivan.
Ardan	The	F. Ryan.
Ainle	Sons of	T. Roberts.
Naissi	Usna	J. Dudley Digges.
Messenger	-	P. MacSiúbhlaigh.
Concobar (Ardrie of Ulla)	-	F. J. Fay.

Act I. The Dún of Deirdre's Captivity, at Emain Macha.
Act II. In Alba. Naissi's Dún on the Banks of Loch Etive.
Act III. The House of the Red Branch at Emain Macha.

— AND —

❖ "A POT OF BROTH." ❖

A FARCE, in One Act, by W. B. YEATS.

A Beggarman	-	W. G. Fay.
Sibby	-	Maire T. Quinn.
John (Her Husband)	-	P. J. Kelly.

Ad Cló-Cumann, Limited, Gaelic Printers, Great Strand Street, Dublin

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

In the afternoon and evening of Saturday, two sets of plays were given for the first time in London by members of the Irish National Theatre Society at Queensgate Hall, South Kensington, under the auspices of the London Irish Literary Society.

A triple bill was presented on both occasions, and the acting, though by amateurs, was of a very high standard. The afternoon programme opened with a morality play, "The Hour-Glass," by Mr. W. B. Yeats, who was obviously inspired by "Everyman," for the recent performance of which we all are so deeply indebted to Mr. William Poel of the Elsinbethan Society. Mr. Yeats's play is by no means an imitation. In it he strikes another note beside the one that it sounded so powerfully in the fifteenth-century play. Besides the transience of human affections and the despatchment of virtuous there is another page suggested with acuteness, the insignificance of all knowledge, and this is the chief note of Mr. Yeats's morality.

This impressive little play, given as it was by Irish-speaking people, graceful of gesture, sweet of voice, and free from stage traditions, made a deep impression on the critical audience. It was staged with the artistic simplicity which has been introduced by Mr. Gordon Craig; the figures of the players standing clearly out in purples and reds against a soft green background. Mr. Dudley Digges, as the Wise Man, and Mr. F. J. Fay, as Tugues the Poet, played with an ease and dignity not always seen in professional. The delicate method of accusation and absence of superfluous gesture, which were the most striking characteristics of this little company of players, harmonised perfectly with delicate writing of the play.

The second item, "Twenty-Five," was a little tragic-comedy by Lady Gregory, already well-known for her skill in the use of colloquial language. Her share in a peasant and his wife making ready for a last merry-making in their little scene. Time has been bad, and their worldly belongings are to be auctioned off to meet a debt of twenty pounds. When all is ready the man goes out to fetch the neighbours in, and the wife's former lover, Christie Henderson, enters, having found his sweetheart Kate from her old home to her new. Kate has married the middle-aged Michael Ford, because four years' silence in America had made her think Christie had forgotten her. But he has come, having scraped together sixty pounds, and hoping to carry her back with him to America, but Kate says her man is nothing kind to her, though jealous even of the birds that sing round the house, and they should have none after her from her old home. Christie burns the new home is about to be broken up, and wants Kate to take his money to keep it together. This she will not do, although he promises her husband will never know of their former relations. Ford returns with the neighbours and a piper, and bids the stranger a kindly welcome. In the course of a friendly game of "Twenty-Five," Christie loans to the husband of the woman he loves the whole of his money with the exception of a five-pound note, which he throws in the fire, just to show he can afford an evening's diversion. The play ends in Christie's standing up in a four-handed reel with Kate, whom he kisses once passionately in the turn of the dance before his pious outpourings into the night never to meet back.

Mr. W. O. Fay played the generous Christie with a humorous pathos that recalled Coppola's Cyprien de Bergevoe, and he was finely supported by Miss Maire Nic Shiúbhlaigh as Kate and Mr. F. J. Kelly as the husband.

Mr. Yeats's poem, "Kathleen ni Houlihan," closed both afternoon and evening performances. As the play was published last year in London, we returned in these columns, our readers are already acquainted with its purport. But its beauty can only be fully realised on seeing it

Mr. W. B. Yeats is bringing his Irish National Theatre across to London with a repertoire including plays by himself and Lady Gregory. The actors in "The Irish National Dramatic Company" have played together in Dublin for more than a year, and, we are told, "their methods, deliberately adopted, differ considerably from those habitual on the English stage." Two performances will be given on May 2 at Queen's Gate Hall.

Daily Chronicle May 4

Westminster Gazette Apr '03

IRISH LITERARY SOCIETY, LONDON,

20, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

Performances of the Irish National Theatre

THE IRISH NATIONAL DRAMATIC COMPANY have consented to come over from Dublin to give a Matinée and Evening Performance for the benefit of this Society.

The Irish National Theatre is an association of players and dramatists, having for its President Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. W. G. Fay for its Stage Manager. It is founded to produce plays having a literary value and especially plays of Irish interest, and is a notable example of uncommercial dramatic enterprise. The actors have now played together for more than a year, and they have developed a great deal of talent. Their methods, deliberately adopted, differ considerably from those habitual on the English stage.

The plays which they have produced have been mostly short pieces written for a small cast and for inexpensive scenery. Those which will be presented on May 2nd are "A Pot of Broth," "Cathleen ni Houlihan," and "The Hourglass," by Mr. W. B. YEATS; "The Laying of the Foundations," by Mr. FRED RYAN; and "Twenty-five," by LADY GREGORY.

"A Pot of Broth" is a farce of peasant life, describing the trick by which a witty beggar-man got a dinner from a miserly woman. The story here dramatised is one

familiar to most Gaelic peasants, and it gives Mr. W. G. Fay an excellent opportunity for comic acting. "The Laying of the Foundations" is the work of a writer previously unknown, and it is a satirical comedy dealing forcibly with municipal corruption and the short-comings of professing patriots. "Cathleen ni Houlihan" is a tragedy of peasant life in the year 1798, when the spirit of Ireland, taking on itself the shape of a strange old woman, draws a young boy from his wedding to go out and fight for Cathleen ni Houlihan, who is also the Sean Bhean Bhocht. This little prose play at its presentment in Dublin, showed itself to be no less dramatic than it was beautiful. "The Hourglass," recently acted for the first time, is a Morality, and gives the company a chance to show its methods in poetic drama. The scenery is designed on Mr. Yeats' theory of simple massed colours. Lady Gregory's "Twenty-five" is another of the peasant plays which are a special feature of the repertory; the plot turns on a game at cards.

The performances will take place at the Queen's Gate Hall (two minutes' walk from S. Kensington station), on Saturday, May 2nd, at 3 p.m. and 8.15 p.m. The doors will be open in each case half an hour before the performance. At the *Matinée* will be produced "Cathleen ni Houlihan," "The Hourglass," and "Twenty-five"; the evening bill will consist of "A Pot of Broth," "The Laying of the Foundations," and "Cathleen ni Houlihan." Tickets can be had by members, or by any person applying with introduction from a member, at 10/6, 5/- and 2/6 respectively. The 2/6 seats will not be reserved. Members are advised that, as the hall seats only 300 persons, early application should be made for tickets.

STEPHEN GWYNN,

Hon. Secretary.



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The Irish National Theatre Society.

President—W. B. YEATS.

Vice-Presidents :

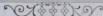
MAUD GONNE, DOUGLAS HYDE, GEORGE RUSSELL.

Stage Manager—W. G. FAY.

Secretary—FRED RYAN.



PROGRAMME.



—+— PERFORMANCE —+—

Under the Auspices of the Irish Literary Society of London,

QUEENSGATE HALL, SOUTH KENSINGTON,

Saturday, May 2nd, 1903,

—+— AT 8.15 P.M. —+—

Production (for the first time in London) of

"THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATIONS,"

A play in Two Acts, by FRED RYAN.

MR. O'LOSKIN, T.C. ... F. J. FAY.

MICHAEL, his son ... P. J. KELLY.

ALDERMAN FARRELLY,
Chairman of
"The New Building Syndicate" } J. DUDLEY DIGGES.

MR. Mac FADDEN, T.C. ... P. Mac SIUBHLAIGH.

MR. NOLAN, T.C., Editor of "The Free
Nation," } G. ROBERTS.

MRS. O'LOSKIN ... DORA HACKETT.

MRS. Mac FADDEN ... HONOR LAVELLE.

EILEEN, her daughter ... MAIRE T. QUINN.

Time : The Present. Act I.—The Drawing Room in the House of Mr.

O'Loskin, T.C. Act II.—The same.

The Action takes place after a Municipal Election in Cathair-Tabhairaire-
dhuitéin. Two months are supposed to elapse between Acts I and II.

Production (for the first time in London) of

"A POT OF BROTH,"

A Farce, in One Act, by W. B. YEATS.

A BEGGARMAN ... W. G. FAY.

SIBBY ... MAIRE T. QUINN.

JOHN (her husband) ... P. J. KELLY.

"KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN,"

A play in One Act, by W. B. YEATS.

KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN ... MAIRE T. QUINN.

DELIA T. CAHEL ... MAIRE Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.

BRIDGET GILLAN ... HONOR LAVELLE.

PATRICK GILLAN ... P. J. KELLY.

MICHAEL GILLAN ... J. DUDLEY DIGGES.

PETER GILLAN ... W. G. FAY.

SCENE—Close to Killala in 1798.

Production (for the first time in London) of
"THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATIONS,"

A play in Two Acts, by FRED RYAN.

MR. O'LOSKIN, T.C.	...	...	F. J. FAY.
MICHAEL, his son	...	...	P. J. KELLY.
ALDERMAN FARRELLY, Chairman of "The New Building Syndicate"	J. DUDLEY DIGGES.		
MR. Mac FADDEN, T.C.	...	P. Mac SIUBHLAIGH.	
MR. NOLAN, T.C., Editor of "The Free Nation,"	G. ROBERTS.		
MRS. O'LOSKIN	...	DORA HACKETT.	
MRS. Mac FADDEN	...	HONOR LAVELLE.	
EILEEN, her daughter	...	MAIRE T. QUINN.	

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"KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN,"

A play in One Act, by W. B. YEATS.

KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN	...	MAIRE T. QUINN.
DELIA T. CAHEL	MAIRE Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.	
BRIDGET GILLAN	...	HONOR LAVELLE.
PATRICK GILLAN	...	P. J. KELLY.
MICHAEL GILLAN	...	J. DUDLEY DIGGES.
PETER GILLAN	...	...
		W. G. FAY.

SCENE—Close to Killala in 1798.

Morning Post May 4

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

The band of Dublin amateurs that on Saturday afternoon and evening made their first appearances in London have brought with them a repertory of little modern Irish plays. Most of the pieces were in two acts and took little over an hour. They vary in merit but it is not too much to say that if it is the business of the dramatist to depict life and not merely to "pick" a more or less legendary story, the worst of them is of a class to which no English play produced in recent years has any pretensions. If there is one thing clear that we have no national drama it is that the Irish have, and a drama that for sincerity of feeling and simple eloquence of expression can rarely, if ever, have been surpassed.

The first play given on Saturday afternoon was "The Hour Glass," a morality by Mr. W. B. Yeats. The idea of morality presented in simple and natural, and the workmanship is of rare beauty. The feeling it provokes discharges out from speaking of the interpretation. The second piece was Lady Gregory's "Twenty-Six," a story somewhat reminiscent of that of "Auld Robin Gray." The introduction of a mythic figure among men and women is not to our thinking artificial, but Mr. Yeats has many another precedent to point to besides those of "Lullaby." These Irish playwrights, however, do not seem to trouble their heads about precedent; it is their glory to write as if they had never been inside a theatre. Mr. W. G. Fay distinguished himself as an old peasant father. Honor Lavelle was excellent as his old wife, and Mr. J. Dudley Digges was poetic with discretion in the character of the son that bears the call.

At the evening performance "Kathleen ni Houlihan" was repeated, and two other plays were given. The first was a little play in two acts called "The Laying of the Foundations," the work of Mr. Fred Ryan, who is the secretary of the society. It is serious in tone and, as was very often played on Saturday, it had a distinctly literary quality. In this play, again, Mr. F. J. Fay, in a beautifully-written part, given a very fine performance, and Mr. R. J. Kelly and Mr. J. Dudley Digges are excellent.

The last of the plays is called "A Pot of Broth," a farce in one act by W. B. Yeats. We have seen many farces called comical. This is a most exquisite piece of comedy called a farce. It was comically implies exaggeration, and throughout there is some thing in touch of exaggeration. In this little play Mr. W. G. Fay came into his kingdom. He is very very different from the stage beggar or the stage lady who we have seen so long persecuted. This beggar man has the grace, the sobriety, and the sympathetic manner of the most adroit diplomatist. He never writes, for him time to breathe. All through he inspires the audience, and, of course, the possible with the fact that he has only to ask, and ask in the right way, and shall be given to him. The technique of his performance could not have been more faultless if he had played the part hundreds of times, and the real feeling of it would probably have been much more than this. We hope Mr. Fay will not "take to the stage," but we will more hope that he will be seen at many more amateur performances. It is sincerely to be hoped that our audience will make some more appearances in London. Their work has only to be known to be most popular, and, perhaps, to have as influence as our own drama.

IRISH PLAYS IN LONDON.

SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCES.

Memorandum. London, Sunday.

The visit yesterday of the Irish National Dramatic Company of Dublin was an event of great interest not only to Irish people here who sympathize with the aspirations of the promoters of National drama, but to a large number of leading workers in the dramatic and literary life of the country.

The performances, which were given for the benefit of the Irish Literary Society, took place under conditions of the most auspicious character. The audiences which assembled at Queen's Gate Hall, South Kensington, in the afternoon and evening were distinguished and critical, and the reception which they accorded to the plays and players was in every respect highly flattering. To a considerable number of those present the performances were a distinct novelty. This was particularly the case in Mr. Yeats' morality play, "The Hour Glass," in which the methods of the scene—different from those of the English stage—the almost total declamation of the lines, and the absence of elaborate settings in the matter of staging lent a peculiar charm to the production. In this piece Mr. Dudley Digges, as the Wise Man, and Mr. F. J. Fay, as the Fool, scored a great success. Their admirable interpretation of poetic drama, combined with that of Miss Maize Nic Shumblough in the character of the Angel, was such that the literary and literary value of the piece had a most striking effect upon the audience. Lady Gregory's peasant play, "Twenty-Six," in which the plot turns on a game of cards, is loved. Through the tenderness of the piece may be regarded as admirable, its interest was much enjoyed. Mr. W. G. Fay making a distinct hit in the part of the returned emigrant. The presentation of "Kathleen ni Houlihan," Mr. Yeats' little prose play, symbolic of the power of patriotism, was undoubtedly the best and most noteworthy of the three productions at the theatre.

Miss Maria T. Quinn was very effective in the chief part, her chanting of the blank verse being particularly admired; while Mr. Dudley Digges, as Michael, the Bridgeman, who is fascinated by Kathleen's words, as she sings and sings of the men who have died for love of her, and goes off to join the insurgents in a transport of patriotism, was highly praiseworthy. At the close of the performance Mr. Yeats was called before the curtain, and was accorded a warm reception. Another large and distinguished audience assembled in the evening, when a triple bill was given, and the success was even greater than that of the afternoon. The first piece presented was "The Laying of the Foundations," in which Mr. Fred Ryan has drawn an amusing, if exaggerated, picture of the activities of Irish nationalists. The unmitigated humour of the piece helped by the really excellent acting, particularly of Mr. E. J. Fay and Miss Shumblough, attracted the fancy of the audience, whose approval was thoroughly confirmed the favourable verdict already passed on Mr. Ryan's work in Ireland. This was followed by Mr. Yeats' "Pot of Broth," in which Mr. W. G. Fay, as the beggar man, and Miss Quinn, as the beggarly housewife, gave us some of the best acting of the entire programme. The scene between the two whilst the beggarman pretends to make away with a stone was tremendously funny. Mr. Fay in particular evoked the hearty applause by the great natural delivery of his performance.

As a concluding item "Kathleen ni Houlihan" was again repeated, and again received a most cordial reception. Mr. Digges once more giving a capital presentation of the part of Michael. At the conclusion of the programme the audience marked their approval in unmistakable fashion, and in response to repeated calls Messrs. Yeats and Ryan hastened to appear and bow their acknowledgments. On the whole the performances were a remarkable success, and it is naturally hoped that this talented company of Irish amateurs will be often seen in London in the future.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

In his speech at the Shakespeare Club dinner, at Stratford-on-Avon Sir Oliver Lodge gave it as his opinion that the next country to give genius would be Ireland. The statement was welcomed as an interesting prediction. But surely there is little prediction about it. Ireland has never lacked for genius. From the beginning genius, unaccompanied, as it often is in individuals, by qualities less volatile and more commonplace and commensurable, has been her curse. Take that department of ill with which we have mainly to deal—the drama. English drama practically came to an end about 1700. Since then Ireland has produced Goldsmith, Sheridan, Wills, and others. If we take a step down we come to Sheridan Knowles, a king in his day. Another step and they swarm. What names can England oppose to these?

As yet we have seen but little of this drama. Much of its speech is so inarticulate. Still, "The Heather Field," though ill arranged, was the most thoughtful dramatic drama of our generation. And now the Irish National Theatre Society comes among us with a batch of little Irish plays all written within the last few years. The society is a band of sworn amateurs whose headquarters are Dublin. Last Saturday they performed five short plays at Queen's Hall. The three given in the afternoon were "The Hour Glass" and "Kathleen Ní Houlihan," both by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and "Twenty-Five," by Lady Gregory. The first is a "morality." The Wise Man is visited by an Angel, who tells him that he has not as he seems to be. "What he is and goes will depend on whether or not he can get some one who believes the old faith to pray for him. His own prayers are useless," he has denied the faith too long. He turns to his scholars, his wife, his children, in vain. For he is it who has taught them that there is no heaven, no purgatory, no hell. He tells them of the Angel. They think it but a ruse to egg them on to a discussion in which they, taking the side of the angel, are to show they still are remnants of faith large enough to find a prayer on? No, the Wise Man has done his work too completely. His wife reminds him that it was he who laughed her out of praying; besides, there is the household to attend to. His little children stand amazed. Still is there one, the poor, wandering Fool, despised of all, who begs pennies by the wayside, but, like Blake, sees the sun not as a golden globe but as legends of angels. And so, when the sound runs out the soul that wings is white and its way is to purgatory. A great, universal idea, beautifully expressed, beautifully interpreted. There is nothing Irish in the piece except the power to write it. Once written it addresses itself to the whole world.

"Twenty-Five" is a piece of widely different nature. The name appears to be that of a game of cards, by which a young wife's lover is not able to put her middle-aged husband in his place, and she is left to find a new one. But the play is a comedy, and the story is a simple one. The Wise Man has gone to America to make enough to marry on. He comes back after four years with £20. But the girl is meanwhile married. It is a very animated little sketch, tender and humorous, the spirit being absolutely that of some of the old Scotch ballads written by ladies about poorer class life. The lover Christie is exquisitely drawn, and exquisitely played by Mr. W. G. Fay; his sort, the lines that he has to tell to carry the thing off, told as the Celt always tells, in a low, courtly, self-deprecating voice, as if falsehood was a matter, not of calculation, but of mere politeness—as if, in short, he was putting you right in the most considerate manner—were delicious. Marie Ní Shuibhéal made a most comely and tender wife. It was a picture that one dare, or could wish, to dispute. It seemed, by the way, here, as elsewhere, that in Ireland the attitude of the sexes towards money is exactly the reverse of what it is with us.

The concluding play of the afternoon, "Kathleen Ní Houlihan," was a blend of the mysterious and symbolic with the frankly human. Kathleen is the spirit of Freedom, national Freedom. When she enters the Gillian's cottage she is an old hag that has come to Killa—the year is 1798—to regain her four fields, which we take to be the four Irish provinces. When she has left the Gillian's cottage, we hear that she passed down the street looking like a queen. She tells the simple hospitable that the Gillians have to do with her. She wants not for money, or bread, or drink. But when she leaves, the son Michael follows her; and he was to have been married on the morrow. The explanation is that the French have landed in the bay, and the young men of Ireland are flocking to their banners. As the father Mr. Fay was again perfect, and Mr. J. Dudley Digges as Michael and Honor Lavelle as his mother were admirable.

We sincerely trust that the Irish National Theatre Society will, before returning to Dublin, give us some more performances. Of their success we do not think there could be a doubt.

Irish Plays in London. — The Irish National Dramatic Company from Dublin who gave a set of performances at Queen's Gate Hall on the afternoon and evening of May 2 came, saw, and conquered, for the morning papers gave them a splendid show. Five pieces were played, all written in English: *Kathleen Ní Houlihan*, *The Hour Glass*, and *A Pot of Brandy*, written by W. B. Yeats (president of the band of players and playwrights constituting the Irish National Theatre Society), *The Laying of the Foundations*, by Mr. Fred Ryan, and *Twenty-Five*, by Lady Gregory. The most interesting of these was undoubtedly *The Hour Glass*, a morality play in one act, staged in a decorative and simple style, and beautifully written. The usual scene background was replaced by a green cloth while the dresses were in shades of purple, green, and brown, the whole colour scheme being highly effective and harmonious. The lighting of the stage, too, by means of spotlights and sunken footlights was admirable.

The *Morality Play*. — The characters in the morality play are the Wise Man — a Rationalist — his wife, Bridget, his two children, his pupils, the Angel, and the Fool. At the height of his career as a teacher of wisdom, the Wise Man is visited by the Angel, who appears to him as a young man, and announces that his time has come; within the hour he must die and for his infidelity he must be damned. But if before the sands of the hour glass have run out he can find among his neighbours anyone who believes in God then he will be allowed to enter Purgatory. Heiriting and trembling at the Angel's message he calls in by turns his pupils, his wife, his children. But they all deny God, confirming what he has ever taught them. At last in despair he appeals to the Fool, who believes, and thus as the sands are almost out the Wise Man is saved and breathes his last. The other short plays in this interesting set were admirable in their vivid portrayal of Irish character and scenes of Irish peasant life. The acting rose at times to a very high level. The audience in the afternoon included Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Lord and Lady Montagu, Lady Adams, Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Mr. William Sharp, and Mr. Wilfrid Blunt.

It is somewhat late in the day now to return to the Irish National Dramatic Company's visit to London, but we cannot forbear commenting on the extraordinary tribute paid to the Company's productions by the London Press in general, and its leading dramatic critics (including Mr. Walley and Mr. Archer) in particular. Without exception, the London papers united in a chorus of commendation of the Company's performances and methods, and very many of them hailed the Kensington productions as a very real expression of National Drama, deploring, at the same time, the utter barrenness and hopelessness of English drama. The position is certainly a remarkable one. On the one hand we have the England of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, and the English dramatists and Chatterton relying on Norway for drama, on France for its comedies, and on the whole Continent of Europe and even America for its remaining variety of dramatic art. On the other, we have a little country (poor and ignorant it has been dubbed) densely packed with people that would go to the making of a National Drama, and yet producing it.

Consider, too, the differences of staging and acting. On the one hand lordly treasure-houses of theatre, retaining limitless resources of stage mounting, and directed by past masters of their art—such men as Sir Henry Irving, Sir Charles Wyndham, Mr. Beerholm Tate, Mr. George Alexander, etc. On the other, an obscure little agent hall, fitted up with the most primitive appointments and scenery, and its stage occupied by a company of amateur, young, and technically untrained. Yet the English critic can only make room for England's drama, his acknowledging—regrettably as one must think the position is—that a real sense of nationality alone can produce a national drama, and that Englishmen in learning how to be theatrical have forgotten how to be English! England will and a new Shakespeare before it originates a new National Drama.

**THE IRISH NATIONAL
THEATRE SOCIETY
PRESIDENT W. B. YEATS**

Vice-Presidents: Maud Gonne MacBride,
Douglas Hyde, George Russell. Stage
Manager: W. G. Fay. Secretary: F. Ryan.

PROGRAMME

DEIRDRE

A Play in Three Acts, by A. E.

Deirdre	-	-	Maire T. Quinn
Lavarcam (Her Foster Mother, a Druid- ess)	-	-	Maire Nic Shiúbhlaigh
Fergus	-	-	P. J. Kelly
Buinne	|	Sons of	P. Columb
Illuan	|	Fergus	Seumas O'Sullivan
Ardan	|		F. Ryan
Ainle	|	The Sons	G. Roberts
Naisi	|	of Usna	J. Dudley Digges
Messenger			P. Mac Shiúbhlaigh
Concobar (Ardrie of Ulla)			F. J. Fay

ACT I. The Dún of Deirdre's Captivity,
at Emain Macha.

ACT II. In Alba. Naisi's Dún on the
Banks of Loch Ettive.

ACT III. The House of the Red Branch
at Emain Macha.

Dún Emer Dundrum. August 22 1903.
At five o'clock in the afternoon.

The efforts of her son, the Ould City may yet be rejuvenated, for as the curtain falls some incoming visitors announce that they met on his leaving the cottage but a maiden of youth and beauty.

Lady Gregory's "Twenty-Five" does not aspire to symbolism, though of course it also is an example of "the more vital forms of dramatic art" with which Dublin is redeeming the good name of the British stage. Of course, therefore, it holds up the mirror to the nature of Irish peasant life, and small tenant farmer winning fifty pounds in five minutes at cards from a returned emigrant, who takes this method of besetting the colleen who has bestowed herself on an elderly rival during his absence in the States. It is a bright little piece, even if it has no particular originality or dramatic force, and it would make quite a nice programme for private theatricals, and might even in the hands of competent players provide a popular curtain-raiser at Brixton or Clapham. But it must not be forgotten that it was "performed for the first time in the Madderworth Hall, Dublin," last March, and has been expressly brought across the channel by a serious Literary Society for our instruction in "the more vital forms," etc.

Mr. Yeats's symbolic play was repeated at the evening entertainment, and the programme comprised in addition a farce by the same author called "A Pot of Broth," and a two-act play, "The Laying of the Foundations," by Mr. Fred Ryan. The latter is not really a play at all, but some forty to sixty minutes of dialogue devoted to the explanation of what a scoundrelly lot the Irish Town Councils are, developed with a charming brogue and delightful enthusiasm by the amateur company. Mr. O'Looskin, I.C., and Alderman Farrelly show young O'Looskin into the office of City Architect to further their own discreditable schemes, and discover that they have entertained a viper unwares, since Michael O'Looskin's native honesty has been lanced into vigorous life by his *fancie* Editor and editor Nolan. Then, just when some sort of a plot is looming into sight, out goes the candle, and we are left to finish this interesting little crisis in the affairs of a quite unpronounceable Irish hamlet for ourselves.

An excellent little one-act farce is "A Pot of Broth," telling a simple little story of a witty and resourceful beggar who gets a dinner by playing on the greedy credulity of an unsympathetic housewife. Into the humour of this one could easily enter, and to our ignorant mind it seemed that here was the real spirit of the country. By quite a small effort of imagination one could sweep away all thoughts of the stage and the Queen's Gate Hall and picture oneself as really privileged to take a peep at the national peasant life that would never be shown to the ordinary impertinent tourist.

The plays were performed by amateurs, some of whom appear to have had considerable experience of the stage, notably Mr. W. G. Fay, Mr. Kelly, and Miss Mary Quinn, all of whom gave capital renderings of their parts, though the usual defects of untutored voice-management were never wholly overcome. We must repeat in conclusion that we have only attempted to say how the productions of the Irish National Theatre strike the unregenerate ordinary dramatic critic, who has been unable so far to discover any reason for apprehending that the Thames will be set on fire by these pleasant but in no degree remarkable amateur theatricals. But no doubt we shall know better some day.

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"The Irish National Theatre is an association of players and dramatists, having for its president Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. W. G. Fay for its stage manager. It is founded to produce plays having a literary value, and especially plays of Irish interest, and is a notable example of uncommercial dramatic enterprise."

Thus the prospectus. At the Queen's Gate Hall on Saturday evening were produced "The Laying of the Foundations," by Fred. Ryan; "A Pot of Broth," and "Cathleen ni Houlihan," by W. B. Yeats. In England we have no National Theatre in the form of a company of players, though truly we possess a building nationally dignified by that name. Now, it would have been curious on Saturday to

have stepped straight from Drury Lane and Sadler's "Dante" into the little Queen's Gate Hall, to have noted the difference, not so much in production as in principle, between the two performances.

If one may venture on the comparison, such a difference might an Imperial Roman have found passing from the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, gorgeous with an imported Greek ritual, to the quiet depth of the Casacaona, where, in all simplicity and crudity of belief, were playing a few Nascentes. Perhaps there seems a touch of comexomy in the announcement of a company of amateurs whose appointments we could probably have bought up with the spare cash of our pockets as an Irish National Theatre. But consider what their claim to such a title implies—that a dozen unimportant people, acting a parochial drama and a drama of the soil with such talent as they have gathered from their surroundings do to some extent dramatically represent Ireland to a greater extent than any fashionable drama being acted to-day within our sacred half-mile radius of Charing-cross can possibly be said to represent England. We in England are so busy selling ourselves wealthy, imitating our neighbors, and buying or stealing their goods that we have no time to repose upon and cultivate our mother earth. What should we do with a drama of the soil? England is no longer a garden, but a hothouse. Such phrases as "the Irish soil above the matter in hand." But consider the case of our own recognized dramatist who has any claim to be called a critic upon life—Mr. J. M. Synge. The critique to which he confines his observations is one existing under most artificial conditions, and for its ideal has cosmopolitanism.

On Saturday evening the program opened with "The Laying of the Foundations," a modern play in two acts. Not a good play; indeed, it is little more than a pamphlet in dialogue upon municipal politics. Certainly, the dialogue has its neatness, and the character-drawing is true enough so far as it goes; but even kindly criticism must term it a rather inept specimen of the parochial drama. Yet it contrived to be interesting, which hundreds of plays of a like technical impotence fail to be. It held our attention by the sheer beauty of purpose. The parochial matters—petty no doubts—were faithfully observed and faithfully recorded. The work rang true—as the very least, finished true.

And we need in England a parochial drama, and we need a drama of the soil. Indeed, a "return to the land" is the most hopeful course for the dramatist of to-day. Let us cease for a little to demand extraordinary circumstances either of wealth or poverty, vice or virtue, as the necessary conditions of a play. Here is the true meaning of this latest little understood and much decised phase of playwrighting, the endeavor to do without a plot. It is an endeavor to make dramatically effective the humor and pathos which are to be found in the everyday life of commonplace people. Present plays are obviously the first result, for in peasant life one sees most the unchanging round of toil which must be the foundation of all the drama of the working of every plot-spinning has had its day, we hope. The serious dramatist must now lay his foundations upon realism.

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Wales Daily News
June 2

quaintance, and we have one to hand—Mr. Yeats's farce (so he calls it) "A Pot of Broth." No more daintily humorous piece of work has been seen on our stage. And the humor is of the soil, unpurified, springing naturally to him as a right of birth, not cunningly and falsely contrived in absurdity. A beggarman harangues his dinner from a cabbage, the housewife, we laugh by reason of her simplicity, and are simple ourselves. That is true comedy, which makes children of us while we watch it. The little Irish girl, so simple and natural as a flower that grows. Also we have "Kathleen Ni Houlihan." Steiner stuff is that, but upon the same true basis, lifted to a higher plane by the people unadvised. There is grandeur in the play's allegory that suffering Ireland may call a man from the joy of his home to a life of exile. But the old peasant with his bag of gold and his parcel of land sees in the magnetic figure only a poor old woman, to whom he will offer a sacrifice. Unconsciously is this angel entertained, and his son is drawn from him, and he is left wondering, still wrapped in his own places. A striking play, a fine drama of the soil, the drama of simplicity. One thing more to notice in this most suggestive work; how all of it is pitched in a minor key, as if the actor, who leads the comedy, Ireland weeps through the laughter. Much of the acting was well-nigh perfect—this also because of the simplicity. Mr. W. G. Fay's performance as the Beggarman is a little masterpiece.

Independent May 4

IRISH NATIONAL DRAMA. PERFORMANCES IN LONDON

(From Our Correspondent's Notes)
London, Sunday.
Very successful recitations of our native drama were afforded on Saturday by the Irish National Theatre Society under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society of London, at the Queen's Gate Hall, North Kensington. At the matinee the programme covered a widely varied range of the dramatic field, depicting in "The Hour Glass" the triumph of Christianity over unbelief; in "Twenty-five," a delightful blend of comedy and pathos in Irish home life, and in "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" a forcible example of that mysticism which is so frequently the theme of Gaelic literature and legend. The plays, which were performed in English, were witnessed by a crowded audience, amidst which the fashionable element, English as well as Irish, was well to the fore.
Amidst the pomposities in the audience were Lord Aberdeen, Lord and Lady Clifden, Mrs. Wyndham (mother of the Irish Secretary), Lady Adams, Mr. Stephen Gwynn, and the Hon. W. Gibbon, who were well killed comically and even to a large blackhead.
The piece in the triple bill which captured to the most absorbing degree the interest of the audience was certainly Mr. W. B. Yeats's monodrama, "The Hour Glass." It was impossible not to feel fascinated by the personality of the grim teacher of atheism, who was so terrified and converted by an angelic visitation. Given a choice of redemption from damnation if he can find one who will believe in his sincerity, he thinks that he is singly seeking to escape in a disputation. Even his little children fail him, and it is no wonder, inasmuch as the angel has declared that he will never believe. However, his little child from the place since he

and some time to reach, as his wife's father on his departing exclamations that there is hope for the future "enough of spirit to be in a piece."
Mr. J. Dudley Morgan, as the Wise Man, armed with vigors and exhortations, and invited the part with a strong suggestion of westernism. Mr. W. J. Fay as the Fool, and through the spirit of the part. Miss Mary Walker as the Angel afforded a charming study of the part, into which she brought not only a strong suggestion of the housewife, Miss Hester Lavelle as the wife of the Wise Man acquitted herself attractively. Miss P. J. Kelly, James O'Sullivan, J. Roberts, and W. Walker, all did well through advancing the parts of the people, that of their principal spokesman—the son of the King—Mr. P. J. O'Sullivan, being so admirably represented as to call for special notice.
The comedy play, "Twenty-five," was next presented, and it was of quite a different order from the preceding one. It was a comedy in domestic life. It shows a man who is disappointed in his love, finding his plighted one the wife of another, and not being allowed by her to relieve their pecuniary necessities by a gift, contrives to lose a large sum to the husband at cards.
The concluding piece was Mr. W. B. Yeats's "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," which dealt with the unaccountable bewitching of a young peasant bridgeman on the eve of his wedding by a fairy woman, who sings and talks with much uncanny mystery. Miss Mary T. Quinn, as Kathleen Ni Houlihan, looked and acted in a way that brought out all the glamour that attaches to the character of a witch.
The evening programme drew an audience, which filled the hall to its utmost. Mr. Fred Ryan's play, "The Laying of the Foundations," and "A Pot of Broth," by Mr. W. B. Yeats, were the new features presented, the performance closing with a repetition of "Kathleen Ni Houlihan." "The Laying of the Foundations" was not long on the stage, most those to whom both the play and the company were entirely new concluded that not only was the dialogue of the play clever, but that the acting was of a very high order indeed.
The little company played admirably together, and the impressive conveyed throughout was one of completeness. "A Pot of Broth," by Mr. W. B. Yeats, is a fragment, but a very delightful one. It does, as a play, lack the manner in which a wide-spread beggarman gains the material for a dinner from a stony housewife. Mr. W. G. Fay as the Beggarman was exceedingly humorous. The little piece created great good humor, and the close was warmly applauded.
"Kathleen Ni Houlihan" concluded the performance. The various parts were filled as admirably as they were in the afternoon. The fall of the curtain was marked by a scene of the greatest enthusiasm. The verdict was unanimous, and it was that the whole performance was a most gratifying success. The little piece of "A Pot of Broth" which were not to be denied, Mr. Yeats and Mr. Ryan had to appear before the curtain, when they received an ovation. Mr. Yeats returned thanks very briefly.

San May 7

Uncommercialism.
In these days, when the shadow of the re-box-office is over Theatricals, it is refreshing to find a per se unconcerned of an "uncommercial" dramatic enterprise. In such a category is the Irish National Theatre Society, which since the production of plays of Irish interest, and incidentally of literary value. The Irish National Theatre Society made a start on Saturday with a triple bill, which "The Hour Glass" was the piece de resistance. One can but hope that the sad days of time will not run out before the little band of enthusiasts who form the Irish National Theatre Society have introduced a degenerate age with the bacillus of uncommercialism.

A performance of quite unique interest—of its kind, since such a play, such scenes were given quite lately by the members of the Irish National Theatre, who came over from Dublin for that purpose under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society. Founded with the object of producing plays by Irish authors in Gaelic and English, or plays on Irish subjects from any sympathetic source. It goes without saying that the repertory of the Irish National Theatre is almost entirely made up of Gaelic plays. A copy of the bill was provided for each performance, "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," a dramatic poem by Mr. W. B. Yeats, being given as the opening scene. The opening piece was a monodrama play, "The Hour Glass," by Mr. Yeats, very dignified, very simple, of a type comparatively rare. The characters consist of the wise man, his wife, and people, an angel, and a fool. The wise man has taught all these within the sphere of his own senses, so that when an angel appeared to him in flames colored robes and a sword brandished to announce his death within the hour, and his education from hence arises he can find one believer before the angel's run out, the terror-stricken philosopher spends in vain his consciousness, to his people, to his wife, even to his children—they all credit him with seeking excuse for an moment, and assure him that they are confirmed infidels. But the fool has lived close to Nature, as from time immemorial, he believes in God, so the soul of the man of science is redeemed by the faith of the fool. Mr. Yeats' other play, "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," has all the haunting fascination of its author's more characteristic work. Ireland is personified in the guise of an old woman who enters a peasant's cottage on the eve of the marriage of one of the sons. She brands over the fire, telling tales of the men who have died for her, and across wind melodies of the brave departed, till the heart of the young bridgeman fails under the spell, and he follows her away in flight in her case, leaving the bride and home and kindred. The sacrifice transforms her, for the younger boy, coming in, declares he is true to old woman.

"Twenty-five," by Lady Gregory, is a sketch of peasant life, describing the return from America of a young emigrant to sell the soil he left behind him. She, in growing poverty and believing herself forgotten, has married Michael Ford, but the farmer has fallen on evil days, and the income is about to be sold off. Celia Henderson, to save his old sweetheart, contrives to lose all his savings to the unscrupulous landlord at the card game of Twenty-five, and departs once more for America with nothing left in his possession but his return ticket. "A Pot of Broth" is a humorous piece of comedy showing how a beggarman could gain a stony housewife into giving him a substantial meal. "The Laying of the Foundations," is the evening bill, and is concerned with historical material, and is a play with a great deal of local interest. It is to be regretted that the Irish Literary Society members, having taken care to give to the public a taste of their quality, were not inspired to produce more substantial fare. Short scenes are of necessity more shadowy, for instance, allows for development of character, and a deeper insight into the genius of the brooding Celt.

THE DRAMA.

As though to crown all those dove-like cooings which have been heard in the House of Commons, to cement the new friendships which striving to make the Irish Land Bill a success and to "make the great thick and slab," we are to have a visit from the Irish players with their Irish plays. The following intimation has been issued by Mr. Stephen Gwynn, as hon. secretary of the Irish Literary Society:

The Irish National Dramatic Company have consented to come over from Dublin to give a Matinee and Evening Performance for the benefit of this Society.

The Irish National Theatre is an association of players and dramatists, having for its President Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. W. G. Fay for its Stage Manager. It is founded to produce plays having a literary value and especially plays of Irish interest, and is a notable example of uncommercial dramatic enterprise. The actors have now played together for more than a year, and they have developed a great deal of talent. Their methods, deliberately adopted, differ considerably from those habitual on the English stage.

The plays which they have produced have been mostly short pieces written for a small cast and for inexpensive scenery. Those which will be presented on May 2 are "A Pot of Broth," "Cathleen ni Houlihan," and "The Hourglass," by Mr. W. B. Yeats; "The Laying of the Foundation," by Mr. Fred Ryan; and "Twenty-five," by Lady Gregory.

"A Pot of Broth" is a farce of peasant life, describing the trick by which a witty beggar-man got a dinner from a miserly woman. The story here dramatised is one familiar to most Gaelic peasants, and it gives Mr. W. G. Fay an excellent opportunity for comic acting. "The Laying of the Foundation" is the work of a writer previously unknown, and it is a satirical comedy dealing forcibly with municipal corruption and the short-comings of governing parties. "Cathleen ni Houlihan" is a tragedy of peasant life in the year 1848, when the spirit of Ireland, taking on itself the shape of a strange old woman, drew a young boy from his wedding to go out and fight for Cathleen ni Houlihan, who is also the Sean Eibhlin Niacht. This Irish prize play, as it is presented in Dublin, showed itself to be no less dramatic than it was beautiful.

"The Hourglass," recently acted for the first time, is a Morality, and gives the company a chance to show its methods in poetic drama. The scenery is designed on Mr. Yeats' theory of scenery, and is of a most beautiful character. "Twenty-five" is another of the peasant plays which are a special feature of the repertory; the plot turns on a game at cards.

The performances will take place at the Queen's Gate Hall (two minutes walk from S. Kensington station) on Saturday, May 2, at 3 p.m. and 8.15 p.m. The doors will be open in each case half an hour before the performance. At the Matinee will be produced "Cathleen ni Houlihan," "The Hourglass," and "Twenty-five"; the evening bill will consist of "A Pot of Broth," "The Laying of the Foundation," and "Cathleen ni Houlihan." Tickets can be had by members at 10s. 6d., 5s. and 2s. 6d. respectively. The 2s. 6d. seats will not be reserved. Members are advised that, as the hall seats only 300 persons, early application should be made for tickets.

It will, indeed, be a point of interest to compare these "deliberately different" methods with our own. And who can foretell the effect on the champions of either school?

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

A very interesting afternoon. Interesting not so much because of any actual accomplishment as for the spirit which prompted such an attempt, which could illumine and at times transfigure many attendant crudities. The Irish National Theatre is somewhat pretentious, it is a body of Dublin amateurs, who are amateurs in the true sense of the word, since their art is their recreation, and has been formed to encourage the production of a native drama. Mr. W. B. Yeats is the president, and so far he is also playwright in chief. Under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society the company has paid a flying visit to London. By this time the players are back in Dublin, plying their professions as usual.

On Saturday afternoon three short plays were presented: "The Hour Glass," "Morality," and "Cathleen ni Houlihan," both by Mr. Yeats, and a peasant comedy, "Twenty-five," by Lady Gregory. "The Hour Glass" may be described as a twentieth century "Everyman." The motive is the same and the mechanism is similar, but naturally any later-day variation upon this universal theme must lack the virility and color of the medieval work. Everyman sinned wickedly and died the sinful lusts of the flesh. Such a sinners we nowadays dread could well civilise and we prize such sins as heavily that only the very wealthy can indulge them at all beautifully. Simple sensuality is in its decadence. Mr. Yeats's "Morality" is guilty of intellectual pride. This is our typical modern vice, for nowadays everyone can pretend to an individualism of some sort, since the pretence of it is provided free of charge by a thoughtful country. Let us recommend this new Morality to the Church party as an educational treat, and note that the fact of its usefulness in that direction is a not inapt criticism of its morality. Doubtless Mr. Yeats has a deeper and more just purpose. He grieves at that divorce of brain from spirit which a wisecracking devotion to science for science's sake may bring about. But in the matter of advocacy, he weakens his case by not making the other side state their case more than most inadequately. Certainly this might turn into a play, what is after all only a sermon. An occasional sermon hurts no one, and it may well heighten humility to see that doctored man of sciences grumbling on the floor and striving to piece together his half-remembered sayings. At the same time it will occur to the rebellious and commonplace mind that any Botticelli angel might have appeared to say—the late Mr. Huxley, pronouncing his death within the hour in short, without causing him to turn a hair. But "The Hour Glass" is a very charming piece of work, and contains some of Mr. Yeats's most beautifully phrased phrases, which, by the way, one rather fears to analyse, and it was excellently acted by Mr. J. Dudley Digges as the Wise Man, by Mr. P. J. Kelly as his pupil, and by Miss Mairie Ne Bladhagh (that is Irish, and is to be pronounced something like shoeblack, as the Botticelli angel).

To the performance of this Morality must principally apply the announcement that "their (the players') methods, deliberately adopted, differ considerably from those habitual on the English stage." Now, let the Irish National Theatre practice to perfect its methods before it starts to this is recalled for. If a method is worth anything it becomes self-evident. These players speak well, using Gaelic, English, and some of the best of the

THE DRAMA.

The visit of the Irish National Theatre to this favoured town suggests the horrible possibility that other enthusiasts may deem it advisable to put the wares of their own particular cult before us. With Ibsen and Maeterlinck even those who fail to see the excellence of their school do not quarrel, and it is reasonable enough to welcome these Irish amateurs, just because they are, after all, simply that and nothing else as playwrights and players. Why it was in the beginning so necessary to shake the dust of England off the shoes of Irish literature and drama none but the apostles know. Nor does it greatly matter. As for the discovery of any real reason for returning to the despoiled soil that is beyond most people. Nor will the performances at Queen's Gate Hall materially aid the search. These quite amiable excursions in perfectly unimportant directions are much better suited for home consumption, for really the samples of Celtic drama have nothing distinctive about them, being just what might be expected from reasonably-gifted amateurs. If it should come, however, to performances all over the place meant to illustrate the "Andromedans" or Primitive Pioneers' theatrical quest, then nothing short of legislation would deliver the land. Quot homines et sententia applies so widely to dramatic taste.

new Ireland May 4

Irish National Dramatic Company
Performances in London

ON Saturday last, at the Queen's Gate Hall, South Kensington, the Irish National Dramatic Company, from Dublin, performed in the afternoon and evening, a series of Irish plays, from the pens of Mr. W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Mr. Fred Ryan. Mr. Yeats's contributions to the repertoire were "Cathleen ni Houlihan," which requires no description or commendation from us; "A Pot of Broth," a farce of peasant life, whose motif of "Stone Broth" is familiar to all of us, and which describes the trick by which a witty, beggar man secures a savoury dinner from a miserly woman; and "The Hour-Glass," a Morality Play, possessing that atmosphere of poetic mysticism of which Mr. Yeats is such a subtle master. Lady Gregory's little play, "Twenty-Five," which met with much favour, is a simple story of peasant life dealing with the game of cards of that name so universal in Ireland. Mr. Fred Ryan's "The Laying of the Foundations," which kept the crowded Irish audience in a condition of perpetual merriment, is broadly satirical in its scope, and might be termed a comedy of municipal corruption. It reminds one a little of Ibsen, a little of Carlestone, and a good deal of Fred Ryan. This is Mr. Ryan's first play, and a very remarkable dramatic achievement it is.

The Irish National Dramatic Company, which performed these plays, of course represents the Irish National Theatre, whose President is Mr. W. B. Yeats, and which has for General Organiser and Stage Manager, Mr. W. G. Fay. Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Secretary of the Irish Literary Society, has been the moving agent in inducing the Irish National Dramatic Company to visit London—a departure upon which Mr. Gwynn and the Company are to be heartily congratulated. And now a word as to the Company itself. The players are very young, but very qualified. With the exception of Mr. Fay, they are amateurs, but amateurs in a different acceptance from the ordinary for it may boldly be asserted that nowhere in the United Kingdom can a similar body of amateurs be found possessing anything like the qualifications of these young Irish men and women. Their methods differ from those of the English stage, and deliberately so. It is in this difference, especially noticeable in their chant-like declamation of blank verse, that the great merit and strength of the Company lies, for the performance of any of the plays above indicated, or, indeed, any of the plays which the Celtic revival has given birth to, according to English dramatic ideals, would be fatal to their vital interpretation. All those who visited the Queen's Gate Hall on Saturday night last, heard eloquence of a singular excellence delivered by non-professional actors and actresses, and conveying the true spirit of the new Irish drama. The performances throughout were of remarkable excellence, the Celtic spirit of the plays finding a corresponding Celtic interpretation from Mr. Fay's earnest little band of workers. To the latter gentleman very much of the success of the performances must be attributed, for, while he is capital as an actor, he is incomparable as a stage-manager. He had, of course, splendid material to his hand, all his capable colleagues working loyally to achieve the general dramatic effects aimed at. Before leaving the question of the Company and its repertoire, we cannot forbear saying that a grievous mistake appears to have been committed in the exclusion of Mr. George Russell's "Deirdre" from the list of plays performed. It may seem extravagant praise to term "Deirdre" a work of genius, but it is undoubtedly one of the most notable contributions to the dramatic literature of Ireland that our generation has offered, and it seems a very regrettable thing that means were not taken to have it presented along with the other representative plays submitted to the Irish in London.

And now some words as to the three playwrights whose productions were so deservedly acclaimed at Queen's Gate Hall. Mr. W. B. Yeats who, as all the world knows, is a very great poet as well as a very promising playwright, was born in the Irish capital on the 13th June, 1865. He

...and Mr. De Max in ...
...for long periods the ...
...would merely stand and pose, and ...
...counted twenty-seven quite ...
...before anybody on a fairly well ...
...stage moved as a second, as much ...
...as a sketch. The Irish players prac ...
...this personality of gesture, and Mr ...
...says that "an audience of artists ...
...threw them, one man saying: "They ...
...get rid of all the nonsense." The ...
...who could get rid of the "con ...
...of acting would be very fine actors.

Two little plays by Dr. Hyde and Mr. Yeats are graded in this number of "Sunday," the prize of which is sixpence. Dr. Hyde's play, "The Last Leaf," is very slight, but it is very beautiful. It is in one scene, and the characters are a Teacher, a few children, and the Old Man. The children are learning a poem, but one of them, Connell, has no memory for anything, and cannot learn the poem. The poem is by a holy man, who had come away out of knowledge. As the children talk an Old Man comes in, and they leave to gather up the scraps. He then about picking up food for the birds. "These little crumblers," he says, "are for the little birds that do be singing to me in the morning, and that awaken me with their songs of music." Connell is left alone with the Old Man, who prays for "this little lost child."

O Lord, later are the tears of a child, sweeten them; deep are the thoughts of a child, quiet them; weak is the heart of a child, strengthen him. Soft is the heart of a child, O do not harden it.
When the Teacher returns, Connell is asleep, and when he awakes him, he is able to say the poem. The Teacher, discovering that the Old Man is the "lost saint" himself, begs for his blessing, and with the Old Man's blessing the play ends. It is a fragile fantasy, but it is full of tender pity and grace.

Mr. Yeats's play, "Cathleen ni Houlihan," is also a fragile fantasy. A young man is about to be married, when an Old Woman comes into the house. She is, of course, the symbol of Ireland—

A giant: What was it that the terrible one said?
O W. B. My land that was taken from me.
Treat, it is it much had they took from me.
O W. W. My heart beautiful green fields.
The Old Woman sings—

...to me with the women.
Her cheeks-bared, though she is dead;
With a lavender nose for a neckcloth
And a white cloth on her head.
She says that many a man has died for
The love of her. They offer her food and
Money, but she says: "If anyone would
me help he must give me himself, he
must give me all. Have you no man
of your own?" they all, sea regions: "I
have not. With all the lovers that brought
on their love, I never set out the bed for
any."
It is a hard service they
make that help me. Many that are red-
checked now will be pale-checked, many
that have been free to walk the hills and
the bogs and the roads will be sent to walk
and plough in far countries. The Old
Woman goes out, and the news comes that
the French are landing at Killybegs.
Michael breaks away from his bride, and
when they eat Patrick if he had seen an
Old Woman going down the path, he
answers: "I did not; but I saw a young
girl, and she had the walk of a queen."
The English reader may not grasp the
poignant beauty of this fragment of dramatic symbolism, but in Ireland it pierces
every heart, for in Ireland there is hardly
a family that has not had its share of
suffering and sorrow for the sake of Ire-
land. It is not a small thing to pour into
drains the passion that is the common
heritage of a people. I think that passion
is at the back of this Irish movement, and
whatever be its outcome it has a lofty and
noble and pathetic significance.

JAMES DOUGLAS.

IRISH LITERARY SOCIETY, LONDON,

20, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

Performances of the Irish National Theatre

THE IRISH NATIONAL DRAMATIC COMPANY have consented to come over from Dublin to give a Matinée and Evening Performance for the benefit of this Society.

The Irish National Theatre is an association of players and dramatists, having for its President Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. W. G. Fay for its Stage Manager. It is founded to produce plays having a literary value and especially plays of Irish interest, and is a notable example of un-commercial dramatic enterprise. The actors have now played together for more than a year, and they have developed a great deal of talent. Their methods, deliberately adopted, differ considerably from those habitual on the English stage.

The plays which they have produced have been mostly short pieces written for a small cast and for inexpensive scenery. Those which will be presented on May 2nd are "A Pot of Broth," "Cathleen ni Houlihan," and "The Hourglass," by Mr. W. B. YEATS; "The Laying of the Foundations," by Mr. FRED RYAN; and "Twenty-five," by LADY GREGORY.

"A Pot of Broth" is a farce of peasant life, describing the trick by which a witty beggar-man got a dinner from a miserly woman. The story here dramatised is one

familiar to most Gaelic peasants, and it gives Mr. W. G. Fay an excellent opportunity for comic acting. "The Laying of the Foundations" is the work of a writer previously unknown, and it is a satirical comedy dealing forcibly with municipal corruption and the short-comings of professing patriots. "Cathleen ni Houlihan" is a tragedy of peasant life in the year 1798, when the spirit of Ireland, taking on itself the shape of a strange old woman, draws a young boy from his wedding to go out and fight for Cathleen ni Houlihan, who is also the Sean Bhean Bhocht. This little prose play at its presentment in Dublin, showed itself to be no less dramatic than it was beautiful. "The Hourglass," recently acted for the first time, is a Morality, and gives the company a chance to show its methods in poetic drama. The scenery is designed on Mr. Yeats' theory of simple massed colours. Lady Gregory's "Twenty-five" is another of the peasant plays which are a special feature of the repertory; the plot turns on a game at cards.

The performances will take place at the Queen's Gate Hall (two minutes' walk from S. Kensington station), on Saturday, May 2nd, at 3 p.m. and 8.15 p.m. The doors will be open in each case half an hour before the performance. At the Matinée will be produced "Cathleen ni Houlihan," "The Hourglass," and "Twenty-five"; the evening bill will consist of "A Pot of Broth," "The Laying of the Foundations," and "Cathleen ni Houlihan." Tickets can be had by members, or by any person applying with introduction from a member, at 10/6, 5/- and 2/6 respectively. The 2/6 seats will not be reserved. Members are advised that, as the hall seats only 300 persons, early application should be made for tickets.

STEPHEN GWYNN,

Hon. Secretary.

was published last autumn by Mr. A. H. Bullen; and also in the last number of "Sambain." It has great merit. It is simple, direct, and charged with genuine national feeling. But the criticism which I am going to make seems to me rather a fundamental one, and it is that the dramatic illusion of the presence of an unearthly or allegorical personage amongst human beings is almost an impossible one to secure upon the stage, where all the parts have to be played by obviously living and breathing men and women. The difficulty can be got over to some extent, although not, I think, wholly, by the use of mystical lighting and the devices of the machinist, which do not enter into Mr. Yeats's scheme. And, of course, it does not arise in the same way when, as in a morality or a legendary play, all the characters are more or less removed from the ordinary human level.

The mysterious visitant in "Kathleen ni Houlihan" is none other than an impersonation of Ireland, one of the poetic names for whom gives the title to the play. This brings me to the point of the "national" character of this Irish theatre, which was further illustrated by Mr. T. E. Ryan's "The Laying of the Foundations," a play that, in spite of its excellent intentions, is not constructed with quite the literary felicity of Mr. Yeats. I understand Mr. Yeats to conceive of his theatre as only one expression of the growing and widening national consciousness. It is to speak to the people, to mirror the national life and voice the national ideals. This is a feature of the enterprise with which one cannot but have the greatest sympathy, provided that it is not forgotten that in one sense art must always be cosmopolitan; that it is the law of its being to stand in a perilously unstable equilibrium between the here and now and the universal; that it takes its impulse from local and momentary causes only on the condition of seeing those *sub specie æternitatis* and of realising that even so vital and fruitful a conception as that of nationality is, to the purged outlook, at most a manifestation of the mutable and the transitory.

I gather it to be part of Mr. Yeats's theories that the drama of the future, for Ireland at least, will not only be founded on national sentiment, but will also be a folk-art, making its appeal to a society which has either never attained to or has discarded the printed book. Herein it is to take rank with Mr. Yeats's other "new art," that of spoken poetry, about which he lectured in Clifford's Inn on Tuesday, while Miss Florence Farr illustrated the lecture by speaking and chanting beautiful ditties to the accompaniment of one of Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch's psalteries. It was a very charming performance, and if the dramatic recitation would give way to the musical recitation one would have reason to be grateful, even if one did not altogether give up the printed book. In insisting that the musical accompaniment of verse must bring out and not obscure the expressiveness of the words Mr. Yeats is on thoroughly firm ground. He will, of course, be the first to admit that his so-called "new art" is a very old art indeed. Thus and no otherwise did the mediæval minstrel use his singing voice and his *vielle*, to support the interminable *laissez* of his romances and *chansons*. If Mr. Yeats will look at the musical notation printed in Mr. Bourdillon's edition of "Aucassin et Nicolette," he will find that the *vielle* itself who tells that story did precisely the sort of thing which Miss Farr does. He chanted his metrical verses to two simple musical phrases, which he repeated over and over again, and brought in a third phrase, slightly more coloured, for the concluding line of each passage, before he went back to his prose. I should rather like to demand to Mr. Yeats's description of this particular way of speaking poetry as a folk-art. He admits that it only comes to the folk by inheritance from the bards, who are minstrels. But the folk have their own poetry long before the development of the chieftain and the imperious desire of this over-weening person to have his praises sung

amongst his followers led to the development of the minstrel. And I think it is clear—shall I be thought pedantic if I refer to Böcher's "Arbeit und Rhythmus"?—that primitive folk-song was accompanied, not by the rhythms of a musical instrument, but either by those of labour itself—the pull of the oar, the sweep of the scyllin, the flash of the shuttle—or, more characteristically still, when the paces of labour unsexually sank, to the rise and fall of the feet of women in the festival dance. Take Rossetti's "Sister Helen," which Miss Farr recited with such exquisite feeling and subtle art. "Sister Helen" is based on the ballad with its refrain. And the ballad goes straight back to the ballade of the dancing ring, whose leader sings complete after complete, while the rest of the company strike in after each with their burden. Merely to listen to the song and lute is a strictly *heroic* deed and unworthy of the free folk.

E. K. CHAMBERS.

Five pieces were played, all written in English—*Kathleen ni Houlihan*, *The Hour Glass*, and *A Pot of Broth*, written by W. B. Yeats (president of the band of players and playwrights constituting the Irish National Theatre Society), *The Laying of the Foundations*, by Mr. Fred Ryan, and *Twenty Years*, by Lady Gregory.

The most interesting of these was undoubtedly *The Hour Glass*, a morality play in one act, staged in a decorative and simple style, and beautifully written. The usual scenic background was replaced by a green cloth while the dresses were in shades of purple, green, and brown, the whole colour scheme proving highly effective and harmonious. The lighting of the stage, too, by means of toplights and sunken footlights was admirable.

The Morality Play.

The characters in the morality play are the Wise Man—a Rationalist—his wife, Bridget, his two children, his pupils, the Angel, and the Fool. At the height of his career as a teacher of wisdom versus faith the Angel appears to the Wise Man and announces that his time has come; within the hour he must die and for his infidelity he damned. But if before the sands of the hour glass have run out he can find among his neighbours anyone who believes in God then will he be allowed to enter Purgatory. Believing and trembling at the Angel's message he calls in by turns his pupils, his wife, his children, and they all deny God, confirm-

Under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society two dramatic performances were given on Saturday by the Irish National Theatre Society, at Queensway Hall, South Kensington—one in the afternoon, and the other in the evening. In the afternoon the performance consisted of "The Hour Glass," a morality play in one act, by W. B. Yeats; "Twenty Years," by Lady Gregory; and "Kathleen ni Houlihan," by Mr. W. B. Yeats; and in the evening, "The Laying of the Foundations," a two act play by Mr. Fred Ryan, "A Pot of Broth," a farce, by Mr. W. B. Yeats; and a reproduction of "Kathleen ni Houlihan." The characters were sustained by amateur actors, but depicting was of considerable merit, and elicited most enthusiastic applause from a crowded audience. The staging also left nothing to be desired. At the close of each performance the talented author had to appear before the curtain in response to an irresistible demand. Mr. W. G. Fay is to be congratulated upon his successful stage-managing throughout both performances.

ing what he has ever taught them. At last in despair he appeals to the Fool, who believes, and thus as the sands are almost out the Wise Man is saved and breathes his last. The other short plays in this interesting set were admirable in their vivid portrayal of Irish character and scenes of Irish peasant life. The acting rose at times to a very high level. The audience in the afternoon included Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Lord and Lady Mount- eagle, Judge Adams, Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Mr. William Sharp, and Mr. Wilfrid Rust.

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The Irish National Theatre Society make no secret of its aims and its ambitions. "It is founded," as runs the official advertisement, "to produce plays having a literary basis, and especially plays of Irish interest, and in a suitable manner of successful dramatic enterprise." The actors have now lived together for more than a year, and they have developed a great deal of talent. Their methods, collectively adopted, differ considerably from those habitual on the English stage. To put the matter less rhetorically, the society is apparently a collection of young literary enthusiasts, who, with the ardour of youth, were inclined to attach to their work considerably more importance than its quality warrants as yet. There is no reason, of course, why Ireland should not have its own theatre and its own dramatists. It is not, however, through the medium of the foreigner, that such plants spring into existence, but rather by a process of natural growth. Sheridan and Goldsmith wrote plays without experiencing any pressing necessity to transform themselves into national theatre societies. This is not to say that the two performances given at Queen's Hall last Saturday by the new society possessed no features of interest. On the contrary, the very character of the experiment served to stimulate curiosity. It would be absurd to contend, however, that anything in the nature of a fresh development, or a new departure, either in "stage methods" or sub-plotting, could be discerned. Of the three pieces presented in the afternoon, two were little more than echoes of the work of established dramatists, and the third a rather ordinary "curtain-raiser," combined as it was with, in the hands of more experienced play-wrights, might possibly have proved productive of better results.

"The Hour Glass," a morality in one act, by Mr. W. B. Yeats, clearly owes its inspiration to "Everyman," but neither in breadth of conception nor in simple majesty of thought does it approach the older work. Mr. Yeats introduces once more the subject of the antagonism between science and religion, and aims the moral that it is better to be a lost possessor of faith than a wise man without it. So successfully has the protagonist of his play incarnated friends, neighbours, pupils, children, and wife with his own spirit of belief that there remains not one to uphold the true religion. When, therefore, "the angel of the Year High" appears with the message that the Wise Man has but an hour to live (if which he has some time to make good a single believer, he is forced to acknowledge that, by his own doing, he has cut himself off from hope. In the extremely the Fool comes to his rescue, for wandering all day long over the mountains he has seen and spoken with angels. He can tell that Mr. Yeats has happened upon his apt and pretty fancy, but that the idea possesses any intrinsically national or individual quality it will hardly be asserted. In "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" the same writer challenges comparison with Maeterlinck without establishing his title to having advanced beyond the limits of a clever imitation. The one distinctive feature of the piece is the presence of Ireland in the guise of an old woman, who—the action passes in 1710—saves a young lad on the eve of his wedding day away from his people and his sweetheart, in order that he may marry her cousin. The author may fairly claim that here he is on native ground, but, even so, the scene and incidents are undeniably Belgian. Lady Gregory's playlet "Twenty Five," the third item on the programme, is merely an episode, crudely and imperfectly sketched. It deals with the return, after a four years' absence, of Christine Hindmarsh, a young emigrant, eager to make his old sweetheart, Kate, his wife. But Kate, meanwhile, has been compelled to marry Michael Ford, a middle-aged farmer. Things have not prospered with the couple, and within the next few hours their house and all its contents are to be put up to auction. Christine discovers the truth, and endeavours to persuade Kate to accept him at his heels. Fearing of her husband's jealousy, Mr. Ford, however, refuses, when Michael enters, Christine introduces himself as a stranger, and challenges the farmer to a game at cards at which the latter is allowed to win a sum sufficient to clear off all his debts. Although the little piece lacks personality, there is not without dramatic possibilities. Of the shillings of the various members of the company it would scarcely be within to speak from the standpoint of professional actors. Altogether all, they revealed, notwithstanding, an earnestness and an intelligence which was far to be commended. Any stage of amateur work.

But perhaps the most remarkable of all the "side-show" productions were the three one-act pieces by Mr. W. B. Yeats acted at Kensington by the Irish Literary Theatre. Both in the "morality" entitled *The Hour-Glass* and in the legendary play *Kathleen ni Houlihan* there was not only imagination but style, not only beauty but dramatic instinct. *The Pot of Brath* was no more than a droll, but a delicious one. The other Irish plays, *Twenty-one* by Lady Gregory, and *The Laying of the Foundations* by Mr. Fred Ryan, were interesting but much less remarkable.

THE DRAWS
The Times
THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

Stendhal said that the greatest pleasure he had ever got from the theatre was given him by the performance of some poor Italian strollers in a barn. The Queen's Gate Hall, if not exactly a barn, can boast none of the glories of the ordinary playhouse; and it was here last night only a day or two ago, a little band of Irishmen and women, strangers to London and to Londoners, gave some of us, who for our sins are constant frequenters of the regular playhouses, a few moments of really delight, quite outside the range of anything which those houses have to offer. They were members of the Irish National Theatre Society, which consists, we understand, of amateurs, all engaged in daily work, who can devote only their leisure time to the stage. That was the case, it will be remembered, with the enthusiasts who helped Antoine to found his *Théâtre Libre*; but there is this difference, that, while the French enterprise was an artistic adventure and nothing else, the Irish Theatre is that and something more. It is part of a national movement, it is designed to express the spirit of the race, the "virtus" of it, in the medium of acted drama. That is an excellent design. If the peculiarities of Irish thought and feeling can be brought home to us through drama, we shall all be the better for the knowledge; and the art of drama, too, cannot but gain by a change of air, new outlook, a fresh crop of ideas. But with these larger aspects of the matter we are not now concerned. Our present business is to record the keen pleasure which an afternoon with the Irish National Theatre has afforded us, and to do our best to analyse that pleasure.

First and foremost, there is the pleasure of the ear. This, of course, is an accidental pleasure; we mean that it has nothing to do with the æsthetic aims of the Society, nothing to do with the dramatic theories or poetic gifts of its President, Mr. W. B. Yeats, nothing to do with art at all; it results from the nature of things, from the simple fact that Irish speakers are addressing English listeners. It is none the less a very exquisite pleasure. We had never realized the musical possibilities of our language until we had heard these Irish people speak it. Most Englishmen, we fancy, got their notions of Irish pronunciation from Thackeray, and though, no doubt, Thackeray's version was always good-natured enough, yet the talk of Conigian and the Mulligans and the O'Dowds tends to belittle the truth. The association is always one of drollery, whereas the English of these Irish players gives us an impression, not of drollery at all, but of elegance. "Poel" is pronounced "fale," (with the Irish French "u"), "philosophy" is "philosophée," "argument" is "argu-méut," and the words look funny when so written; but they do not sound funny, they sound charming. The unexpected emphasis on the minor syllables has an air of not ungraceful pedantry or, better still, of an old-world courtliness. We are listening to English spoken with watchful care and slightly timorous hesitation, as though it were a learned language. That at once endows our mother-tongue, brings it into relief, gives it a distinctness and distinction of which, in our rough workaday use of it, we had never dreamed. But the charm does not stop there. These Irish people sing our language—and always in a minor key. It becomes in very fact "æsthetic," most æsthetic. Rarely, very rarely, the chant degenerates into a waltz. But, for the most part, the English ear is mildly surprised and entirely charmed. Talk of *Anglo-Teutonic* is better forgotten! The English tongue on Irish lips is every whit as melodious.

each night May 4

men

Birth of Ireland's National Drama

The Gaelic revival in Ireland and the enthusiasm and rapidity with which the idea has been taken up by all classes of the Irish people is one of the most remarkable national movements of our time. The Irish Literary Society and the Irish Literary Theatre have been successfully established in Dublin and also in London, and the Irish Literary Society of New York, a more recent organization, not officially connected with the Dublin or London societies but in co-operation and sympathy with both of them bodies, recently produced at Carnegie Lecture, this city, three of the plays of W. B. Yeats, the Irish poet. The following article gives an interesting account of this extraordinary movement and what it has done for a national dramatic literature.

THAT the Gaelic revival, and kindred literary interests which it has aroused in Ireland, would, within a few years of their inception, lay the foundation of a national dramatic literature, was probably beyond the expectation of the enthusiastic spirits to whom it is so largely due the present intellectual awakening of Ireland. Results prove that, as W. B.

Yeats has said, "the Irish people are at that precise stage of their history when imagination, shaped by many stirring events, desires dramatic expression."

The Irish revival has opened numerous ways of literary and artistic expression to those whose talents, under the old conditions, would have been smothered in the materialistic atmosphere of Anglicization, had they not turned back to build, upon the old Gaelic foundation, the structure of a distinctive art and literature which could never be reared under conditions imposed by a foreign civilization.

"Why seriously criticize an Irish drama?" asked a writer recently, when describing the latest Irish-American emerald production. If by "Irish drama" is meant the familiar outworn claptrap of second-rate melodrama, decked in coats of green, and thickly plastered with an impossible brogue;—this thing which, constructed on purely English lines, never did and never could truthfully portray one single phase of Irish life or character, but only the foreigners' extravagant idea thereof,—why, the answer is simple enough. There is no earthly reason why it should be seriously criticized. The mistake is in considering this nondescript article as "Irish drama." The mistake, even in Ireland, has been in supposing that a characteristic dramatic literature, expressing the true Ireland, could ever be evolved in the English language.

That the Gaelic, in the old days of its glory, never did evolve a drama, is the more remarkable when we consider the highly developed state of every other branch of literature among the Gaels; the well-known dramatic temperament of the race and the vast amount of heroic romance, poetry and legend which affords an inexhaustible wealth of material for

dramatic expression. But to the Irish renaissance has been left the inception and development of Irish drama.

It is scarcely five years since W. B. Yeats, Edward Martyn and Lady Gregory, wishing to establish a definite center for the newer literary interests of Ireland, planned the Irish Literary Theatre. A little later they were joined by George Moore. "I was moved to this," says Mr. Moore, "because I had come to know the hopelessness of all artistic effort in England. I discovered the English decadence before I discovered my conscience; at that time I merely despaired of any new literary movement ever rising in England. I saw nothing about me but intellectual decay and moral degradation, so I said: 'well, my friends, let us try.' I knew Mr. Martyn's play "The Heather Field" and his "Maive," and I knew Mr. Yeats' "Countess Cathleen." "These," I said, "will do for a start, but what have we got to follow them?" They answered: "You will write us a play, and somebody else will write after you. One must not look too far ahead." One of the cleverest and most original dramas afterward produced by the Literary Theatre was "The Hending of the Bough," from the pen of Mr. Moore. At this time they attempted to find a play in Gaelic; but in vain, for Gaelic litterateurs had not yet turned their attention to the stage. Since then there have been written and produced successfully plays in Gaelic by Dr. Douglas Hyde, P. T. MacGinlay, Rev. Patrick Dinneen, Rev. Peter O'Leary, Eamonn O'Neill, "Conan



Courtesy Literary Digest

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

The Irish poet and president of the Irish National Theatre

Maol" and other writers. To the organization known as "Inghinidhe na h-Eireann" belongs the credit for producing the first Gaelic play ever given in Dublin. This was P. T. MacGinlay's amusing one-act farce entitled "Eilis agus an Bhean Deirce" (Elizabeth and the Beggar-Woman) which was acted in the early autumn of 1901. In October of the same year, for the first time in any Irish theatre, was produced a Gaelic play. This clever little comedy of Dr. Hyde's, entitled "Casadh an t-Sagairt" (The Twisting of the Rope) is founded upon an incident in the life of Tomas O'Hanrahan, an eighteenth-century Connacht bard. The author has drawn with artist touch this Villonnesque vagabond,—a type of the pathetically contradictory Irish poetic temperament. On the first production of "Casadh an

t-Sagain" Dr. Hyde, as he has since frequently done in other of his plays, himself enacted the principal rôle.

Meantime the Irish Literary Theatre had staged a number of serious and artistic plays, which, although written in English, were thoroughly Irish in spirit. Among these were such widely differing pieces as the picturesque "Last Feast of the Fianna" by Miss Milligan, and Edward Martyn's thoughtful and well-constructed play "The Heather Field," which, after its success in Dublin, was translated into German and produced on the Continent. Mr. Yeats's remarkable dramas "The Countess Cathleen" and "Diarmuid and Grania" in the two seasons during which they were produced occasioned heated controversy among critics, none of whom, however, questioned the poetic value of the former, nor the excellent stage construction of the latter play, in which George Moore had collaborated with the poet. "The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grania," one of the greatest of Gaelic love-stories, is a legend of the Finian Cycle, that wonderful group of hero-tales and poems dealing with the adventures of Fionn Mac Cumhal and his warriors who flourished in the second century of the Christian era. The story is well adapted to the dramatic form, and the authors' treatment of it, philosophic although poetically symbolical, reminds one at times of the Wagner music-drama.

With the production of this play and "The Twisting of the Rope" the Irish Literary Theatre came to an end. It has been succeeded by the Irish National Theatre Society, of which Mr. Yeats is President, and Dr. Douglas Hyde, vice-President. A company has been formed, which, under the management of W. G. Fay, is producing plays both in English and Gaelic. Among the first serious plays presented

were Mr. Yeats' "Kathleen Ni Houlihan"—the name being an allegorical one used by eighteenth century poets to signify Ireland,—and the tragedy "Deirdre" by "Æ," (George Russell) founded on the beautiful story of "The Fate of the Sons of Uisneach," long known as one of the "Three Sorrowful Tales of Erin." A few months ago there were acted in Dublin by this company several new plays that attracted considerable attention both in and out of Ireland. These were "The

DR. DOUGLAS HYDE
Leading Irish dramatist and vice-president
of the Society.

Laying of the Foundations" by Frederick Ryan, a study of political and social conditions in Ireland of to-day; "A Pot of Broth" by Mr. Yeats; "The Sleep of the King," and "The Racing Lug" by Seumas O'Cuinn.

The scene of "The Racing Lug" is laid among the Pres-



LADY GREGORY
Irish author and one of the founders of the Irish Literary Theatre

byterian fisher folk of the wild north coast of Ireland. "Right through the piece we feel the chill of the bitter, dividing sea" wrote a critic in a Dublin review. "A dramatist who knows the sea, and can get the feeling of it into his work, can use no grander background. Maeterlinck has

used the sea-background in many of his plays, but the sea in "The Racing Lug" is not the vague, half-lifeless thing of the Maeterlinckean drama. It is turbulent and terrible, splendid and strong, as in Ibsen's "Lady From the Sea" and Martyn's "Enchanted Sea."

Drawing his material from a familiar Irish folk-tale, Mr. Yeats constructed his clever little farce "A Pot of Broth," the genial humor of which, characteristically Irish, is entirely free from caricature or vulgarity. Among more recent plays given by the National Theatre Company are "The Hour Glass" a morality by W. B. Yeats, "Twenty-five," a pathetic sketch of western Irish life, by Lady Gregory, and "The Sword of Dermot," a three-act tragedy by Seumas

O'Cuinn. These, with "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," "A Pot of Broth" and "The Laying of the Foundations" have been successfully produced in London.

There have been Gaelic plays since the first days of the movement. Among them are: Father Dinneen's "Creideamh agus Gorta" (Faith and Famine) a tragic drama of the '47 period, and a later and more simply constructed play of lighter character by the same author, "An Tobar Draoidheachta," (The Enchanted Well) which has met with great success. "Tadhg Saor," (Poor Teig) is a short farce written by the Rev. Peter O'Leary, one of the pioneers of the Gaelic revival, while a longer and ambitious play "Ar Son Baile agus Tíre," (For Home and Country) by J. Dorney, also deserves mention. An historic drama entitled, "Aodh O'Neill," by Conan Maol, is perhaps the most important of the four Gaelic plays lately staged in Dublin.

Mr. Yeats insists on Irish dramatists studying the dramatic masterpieces of the world. "If Irish dramatists," he writes, "had studied the romantic plays of Ibsen, they would not have sent the Irish Literary Theatre imitations of Boucicault, who had no relation to literature. His own dream has always

been to give dramatic form to the heroic ideals of his country. He writes in English,— "for we must speak in the language we think in, and write in the language we speak in. And more important than questions of language or politics it is to give new artistic form to beauty and truth."



EDWARD MARTYN
Author of "The Heather Field" which was translated into German.

MOIRA L. RAY.

The Irish National Theatre Society.

President : W. B. YEATS.

Vice-Presidents :

MAUD GONNE MacBRIDE, DOUGLAS HYDE, and
GEORGE RUSSELL.

Stage Manager : W. G. FAY. Secretary : F. M. RYAN.

PROGRAMME.

Molesworth Hall, Molesworth Street,

DUBLIN, IRELAND.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS,

8th, 9th & 10th October, 1903, at 8.15.

Prices of Admission : 3s., 2s., & 1s.

an Clár-Camán (Carpenter), Cláróirí Gearrtha, &c. Clár

PRODUCTION (FOR THE FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE)

OF

"THE KING'S THRESHOLD,"

A Play in one Act and in Verse,

BY

W. B. YEATS.

King Guaire	.. .. .	P. J. Kelly
The Chamberlain of King Guaire,		Seumas O'Sullivan
A Soldier		W. Conroy
A Monk		S. Sheridan-Neill
The Mayor of Kinvra		W. G. Fay
A Cripple		P. Columb
Another Cripple		E. Davis
Aileen .. }	Ladies of the Court	{ .. Honor Lavelle
Essa .. }		{ .. Dora Melville
Princess Buan		Sara Allgood
Princess Finnha (her Sister) ..		Doreen Gunning
Fedelm (Seanchan's Sweetheart),		Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
Clan Brian }	Servants of Seanchan	{ P. Mac Shiubhlaigh
		{ P. Josephs
Senias } Pupils of Seanchan		G. Roberts
Arias }		Caitia Nic Chormac
Seanchan (Chief Poet of Ireland)		F. J. Fay

Pupils, Courtiers.

SCENE—THE STEPS BEFORE THE PALACE OF
KING GUAIRE AT GORT.

PRODUCTION (FOR THE FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE)
OF

"In the Shadow of the Glen."

A Play in One Act, by J. M. SYNGE.

Dan Burke (Farmer and Herd)	G. Roberts
Nora Burke (His Wife)	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
Michael Dars (A Young Herd)	P. J. Kelly
A Tramp	W. G. Fay

SCENE—THE LAST COTTAGE AT THE HEAD OF A
LONG GLEN IN COUNTY WICKLOW.

"KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN,"

BY

W. B. YEATS.

Kathleen Ni Houlihan	Honor Lavelle
Peter Gillane	W. G. Fay
Bridget Gillane (His Wife)	Sara Allgood
Michael Gillane }	His Sons { P. J. Kelly
Patrick Gillane }	{ P. Mac Shiubhlaigh
Delia Cahel	Dora Melville

SCENE—CLOSE TO KILLALA IN 1798.

The Irish National Theatre Society.

President: W. B. YEATS.

Vice-Presidents:

DOUGLAS HYDE and GEORGE RUSSELL.

Stage Manager: W. G. FAY. Secretary: F. M. RYAN.

PROGRAMME.

Molesworth Hall, Molesworth Street,

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THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS,

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an Cló-Chumann (Coöperative), Clóúinéirí Gearrdaigh, &c. Clóat

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The Chamberlain of King Guaire,	Seumas O'Sullivan	
A Soldier	W. Conroy
A Monk	S. Sheridan-Neill
The Mayor of Kinvara	W. G. Fay
A Cripple	P. Columb
Another Cripple	E. Davis
Aileen	.. } Ladies of the Court	{ .. Honor Lavelle
Essa	.. }	{ .. Dora Melville
Princess Buan	Sara Allgood
Princess Finnhua (her Sister)	Doreen Gunning
Fedelm (Seanchan's Sweetheart),	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh	
Cian	} Servants of Seanchan	{ P. Mac Shiubhlaigh
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Patrick Gillane		{ P. Mac Shiubhlaigh
Delia Cahel	Dora Melville

SCENE A COTTAGE NEAR TO KILLALA IN 1798.

THE IRISH NATIONAL
THEATRE SOCIETY
PRESIDENT W. B. YEATS

Vice-Presidents: Maud Gonne MacBride,
Douglas Hyde, George Russell. Stage
Manager: W. G. Fay. Secretary: F. Ryan.

PROGRAMME

DEIRDRE

A Play in Three Acts, by A.E.

Deirdre	-	-	Maire T. Quinn
Lavarcam (Her Foster Mother, a Druid- ess)	-	-	Maire Nic Shiúbhlaigh
Fergus	-	-	P. J. Kelly
Buinne	|	Sons of	P. Columb
Illuan	|	Fergus	Seumas O'Sullivan
Ardan	|		F. Ryan
Ainle	|	The Sons	G. Roberts
Naisi	|	of Usna	J. Dudley Digges
Messenger			P. Mac Shiúbhlaigh
Concobar (Ardrie of Ulla)			F. J. Fay

ACT I. The Dún of Deirdre's Captivity,
at Emain Macha.

ACT II. In Alba. Naisi's Dún on the
Banks of Loch Ettive.

ACT III. The House of the Red Branch
at Emain Macha.

Dún Emer Dundrum. August 22 1903.
At five o'clock in the afternoon.

The Irish National Theatre Society.

President, W. B. YEATS; Vice-Presidents, DOUGLAS HYUN and GEORGE RUSSELL; Stage Manager, W. G. FAY;
Secretary, FRANK RYAN.
20-04-3 1903
OPENING PERFORMANCES, SEASON 1903-4.

Thursday, Friday, & Saturday Evenings,
October 8th, 9th and 10th, 1903,
AT 8.15 O'CLOCK.

MOLESWORTH HALL,
Molesworth-street, Dublin,
PRODUCTION FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE.

"THE KING'S THRESHOLD,"
By W. B. YEATS,
AND

"In the SHADOW OF THE GLEN,"
By J. M. SYNGE.
Concluding with

"KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN,"
By W. B. YEATS.

Reserved Seats, 3s. Admission, 2s. & 1s.
Tickets can be had at CRAMER WOOD'S and PHOTYS.

AN IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

We have seen the programme of the performances to be given on this and the remaining nights of the week by the Irish National Theatre Society. We give the Society the name by which its members know it, because there are ladies and gentlemen associated with it who have the desire and the power to bring the title, the specified objects and the character of the productions into an agreed more or less complete. To the members of the Society whom we have in mind we would not willingly say a word that would savour of offence. They have done excellent work that has been of profit to the whole movement of regeneration that is going on in Ireland. Their presence in the Irish National Theatre Society is to be attributed to their anxiety to set some agency in motion to gain the ends that this Society is supposed to have in view. Could we take for granted the statement of its objects laid before the Irish public, we should have nothing unfriendly to say of the Society's aims. Rather should we, with an unimportant reservation, commend them as deserving the support of all who understand how great a power for good the theatre can be made. We are informed that the Irish National Theatre Society was founded to place on a more permanent basis the work begun by the Irish Literary Theatre. Its objects are to endeavour to create an Irish National Theatre, by producing plays written by Irish writers on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to develop an interest in dramatic art. We mistake the impetuous proposal because of its dangers, though these could be avoided were those charged with the selection of plays persons of delicate taste and judgment.

Since the Society came into being it has put upon the stage eight or nine plays that have been, on the whole, well received. A company of amateur actors has been organized and drilled into competence. Indeed, several of the members of the company are of more than average talent—no much so, that on their appearing at the Queen's Gate Hall, London, some well-known critics, enjoying the novel sensation, were lavish with their praise. This much we must say in acknowledgment of what the Society has accomplished, but we were not unprepared to encounter unwelcome developments as the one uncertain factor in the movement asserted its dominance. We are not, therefore, surprised to learn that in the two plays that are to be produced this evening for the first time, the peculiarities of a certain school of Anglo-Irish writers are made unpleasantly manifest. Mr. W. B. Yeats is staging a one-act play in verse, founded on the old story of Seanchán the poet and King Gúaire of Gort. For his own purposes Mr. Yeats inverts the story and retells it from the poet's point of view. His version would symbolise the position of the poet in the world, and the manner of its presentation as intended by the author to before the mind of his audience not so much the ancient Ireland of the archaeologist as the ancient Ireland of Mr. Yeats's dreams. The other play to which we allude is by a new writer, Mr. J. M. Synge, who, an over-friendly preliminary notice informs us, lives his life between the gaiety of Paris and the homes of the fisher-folk in the Aran Islands. Mr. Synge did not derive his inspiration from the Western Isles.

We do not for a moment think that all the members of the Irish National Theatre Society can be held accountable for the eccentricities and extravagances of Mr. Yeats and his friends. But, once they are made acquainted with what is being done in their name, we hold that those who ambition the apron of a dramatic art that shall be true, pure, and National, should make their voices heard against the perversion of the Society's avowed aims by men who, however great their gifts, will never consent to serve save on terms that never could or should be conceded. The actors, too, in these unwholesome productions have a responsibility that even the youngest of them cannot shrink. Their heads may have been turned a little by the flattery they have been exposed to, but the not unsavory thrusts for praise will not excuse them. Not content with the measure of his performances up to date, Mr. Yeats wants greater freedom. He declares that every dramatic writer should be encouraged to use life as flesh, "even though he sees it with strange eyes. Our National Theatre must be so tolerant, and, if this is not too wild a hope, find an audience so tolerant that the half-dumb minds who are likely to be the dramatic imagination of Ireland for this generation, may put their own thoughts and

"their own characters into their work." Sim-
ply only we hope and believe that no such toler-
ance will be extended to Mr. Yeats and his
friends. "It is a supreme moment in the life
"of a nation," once more to quote Mr. Yeats,
"when it is able to turn now and again from
"its pre-occupations, to delight in the capri-
"cious power of the artist as one delight in
"the movement of some wild animal." The
simile is not happily chosen, but it is Mr.
Yeats's, not ours. We can neither admire the
grace of the wild animal nor the less artistic
metaphors of the poet unless they are under
restraint.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

The little company of Irish players, which
has been producing new plays by Irish players
at intervals during the past two or three years,
would seem to have established itself on a
more permanent basis in Dublin. In a pro-
gramme setting forth the past efforts and the
future intentions of the National Theatre So-
ciety, we are told that the Molesworth Hall
has been taken for three nights in every
month for the next five months, and that
several new plays, as well as some which have been
produced already, will be performed. The
"season"—if one can use such a conventional
term in this connection—opens to-night. Three
plays are to be given—a new one by Mr. W. B.
Yeats, "The King's Threshold"; a new one
by a new writer, Mr. J. M. Synge, "In the
Shadow of the Glen"; and Mr. Yeats's "Kath-
leen ni Houlihan." The first of these is a
romantic play in verse on the old story of
King Quinlan and the poets; but with this
difference, that while the old story-tellers are
rather inclined to take the King's own
view, Mr. Yeats has frankly enlisted himself
on the side of the poets. The
old story is that Seanchán, the
chief poet of Ireland, out of pride
and vain glory made exorbitant demands on
behalf of himself and his fellow-poets, and
the King, to humble the poets, deprived them
of certain ceremonial honours. Mr. Yeats,
however, thinks that this was a story invented
by the King and his friends. In his play the
immortal rights of the poets to sit at the
King's table has been questioned by the
mobster. Jealous of the power of the poets,
the nobles have persuaded the King to de-
prive them of this right, when Seanchán, in
seeing the degradation of his companions, offered
to submit and accept the compensation offered.
Better death than disgrace, he says, and to
show his sincerity he prepares to die on the
threshold of the King—the being in ancient
Ireland, as it is in this day, the ultimate
appeal of the wronged man. The King, who
has promised everything except the one thing
that the pupils of Seanchán to go to him and
beg him to live, but they are shamed by his
eloquence, and go instead to the King to im-
plore him to give way. Then the chief man
of the place comes to Seanchán, and promises
him his father and mother, but still he re-
fuses to give in. Then the Court comes in
the Lord Chamberlain, and the ceremo-
nial, in his green robes, explaining that
he is kind to something of
a poet, the soldier, the Prince, and
finally Feidelm, Seanchán's sweetheart. But
she is won over by her love for him, and she
then begs him to share his life, saying, "The
Seanchán, but claim the right of the poet."
and then, at last, the King gives way. One can
see the defence every that pays through the
house, as a modern application of the old

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE

Irish Times

The Irish National Theatre is preparing to open a new season, as announced in our columns. We hope its past meet with the success its moving spirit and courage have deserved. This society has a peculiar value in the eyes of those who believe the drama should have an institutional tradition behind it, and that it is susceptible of reform. "Banshaun," just issued, presents many points of interest. In the preliminary "Notes," Mr. Yeats sums up the dramatic adventures of the year, and we are glad to find him urging the necessity of greater attention to construction on the part of play-writers and a more efficient stage management, for lack of which the plays performed in the spring suffered severely. We were not present at the Galway Fête, but we did see two plays by Father Dixon and Mr. Hyde performed before crowded audiences at the Rotunda, wherein the author's intention was surely and obviously betrayed. Great success, however, attended the performances of the Fay Company before the Irish Literary Society in London at the Queen's Hotel last May. The plays by Mr. Yeats, Mr. Russell, Lady Gregory, and others were warmly received by large audiences, and with marked enthusiasm by the critic of the London Times, from whose two columns of praise interesting extracts are given. It is the same company that will present the new plays on the three nights ending this week; the same actress, whose "Virginal beauty" was noted as the angel in "The Hourglass," will sustain the chief part, that of the Poet's Sweetheart, in "The King's Threshold." There is a great deal more to be said about this play than our *Notes* now permit, we hope to discuss it fully on Thursday night. For the moment it must suffice to say that it is a one-act play in verse, dealing with the old story of Banchar the poet, and King Canice of Gort, dealing with it, too, from the poet's point of view, and symbolizing the position of the poet in the world. The effect is to be still further heightened by the substitution of a new and wonderful colour scheme, in which, instead of the cloying artificiality in costume, will be expressed the Wagnerian idea that every costume should harmonize with and partially express the wearer. The dresses, specially made for this performance by a friend who wishes to remain anonymous, are in the highest degree original and artistic. They will present to the mind not so much the ancient Ireland of the archaeologist as the ancient Ireland reflected in the complex and ambivalent mind of the poet. Against a background of pearly grey which stands for moonlight, the twilight sadness of the story, will shine in high relief the purple and red of ecclesiastical pride, the scarlet splendour of the King's robe, the orange that symbolizes the joy of living.

Following the drama come "The Shadow of the Glen," by Mr. J. M. Synge, and Mr. Yeats's well-known "Cathleen ni Houlihan." We feel grateful to "Banshaun" for introducing us to the work of Mr. Synge, a new writer whose life between the gaiety of Paris and the scenes of the fisher-folk in the Aran Islands. His "Riders to the Sea" deals with but a few poor men and women, a drowned man, a mother's grief, and the sea, but how vivid, how poignant. One could no more forget it than one could forget *Puck of the Fens*.

We regret very much to learn that he has chosen as the theme of his comedy the passion one of the young women with an old husband and a lover, though no doubt it is designed to throw a hard light on the loveless, mercenary marriage too common in Ireland.

Returning to "Banshaun," there is much stimulating matter in the editor's detailed suggestions of theatre reform in the direction of simplification of action, gesture, and background. These details are expressed in prose of rare beauty. We like the writer least on the controversial topic of the demoralizing nature of the English theatre, and on one point at least he lays himself open to correction. Speaking of the National Library, he says—"I read some time ago . . . that though I had long been the possessor of Flaubert, it had refused as I had proposed to have my novel written by him." One does not know exactly what date "some time ago" can mean, but as a matter of fact during the past four years five of Flaubert's masterpieces have been added to the catalogue. The National Library is doing under great difficulties, a splendid work which should not be lightly unperturbed, less of all by a poet engaged in founding a National Theatre. The adventure of this week is not to be an isolated one. The society has taken the Moleworth Hall for three days in every month, and hopes to produce other new plays in succession, by Dr. Hyde, Mr. Synge, Mr. O'Casey, and, possibly, in the spring by Mr. Bernard Shaw. This little company of play-writers and players deserves every encouragement in their effort to produce a sincere modern drama that shall express as once the spirit of the race, the universal soul of man, and the witchery of the beyond. It turns deliberately away from conventions of the moment and commercial standards, seeking an ideal beauty that shall appeal, it may be, to "all generations that are to come."

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY was formed to continue on a more permanent basis the work begun by the Irish Literary Theatre. Its objects are to endeavour to create an Irish National Theatre, by producing plays written by Irish Writers, on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to develop an interest in Dramatic Art.

The Society has already produced the following plays :—*Deirdre*, by "A.E."; *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, *A Pot of Broth*, and *The Hour Glass*, by W. B. Yeats; *Twenty-five*, by Lady Gregory; *The Laying of the Foundations*, by Fred Ryan; *The Sleep of the King*, and *The Racing Lug*, by Seumas O'Cuisin, and *Eilis agus an Bhean Deirce*, by P. T. MacGinley.

Since the first performance the Society has repeated many of these plays in Dublin, in some Provincial towns, and in last May, at the invitation of the Irish Literary Society, gave two performances at the Queen's Gate Hall, London.

At present the work of the Society is done under great disadvantages, there being no hall in Dublin properly equipped for Dramatic Performances, but it is hoped it will be possible to secure such a hall in the near future; where performances can be more frequently given and a centre created for the Dramatic Movement in Ireland.

At the opening performances this season the following new plays will be produced :—*The King's Threshold*, by W. B. Yeats, and *In the Shadow of the Glen*, by J. M. Synge, and during the ensuing Winter and Spring :—*Broken Soil*, by Padraic MacCormac Colm; *Riders to the Sea*, by J. M. Synge; *The Townland of Tamney*, by Seumas MacManus; *The Shadowy Waters* and *On Baile's Strand*, by W. B. Yeats; and probably new plays by Lady Gregory, Douglas Hyde, Fred Ryan, and George Bernard Shaw.

For the convenience of those interested in the work of the Society it has been decided to admit Associates at the subscription of 10s. for the season (payable in advance), which will entitle them to one reserved seat on the opening night of the five ensuing monthly performances (exclusive of the October performances). These seats, however, will be reserved only till five minutes before the curtain rises.

Applications for Election as Associates will be received by the Secretary,

FRED RYAN,

34 Lower Camden Street,

Dublin.

THE IRISH PRESS ON THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY'S WORK.

We are convinced that Mr. W. Fay is the man in Ireland most competent to train an Irish school of actors, and we are convinced, moreover, that in less than five years we shall have Irish actors equal to any actors in the world, and an Irish National Theatre which will command the admiration of other countries.—*United Irishman*.

A new departure in dramatic representation in this country. . . . To a very remarkable degree free from the conventional stage tricks and time-honoured traditions with which we are all too familiar.—*Freeman*.

Mr. Fay's company, in spite of plenty of inexperience, are to be congratulated on their present performance.—*Irish Times*.

An Irish Théâtre Libre, which will take dictation from no quarter, which recognises that goodness and beauty and truth are independent of language questions, that they have from the point of view of art no necessary connection with political or sectarian controversy, can do much for Ireland, and is entitled to support as patriotic in the highest sense. The acting in both plays was excellent.—*Daily Express*.

Both plays were splendidly staged, and produced by Mr. Fay's Irish Dramatic Company. . . . The production of the works in question was attended with brilliant success.—*Independent*.

The performances of last week, though labouring under some necessary disadvantages, were free from many of the most objectionable features of the Literary Theatre. There was less of the clique about them. Neither actors nor scenery were imported; they appealed to the people, and not to the educated caste, and were supported by the shillings of Gaelic Leaguers, and not by the guineas of men like Lecky; in a word, there was so much both of the popular and spontaneous about the circumstances of their production that they were well calculated to form the nucleus of a national drama.—*The Leader*.

Its work is still chiefly pioneer work, but that it has a character and a promise of its own, few that have seen the drama produced, or seen the unconventional performances of the actors can doubt. . . . The Irish National Theatre Society pays no regard to stage upholstery, little to the ordinary histrionics of the modern actor. Its stage management is bold; its acting is such as sinks the actor in the dramatist; its method is almost primitive in its simplicity.—*Evening Telegraph*.

A few words of recognition must be accorded to the acting of the two playlets (the Hour Glass and Twenty-Five), on Saturday night. Taken as a whole, it was extremely good.—*Evening Mail*.

THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE PERFORMANCES IN THE QUEEN'S GATE HALL, LONDON.

. . . If there is one thing clearer than that we have no national drama, it is that the Irish have, and a drama that for sincerity of feeling and simple eloquence of expression can, rarely, if ever, have been surpassed. . . . These Irish playwrights, however, do not seem to trouble their heads about precedent; it is their glory to write as if they had never been inside a theatre. . . . It is to be sincerely hoped that our visitors will make some more appearances in

London. Their work has only to be known to be most popular, and, perhaps, to have an influence on our own drama.—*Morning Post*.

The productions which were given at the Queen's Gate Hall, on Saturday afternoon and evening, could scarcely have failed to impress anyone who assisted at them with the conviction that here was something more spontaneous, more organically independent, less influenced by transient literary or artistic fashions, or by foreign literary or artistic forces than anything which we have done for many years in drama in this country. There were days—the great Elizabethan days—when we, in England, had a characteristic national theatre. We shall soon have one again. But the Irish may get there before us, for they have this tremendous advantage, that while our dramatists are hugging foreign models for their form, and groping through the darkness of petty social unrealities for their ideas, we can see already the beginnings in Ireland of a drama which is founded on the bed-rock of simple emotion and sentiment, instead of the falsities of complicated motives and warped ambitions, and which breathes the free air of national instead of petty social character. With these productions of the Irish theatre we feel that in Dublin the theatre is beginning to be what it has not been for hundreds of years in England—the expression of the aspirations, the emotions, the essential spirit and movement of the people, both in the sense in which it is so in France, in the sense of being a recognised platform to which come those who have something important to say, and those who seek something important to hear, but also in the sense in which it expresses the idealism and the poetry of the national sentiment.—*Daily News*.

. . . The Irish Literary Society have done excellently well in inviting these clever amateurs over here, and we hope that like the "München Scharfrichter" they will wander farther afield and win more laurels.—*Daily Chronicle*.

On the whole the performance of both afternoon and evening amply justified what we have heard of the Irish National Theatre, and gave a most interesting sample of their work.—W. A. in the *Manchester Guardian*.

. . . Stendhal said that the greatest pleasure he had ever got from the theatre was given him by the performance of some poor Italian strollers in a barn. The Queen's Gate Hall, if not exactly a barn, can boast none of the glories of the ordinary playhouse, and it was here that, only a day or two ago, a little band of Irishmen and women, strangers to London and to Londoners, gave some of us, who for our sins are constant frequenters of the regular playhouses, a few moments of calm delight quite outside the range of anything which those houses have to offer. . . . The Irish theatre is really of its own kind and of none other. Its sustained note of subdued gravity, with here and there faint harmonics of weird elfish freakishness ("harps in the air" Hilda Wangel would have called them) is entirely Irish and entirely delightful. We are sincerely grateful to them for an hour or two of real refreshment and a train of curious suggestions, a series of new thrills.—*The Times*.

. . . I turn gladly to matters which concern the healthier side of modern drama. By the courtesy of the Irish Literary Society, I had the opportunity of witnessing the performance of Anglo-Hibernian plays, given by the Irish National Theatre Society, under the direction of Mr. Yeats, at the Queen's Gate Hall. It was an interesting experiment. The best hope for the future of the drama lies in its seeming to writers like Mr. Yeats a possible means for expression of the truth that is in them. And the plays which we saw had the advantage of being produced

by a company of clever amateurs, who, if they lack something of technical training, have also escaped many of the irritating conventions which technical training is only too apt to bring with it. They are able, for instance, to stand still, and do not think it necessary to wriggle in the background when they have nothing to do or say.—E. K. Chambers in *The Academy and Literature*.

It is a weakness of mine to be intolerant of the amateur in art. . . . I lack the coterie spirit which prompts one to worship in the conventicles rather than the cathedrals of art. . . . Consequently, it was not without misgivings that I went to the Queen's Gate Hall to witness a performance which, though given by the Irish National Theatre Society, no less, was evidently of the nature of a conventicle celebration. . . . I remained if not to pray, at any rate, to applaud and admire with the utmost sincerity. The company, indeed, were amateurs, with most of the characteristic faults of their class, but in almost all of them there was a clear vein of talent, while the work they presented was all of it interesting, and some of it exquisitely and movingly beautiful.—William Archer in *The World*.

. . . Perhaps it seems a touch of coxcombry in the announcement of a company of amateurs . . . as an Irish National Theatre. But consider what their claim to such a title implies—that a dozen unimportant people acting a parochial drama, and a drama of the soil, with such talent as they have gathered from their surroundings do, to some extent, dramatically represent Ireland to a much greater extent than any fashionable drama being acted to-day within our sacred half-mile radius of Charing Cross can possibly be said to represent England. . . . Much of the acting was well nigh perfect, this, also, because of its simplicity.—*Star*.

. . . They were only amateurs. In Dublin they are ordinary citizens. . . . and they only played in Queen's Gate Hall, which gives little scope for scenic effect; but they aroused such interest and enthusiasm as many professional performers would be glad to awaken in the finest theatres in the West End. Irish drama has been dead for years. Plays there have been in numbers written about Ireland, and by Irishmen. Need one mention Sheridan? Must a forgetful world be reminded of Dion Boucicault? But Irish drama, in the sense in which the Irish Literary Society of London, and the Irish National Theatre Society of Dublin understand it, is something much more racy of the soil, much more distinctively Celtic. . . . The amateurs acted, as we have said, with rare spirit, and a distinction that just suited their programmes. After the evening performance they went back to Dublin with the applause of the London audience ringing in their ears, and with the satisfaction of having justified their flying journey, and left behind a wish for another taste of their quality before very long.—*Morning Advertiser*.

We sincerely trust that the Irish National Theatre Society will, before returning to Dublin, give us some more performances. Of their success we do not think there could be a doubt.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

The visit of the Irish players will, it is hoped, be repeated at a less busy time of the year, and in a theatre in Central London. The affair, however, attracted much notice.—*Glasgow Herald*.

SAMHAIN: An Occasional Review, Edited by W. B. Yeats: containing Notes and an Article on Theatrical Reform by the Editor; a play in English by J. M. Synge; a play in Irish by Dr. Douglas Hyde, with translation by Lady Gregory. Price Sixpence. Sealy, Bryers & Walker: Dublin, 1903.

Nat. Schinblagh. The costumes were emul-

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

LAST NIGHT'S PLAYS

The Irish National Theatre Society opened its winter season last night in the Molworsworth Hall by the production of two new plays and a repetition of an old one. The methods of the Society have undergone little or no change since they played in Molworsworth street. The brilliant and elaborate costumes used in Mr. Yeats' play were perhaps just a little more splendid than the gospel of simplicity and adequacy led us to expect, but apart from this things are as they were. There is the old simplicity of setting, the same "unworthy platform"—two feet wider than Molworsworth's and the same "fading" of the sides of the audience that if a player should sneeze the scenery would collapse, or if he should expand his chest he would force a fellow mime across the footlights in among the audience. In this connection I would make one suggestion to Mr. Yeats. If he intends to produce any more seventeen-part plays, and to bring all or most of his characters before the footlights at the same time, he must give them room to think, to act, and to speak like natural beings. By doing so he will get rid of much that looks cramped and clumsy in the work of the players.

By far the most important and the most ambitious of the three pieces produced in the Molworsworth Hall was Mr. Yeats' new-act play in verse, "The King's Threshold." Mr. Yeats has taken the splendid incident of this piece from the old story of Seanchán the poet and King Gúaire of Gort, but, naturally enough, he has read the legend from the poet's, not from the king's point of view. Gúaire, the High King, has decided that Seanchán, the Chief Poet, must not eat at the Royal table. He must sit below the salt; in good company, it is true, but still below the salt. Seanchán resents this abrogation of the poet's rights, this attack on his dignity, and he retires to the steps of the Royal Palace, and postally but firmly proceeds to starve himself to death. Here onto him come temptations which seldom arise in a twentieth-century poet. He is offered everything—land, riches, love. The only condition is that he will so far consider the feelings of others as not to starve. All temptation, however, is in vain. Not even to the King's entreaty will he surrender the right of the poet; on the contrary, he tells the King what he thinks of him, like the "True Thomas" that he is. For Seanchán is a True Thomas, as true a Thomas as ever twanged a Kipling harp. In the end King Gúaire surrenders. He knows before the starving poet, and surrenders his crown into his hands. Then in one of the finest poetic passages of a play in which there are many fine passages, Seanchán proclaims the triumph of his art. "The King's Threshold" is a delightful little allegory. But I wonder where it will lead Mr. Yeats, and what some people will think about it.

I do not know that Kipling has dug deeply into Celtic legend, but if he has not he has created in "True Thomas" a bard who may claim to stand beside Seanchán as a defender of the poetic faith. Take the last four verses of the drama which tell how the bard refused

with Gúaire, two anguished efforts to fling his King, "all for the sake of the songs he made"—

True Thomas lost his sleep away,
And faded low at the middle side;
He has taken strength and broken care,
And set the King on his horse a' pride.

Sleep ye or wake—True Thomas said,
That is as will, that more so long;
Sleep ye or wake—old the latter sleep
I'm sure will be better for you.

I'll harp the shadow out of the sun
To stand before your face and cry;
I'll harp the earth beneath your head,
And o'er your head I'll dance the sky.

I'll harp ye up to the Throne o' God,
I'll harp your mist and sea in three;
I'll harp ye down to the Hinges of Hell,
And ye would make a Knight o' me!

"The Threshold of the King" was played with considerable talent, but the one outstanding historic triumph in the piece was Mr. F. J. Fay in the part of Seanchán. A few words will do justice to his acting; it was almost perfect. It is much more difficult, however, to find a term in which adequately to praise the manner in which he delivered his lines, the fine closing passages of the play in particular. There was a music in his voice, a charm and distinctness in his enunciation, and an appreciation of the poetic significance of his words that are seldom heard even within the walls of that accused institution, the "commercial theatre."

"The King's Threshold" was followed by a comedy, "problem-comedy," "In the Shadow of the Glen," from the pen of Mr. J. M. Synge. If loveless marriage and marital infidelity have ever formed the chief ingredients of a problem play—and, Shades of Pinero and Jones, how often have they not done so!—"Shadow of the Glen" is of this school. The only difference is that we crack the nut amongst the heather and the bogland, and not in a parlour-cum-closet. There were some excellent folk in the Hall last night who did not like the tone of the play, and said so silently. I must confess for my own part that I was unoffended by the "problem" and charmed by the comedy; but, then, the very bludge which came across the footlights of the commercial theatre have torn many "problem" has made me a trifle indifferent. One thing, however, may be said about the play, and said without implying a condemnation. It shows a disposition on the part of the Society to break new ground—to favour the idealism of its propaganda now and then with a lesson of realism. There was some clever acting in this piece, that of Mr. W. G. Fay as a Tramp, and of Mr. Roberts as Dan Burke being extremely good.

Kathleen in "Havilah"—that "sigh of '98," as some critics has called it—concluded the triple bill. Of this well known piece it is not necessary to say more than that it was well acted. When the curtain fell for the last time Mr. Yeats came on the stage, and made a short speech. He set forth the aims of the Society, of which he is President, and, like his Seanchán, he claimed "the right of the poets." There are some who would withhold that right, but, so far as I could discover, they were not present last night in Molworsworth Hall.

R. M.

Evening Mail Oct 9-

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

LAST NIGHT'S PLAYS

The Irish National Theatre Society opened its winter season last night in the Molworsworth Hall by the production of two new plays and a repetition of an old one. The methods of the Society have undergone little or no change since last they played in Molworsworth street. The brilliant and elaborate costumes used in Mr. Yeats' play were perhaps just a little more splendid than the gospel of simplicity and adequacy led us to expect, but apart from this things are as they were. There is the old simplicity of setting, the same "unworthy platform"—two feet wider than Molworsworth's and the same "fading" of the sides of the audience that if a player should sneeze the scenery would collapse, or if he should expand his chest he would force a fellow mime across the footlights in among the audience. In this connection I would make one suggestion to Mr. Yeats. If he intends to produce any more seventeen-part plays, and to bring all or most of his characters before the footlights at the same time, he must give them room to think, to act, and to speak like natural beings. By doing so he will get rid of much that looks cramped and clumsy in the work of the players.

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Amongst the numerous minor difficulties which the Irish Literary Theatre had to contend with in the production of their plays, but with, undoubtedly the most annoying was the noise from the street. Moorehead street is not a particularly busy thoroughfare, but the effluvia of the hall, and its proximity to the outer air, made every voice, every footfall, resound with most damaging effect to the attention of the audience. A difficulty which the actors, or the stage-manager, brought on themselves arose from the practice of lowering the lights in the body of the hall before the curtain rose, and after the stage had been brightly illuminated. The transparency of the thin curtain then allowed all the preparations for the forthcoming scene to be plainly visible to the audience. Sometimes with a most laughable effect—as when, previous to the presentation of "In the Shadow of the Glen," the supposed dead man was seen laying himself rapidly down on the bed.

* * *

Irish Times Oct 12

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

"The King's Threshold" and the two accompanying plays were performed for the third time on Saturday night before a large audience, which highly appreciated the scenic-architectural treatment and the poetic beauty of both Mr. Yeats' drama. Mr. Synge's comely appearance also drew great attention to spectators who were not characterised as unimpassioned as that of, say, the Trustees of the National Gallery, and whose literary taste is unimpassioned. No doubt, they considered it in the light of a farce, unconnected with the world's life. But Mr. Yeats has declared, and quite truthfully, that their little company of players follow the teaching of art in a devoted spirit, and work with a true sense of their responsibility. And so must the critic. It is in the same serious spirit, and actuated by the same earnest responsibility, that we repeat our former protests, claiming that the writing is clever, from the grotesque corpse in the impudent to the little whiskey-drinking at the end, the genuineness of the comedy played in certain the pale of our sympathy. It may be objected that the comedies, the brutal, the part of life, and so such are lawful for the experience of the sincere artist. But we did not look for them on this platform. If the country would blame, or to rather only some such legend as "Edgwyss" and their position would be entirely defensible and logical. But we would ask quite dispassionately, is what seems to be to be considered a second drama? In what sense can its promoters rebuke the alleged vulgarity, the debasing influence of the "commercial" theatre? Those who are interested in this problem will have a further opportunity of studying it next Saturday when the same three plays will be repeated. This announcement was made by Mr. Fay, whose admirable acting has gone so far to secure their success. Monday next also he will be Mr. Kelly, who sustains three parts, those of the King, Michael Furey, and the priest in "Kathleen ni Houlihan." Next month will be presented a new play by Mr. O'Shea, and "The Hour-glass" by Mr. W. H. Yeats.

The Irish National Theatre.

The Irish National Theatre gave us a real treat last week in Mr. Yeats' new play "On the Threshold of the King." These short poetical plays seem to suit his genius. The form is more finished, and there is more of that simplicity and unity that always indicates complete art in those than in many of his other poems. "The Land of Heart's Desire," "The Shadow Waters," "Kathleen ni Houlihan," "The Threshold of the King," and the Cuchulainn dramas in his recently published volume, all show a simplicity, mastery and clearness that his lyrics often much want, and they are full of exquisite beauty of language.

An Old Irish Story.—

In "The Threshold of the King" he has taken an old Irish story, and retold it with great loveliness, the treatment conveying the moral significance implied in the legend. The single scene takes place outside the palace. In the early Irish society when a man was injured—frequently for example, when a wrong-doer would not pay the *ere* or fine to which the judge had sentenced him—it was one of the methods used to compel him to make reparation for the sufferer to take his seat opposite his door, and refuse to eat or drink till justice was done. Fear of causing the death of the man he had wronged, and of the social consequences that would follow, were generally sufficient to bring him to right conduct. This custom was known in Breton law as "fasting on the defendant."

—and a Plucky Poet.

In this case the King has refused the Seanchan bard the right to occupy the high position of precedence which in reverence for the divine gift of poetic genius, and its noble influence was always assigned to poets. Seanchan then "fasts on the King." In dread of his death, the King offers him every bribe to induce him to eat, if only he will give up the position that is the outward symbol of his sacred gift and calling. Everyone, including his beloved sweetheart, tries to persuade him, but in vain. The poet triumphs. Of course we have symbolised here the lofty and unspotted freedom in which the true poet should maintain his function, holding it above all uses except the pure revelation of beauty and truth. The little play was wonderfully well produced. It is not too much to say that we could hardly imagine Seanchan better acted than it was by Mr. Fay, and all the actors were good. The dresses which were costly and most picturesque were specially designed—each symbolising the position and character of the wearer—by a friend of the authors, Mrs. Horniman. The scenery was of the simplest, a mere background to the action. "Kathleen ni Houlihan" we have seen before. It is a perfect little work of art. The title part, which formerly was taken by Miss Maud Gonne, was well done by a young university graduate who has already appeared in these performances before.

Powerful but Gruesome.

SOME commotion has been raised over Mr. Synge's very powerful though somewhat gruesome little play. Mr. Synge is a young man of most promising literary ability. He lives frequently in Paris, but has spent months every summer amongst the fishers and peasants of the West. He knows them thoroughly, and the whole atmosphere of the place, and the life. In this play—a comedy—a young woman has been married in the mercenary fashion common among Irish peasants, to an old man who suspects that she cares little about him. He pretends to be dead to witness how she will act. A tramp comes in—capitally played by Mr. William Fay—the proverbial merry and witty Irish tinker who figures in "The Pot

SAMHAIN

(An Occasional Review)

Edited by W. B. Yeats
and containing a Play in
Irish by Douglas Hyde with
English translation by Lady
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lish by J. M. Synge and
Notes by the Editor. Pub-
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PLAYS BY W. B. YEATS.



WHERE THERE IS NOTHING:

Being Vol. I. of Plays for an Irish Theatre. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

"The prose of the play is first-rate—never metrical, but rich in trailing and rippling melodies, genuine harmonies of prose, and delightfully suggestive of the sound of Irish country speech."—*Manchester Guardian*.

"One of the most notable accessions to the drama that we have had."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

"We have read nothing for a long time so redolent of the green earth and of what Jasper Pentecost called 'the wind on the heath, brother.'"—*Times*.

THE HOUR-GLASS AND OTHER PLAYS:

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WILLIAM FAY.

Samhain : An occasional
review edited by W. B. Yeats.

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Notes.

I CANNOT describe the various dramatic adventures of the year with as much detail as I did last year, mainly because the movement has got beyond me. The most important event of the Gaelic Theatre has been the two series of plays produced in the Round Room of the Rotunda by the Gaelic League—Father Dineen's *Tobar Dravidheachta*, and Dr. Hyde's *An Pasadh*, and a chronicle play about Hugh O'Neill, and, I think, some other plays, were seen by immense audiences. I was not in Ireland for these plays, but a friend tells me that he could only get standing room one night, and the Round Room must hold about 3,000 people. A performance of *Tobar Dravidheachta*, I saw there some months before, was bad, but I believe there was great improvement, and that the players who came up from somewhere in County Cork to play it at this second series of plays were admirable. The players, too, that brought Dr. Hyde's *An Pasadh* from Ballaghaderreen, in County Mayo, where they had been showing it to their neighbours, were also, I am told, careful and natural. The play-writing, always good in dialogue, is still very poor in construction, and I still hear of plays in many scenes, with no scene lasting longer than four or six minutes, and few intervals shorter than nine or ten minutes which have to be filled up with songs. The Rotunda chronicle play seems to have been rather of this sort, and I suspect that when I get Father Peter O'Leary's *Meadhbh*, a play in five acts produced at Cork, I shall find the masterful old man, in spite of his hatred of English thought, sticking to the Elizabethan form. I wish I could have seen it played last week, for the spread of the Gaelic Theatre in the country is more important than its spread in Dublin, and of all the performances of Gaelic plays in the country during the year I have seen but one—Dr. Hyde's new play, *Cleanhnas*, at Galway Feis. I got there a day late for a play by the Master of Galway Workhouse, but heard that it was well played, and that his dialogue was as good as his construction was bad. There is no question, however, about the performance of *Cleanhnas* being the worst I ever saw. I do not blame the acting, which was pleasant and natural, in spite of insufficient rehearsal, but the stage management. The subject of the play was a match-making. The terms were in debate between two old men in an inner room. An old woman, according to the stage directions, should have listened at the door and reported what she heard to her daughter's suitor, who is outside the window, and to her daughter. There was no window on the stage, and the young

man stood close enough to the door to have listened for himself. The door, where she listened, opened now on the inner room, and now on the street, according to the necessities of the play, and the young men, who acted the fathers of grown-up children, when they came through the door were seen to have done nothing to disguise their twenty-five or twenty-six summers. There had been only two rehearsals, and the little boy who should have come in laughing at the end came in shouting, "Ho ho, ha ha," evidently believing that these were Gaelic words he had never heard before. Playrights will have to be careful who they permit to play their work if it is to be played after only two rehearsals, and without enough attention to the arrangement of the stage, to make the action plausible.



The only Gaelic performances I have seen during the year have been ill done, but I have seen them sufficiently well done in other years, to believe my friends when they tell me that there have been good performances. *Inghinidhe na h-Eireann* is always thorough, and one cannot doubt that the performance of Dr. Hyde's *An Naom ar Iarraid*, by the children from its classes, was at least careful. A powerful little play in English against enlisting, by Mr. Colum, was played with it, and afterwards revived, and played with a play about the Royal Visit, also in English. I have no doubt that we shall see a good many of these political plays during the next two or three years, and it may be even the rise of a more or less permanent company of political players, for the revolutionary clubs will begin to think plays as necessary as the Gaelic League is already thinking them. Nobody can find the same patriotic songs and recitations sung and spoken by the same people, year in year out, anything but mouldy bread. It is possible that the players who are to produce plays in October, for the Samhain festival of *Cumann na n-Gaedheal*, may grow into such a company.



Though one welcomes every kind of vigorous life, I am, myself, most interested in "The Irish National Theatre Society," which has no propaganda but that of good art. The little Camden Street Hall it had taken has been useful for rehearsal alone, for it proved to be too far away, and too lacking in dressing rooms for our short plays, which involve so many changes. Successful performances were given, however, at Rathmines, and in one or two country places.



Deirdre, by A. E., *The Racing Lug*, by Mr. Cousins, *The Foundations*, by Mr. Ryan, and my *Pot of Broth*, and *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, were repeated, but no new plays were produced until March 14th, when Lady

Gregory's *Twenty Five*, and my *Hour Glass*, drew a good audience. On May the 2nd the *Hour Glass*, *Twenty Five*, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, *Pot of Broth*, and *Foundations* were performed before the Irish Literary Society in London, at the Queen's Gate Hall, and plays and players were generously commended by the Press. I do not think I need apologise for reprinting some quotations from the article written by the *Times* critic. It is natural that we should be pleased with this praise, and that we should wish others to know of it, for is it not a chief pleasure of the artist to be commended in subtle and eloquent words? The critic of the *Times* has seen so many theatres that he is, perhaps, a little weary of them, but even in Ireland there are one or two critics, who are so much in love, or pretend to be so much in love with the theatre as it is that they complain when we perform on a stage two feet wider than Moliere's, that it is scarce possible to be interested in anything that is played on so little a stage. We are to them foolish sectaries who have revolted against that orthodoxy of the commercial theatre, which is so much less pliant than the orthodoxy of the church, for there is nothing so passionate as a vested interest disguised as an intellectual conviction. If you enquire into its truth it becomes as angry as a begging letter writer, when you find some hole in that beautiful story about the five children and the broken mangle. In Ireland wherever the enthusiasts are shaping life, the critic who does the will of the commercial theatre can but stand against his lonely pillar defending his articles of belief among a wild people, and thinking mournfully of distant cities, where nobody puts a raw potato into his pocket when he is going to hear a musical comedy.



The Irish Literary Society of New York, which has been founded this year, produced *The Land of Heart's Desire*, *The Pot of Broth*, and *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, on June 3rd and 4th very successfully, and propose to give Dr. Hyde's Nativity Play, *Drama Breithe Christa*, and his *Casadh an t-Sugain*, '*Posadh*' and *Naom ar Iarraid* next year, at the same time of year, playing them both in Irish and English. I heard too that his Nativity Play will be performed in New York this winter, but I know no particulars except that it will be done in connection with some religious societies. The National Theatre Society will, I hope, produce some new plays of his this winter, as well as new plays by Mr. Synge, Mr. Colum, Lady Gregory, myself, and others. They have taken the Molesworth Hall for three days in every month, beginning with the 8th, 9th, and 10th of October, when they will perform Mr. Synge's *Shadow of the Glen*, a little country comedy, full of a humour that is at once harsh and beautiful; *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, and a longish one act play in verse of my own, called *The King's Threshold*. This play is founded on the old story of Seanchan the poet, and King Guare of Gort, but I have seen the story from the poet's point of view, and not like the old storytellers, from the

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King's. Our repertory of plays is increasing steadily, and when the winter's work is finished, a play Mr. Bernard Shaw has promised us may be ready to open the summer session. His play will, I imagine, unlike the plays we write for ourselves, be long enough to fill an evening, and it will, I know, deal with Irish public life and character. Mr. Shaw, more than anybody else, has the love of mischief that is so near the core of Irish intellect, and should have an immense popularity among us. I have seen a crowd of many thousands in possession of his spirit, and keeping the possession to the small hours.

..

This movement should be important even to those who are not especially interested in the Theatre, for it may be a morning cock-crow to that impartial meditation about character and destiny, we call the artistic life in a country where everybody, if we leave out the peasant who has his folk songs and his music, has thought the arts useless unless they have helped some kind of political action, and has, therefore, lacked the pure joy that only comes out of things that have never been indentured to any cause. The play which is mere propaganda shows its leanness more obviously than a propagandist poem or essay, for dramatic writing is so full of the stuff of daily life that a little falsehood, put in that the moral may come right in the end, contradicts our experience. If Father Dineen or Dr. Hyde were asked why they write their plays they would say they write them to help their propaganda; and yet when they begin to write the form constrains them, and they become artists—one of them a very considerable artist, indeed. Dr. Hyde's early poems have even in translation a naivete and wildness that sets them, as I think, among the finest poetry of our time; but he had ceased to write any verses but those Oireactas odes, that are but ingenious rhetoric. It is hard to write without the sympathy of one's friends, and though the country people sang his verses the readers of Irish read them but little, partly it may be because he had broken with that elaborate structure of later Irish poetry which seemed a necessary part of their propaganda. They read plenty of pamphlets and grammars, but they disliked—as do other people in Ireland—serious reading, reading that is an end and not a means, that gives us nothing but a beauty indifferent to our profuse purposes. But now Dr. Hyde with his cursing Hanrahan, his old saint at his prayers, is a poet again; and the Leaguers go to his plays in thousands—and applaud in the right places, too—and the League puts many sixpences into its pocket.

..

We who write in English have a more difficult work, for English has been the language in which the Irish cause has been debated; and we

have to struggle with traditional phrases, and traditional points of view. Many would give us limitless freedom as to the choice of subject, understanding that it is precisely those subjects on which people feel most passionately, and, therefore, most dramatically, we would be forbidden to handle if we made any compromise with powers. But fewer know that we must encourage every writer to see life afresh, even though he sees it with strange eyes. Our National Theatre must be so tolerant, and, if this is not too wild a hope, find an audience so tolerant that the half dozen minds, who are likely to be the dramatic imagination of Ireland for this generation, may put their own thoughts and their own characters into their work; and for that reason no one who loves the arts, whether among Unionists or among the Patriotic Societies, should take offence if we refuse all but every kind of patronage. I do not say every kind, for if a mad king, a king so mad that he loved the arts and their freedom, should offer us unconditioned millions, I, at any rate, would give my voice for accepting them.

..

We will be able to find conscientious playwrights and players, for our young men have a power of work, when they are interested in their work, one does not look for outside a Latin nation, and if one were certain of being granted this freedom one would be certain that the work would grow to great importance. It is a supreme moment in the life of a nation when it is able to turn now and again from its pre-occupations, to delight in the capricious power of the artist as one delights in the movement of some wild animal, but nobody can tell with certainty when that moment is at hand.

..

The two plays in this year's SAMHAIN represent the two sides of the movement very well, and are both written out of a deep knowledge of the life of the people. It should be unnecessary to praise Dr. Hyde's comedy, that comes up out of the foundation of human life, but Mr. Synge is a new writer and a creation of our movement. He has gone every summer for some years past to the Arran Islands, and lived there in the houses of the fishers, speaking their language and living their lives, and his play seems to me the finest piece of tragic work done in Ireland of late years. One finds in it, from first to last, the presence of the sea, and a sorrow that has majesty as in the work of some ancient poet.

..

A part of the essay which follows was printed in the *United Irishman* last spring. It is a summary, as far as I can remember, of a lecture I gave

after the performance of *The Hour Glass*. It repeats a good deal that has been said before in *SAMHAIN* or *Beltaine*, but only things that one must repeat over and over, not perhaps to convince those who do not believe us, but, as Blake said, to protect those who do.



I think that there must be some who will be glad of Mr. W. Fay's Portrait. We owe our National Theatre Society to him and his brother, and we have always owed to his playing our chief successes.

W. B. YEATS.

The Reform of the Theatre.

I THINK the theatre must be reformed in its plays, its speaking, its acting, and its scenery. That is to say, I think there is nothing good about it at present.

1st. We have to write or find plays that will make the theatre a place of intellectual excitement—a place where the mind goes to be liberated as it was liberated by the theatres of Greece and England and France at certain great moments of their history, and as it is liberated in Scandinavia to-day. If we are to do this we must learn that beauty and truth are always justified of themselves, and that their creation is a greater service to our country than writing that compromises either in the seeming service of a cause. We will, doubtless, come more easily to truth and beauty because we love some cause with all but all our heart; but we must remember when truth and beauty open their mouths to speak, that all other mouths should be as silent as Finn bade the Son of Lugaidh be in the houses of the great. Truth and beauty judge and are above judgment. They justify and have no need of justification.

Such plays will require, both in writers and audiences, a stronger feeling for beautiful and appropriate language than one finds in the ordinary theatre. St. Beuve has said that there is nothing immortal in literature except style, and it is precisely this sense of style, once common among us, that is hardest for us to recover. I do not mean by style words with an air of literature about them, what is ordinarily called eloquent writing. The speeches of Falstaff are as perfect in their style as the soliloquies of Hamlet. One must be able to make a king of faery or an old countryman or a modern lover speak that language which is his and nobody else's, and speak it with so much of emotional subtlety that the hearer may find it hard to know whether it is the thought or the word that has moved him, or whether these could be separated at all.

If one does not know how to construct, if one cannot arrange much complicated life into a single action, one's work will not hold the attention or linger in the memory, but if one is not in love with words it will lack the delicate moment of living speech that is the chief garment of life; and because of this lack the great realists seem to the lovers of beautiful art to be wise in this generation, and for the next generation, perhaps, but not for all generations that are to come.

2nd. But if we are to restore words to their sovereignty we must make speech even more important than gesture upon the stage.

I have been told that I desire a monotonous chant, but that is not true, for though a monotonous chant may be a safer beginning for an actor than the broken and prosaic speech of ordinary recitation, it puts one to sleep none the less. The sing-song in which a child says a verse is a right beginning, though the child grows out of it. An actor should understand how to so discriminate cadence from cadence, and to so cherish the musical lineaments of verse or prose that he delights the ear with a continually varied music. Certain passages of lyrical feeling, or where one wishes, as in the Angel's part in *The Hour Glass*, to make a voice sound like the voice of an immortal, may be spoken upon pure notes which are carefully recorded and learned as if they were the notes of a song. Whatever method one adopts one must always be certain that the work of art, as a whole, is masculine and intellectual, in its sound as in its form.

3rd. We must simplify acting, especially in poetical drama, and in prose drama that is remote from real life like my *Hour Glass*. We must get rid of everything that is restless, everything that draws the attention away from the sound of the voice, or from the few moments of intense expression, whether that expression is through the voice or through the hands; we must from time to time substitute for the movements that the eye sees the nobler movements that the heart sees, the rhythmical movements that seem to flow up into the imagination from some deeper life than that of the individual soul.

4th. Just as it is necessary to simplify gesture that it may accompany speech without being its rival, it is necessary to simplify both the form and colour of scenery and costume. As a rule the background should be but a single colour, so that the persons in the play wherever they stand, may harmonize with it, and preoccupy our attention. In other words it should be thought out not as one thinks out a landscape, but as if it were the background of a portrait, and this is especially necessary on a small stage where the moment the stage is filled the painted forms of the background are broken up and lost. Even when one has to represent trees or hills they should be treated in most cases decoratively, they should be little more than an unobtrusive pattern. There must be nothing unnecessary, nothing that will distract the attention from speech and movement. An art is always at its greatest when it is most human. Greek acting was great because it did everything with the voice, and modern acting may be great when it does everything with voice and movement. But an art which smothers these things with bad painting, with innumerable garish colours, with continual restless mimicries of the surface of life, is an art of fading humanity, a decaying art.

♦♦

A writer in *The Leader* has said that I told my audience after the performance of *The Hour Glass* that I did not care whether a play was

moral or immoral. He said this without discourtesy, and as I have noticed that people are generally discourteous when they write about morals, I think that I owe him upon my part the courtesy of an explanation. I did not say that I did not care whether a play was moral or immoral, for I have always been of Verhaeren opinion that a masterpiece is a portion of the conscience of mankind. My objection was to the rough and ready conscience of the newspaper and the pulpit in a matter so delicate and so difficult as literature. Every generation of men of letters has been called immoral by the pulpit or the newspaper, and it has been precisely when that generation has been illuminating some obscure corner of the conscience that the cry against it has been more confident.

The plays of Shakespeare had to be performed on the south side of the Thames because the Corporation of London considered them immoral. Goethe was thought dangerous to faith and morals for two or three generations. Every educated man knows how great a portion of the conscience of mankind is in Flaubert and Balzac, and yet their books have been proscribed in the courts of law, and I found some time ago that our own National Library, though it had two books on the genius of Flaubert, had refused on moral grounds to have any books written by him. With these stupidities in one's memory how can one, as many would have us, arouse the mob, and in this matter the pulpit and the newspaper are but voices of the mob, against the English theatre in Ireland upon moral grounds? If that theatre became conscientious as men of letters understand the conscience, many that now cry against it would think it even less moral, for it would be more daring, more logical, more freespoken. The English Theatre is demoralizing, not because it delights in the husband, the wife and the lover, a subject which has inspired great literature in most ages of the world, but because the illogical thinking and insincere feeling we call bad writing, make the mind timid, and the heart effeminate. I saw an English play in Dublin a few months ago called *Mice and Men*. It had run for five hundred nights in London, and been called by all the newspapers "a pure and innocent play," "a welcome relief," and so on. In it occurred this incident: The typical scapegrace hero of the stage, a young soldier, who is in love with the wife of another, goes away for a couple of years, and when he returns finds that he is in love with a marriageable girl. His mistress, who has awaited his return with what is represented as faithful love, sends him a letter of welcome, and because he has grown virtuous of a sudden he returns it unopened, and with so careless a scorn that the husband intercepts it; and the dramatist approves this manner of crying off with an old love, and rings down the curtain on his marriage bells. Men who would turn such a man out of a club bring their wives and daughters to look at him with admiration upon the stage, so demoralizing is a drama that has no intellectual tradition behind it. I could not endure it, and went out into the street

and waited there, until the end of the play, when I came in again to find the friends I had brought to hear it, but had I been accustomed to the commercial theatre I would not even have known that anything strange had happened upon the stage. If a man of intellect had written of such an incident he would have made his audience feel for the mistress that sympathy one feels for all that have suffered insult, and for that young man an ironical emotion that might have marred the marriage bells, and who knows what the cheesemonger and the curate would have said of him. Even Ireland would have cried out; Catholic Ireland that should remember the gracious tolerance of the Church when all nations were its children, and how Wolfram of Eisenbach sang from castle to castle of the courtesy of Parzival, the good husband, and of Gawain, the light lover, in that very Thuringia, where a generation later the lap of St. Elizabeth was filled with roses. A Connaught Bishop told his people a while since that they "should never read stories about the degrading passion of love," and one can only suppose that being ignorant of a chief glory of his Church, he has never understood that this new puritanism is but an English cuckoo.

W. B. YEATS.

CEAD NA M-BOCT.

(Leig an cnaoibín.)

AMAR.

CEAD NA MBOCT. Tá leabairt ar an uplár, cúis fiata no map rin ó céile. Sean fear nór gac don leabairt aca. Tá leaptóca eile ar gac taobh: ní feictear iad, aet cloiptear anoir agus aifir gúanna na n-aoine atá sunnca.

[Tagann míghreag Eige na mbóict aetad; eomann pí nór cion leaptán aca.]

MÁIGISTREAS—Dfuit tú níor fearr inoib, a páirín? Ór mást leat aon fear?

PÁIRÍN—Tá mé níor fearr 'ná bí mé inoib, go raib mást agao-pa.

MÁIGISTREAS—Dfuit aon fear a' ceaptál uait?

PÁIRÍN—Deamhan psoe. Tá mé bairéad uait.

[Tébeann an míghreag go nór an leabairt eile.]

MÁIGISTREAS—Agur dfuit túpa níor fearr, a Colum?

COLUM—Níl caill ar bíc óim, a Máigistreach, go raib mást agao, aet an éapact vo beic leanamant nam i gcóimurbe, agus tá póit coeáir ar mo éoróbe. Feictear nam dá mbeic fé bainte amac, agus rógóir, agus cupra ar aif, go mbeic pocapact agam.

MÁIGISTREAS—A Colum, tá paitéor óim nac dfuit aon bóctúir i mD'ac-Chat péin vo véanpáir an cleap rin tuic. Dfuit aon fear ag ceaptál uait?

COLUM—Níl, aet póitead bainne no uirge vo beic le m'air; bíonn an capc ag gabáil nam i gcóimurbe. Ní péanaim a páipáir.

MÁIGISTREAS—Ón tuc an bóctúir ceat tuic an bainne vo beic agao.

COLUM—Níor bairéar fé na agao.

DOIRSEÓIR [ag teac aetad]—Tá dean níor ann rin ag iappáir cápla pocal vo pád leat. Támis pí le fearn-fear vo tabairt léi ar an cead ro, má págann pí ceat uait-fa.

MÁIGISTREAS—Deanpáir rin: pácaró mé níor éurci, 7 a Colum, béró mé ar aif i gceann leat-uairpe 7 cuppóir mé póitead bainne ag ceann vo leaptán tuic.

PÁIRÍN—Ná tabair an bainne uile vo'n fear rin. Tabair curc vo uait-fa.

PÁDRAIS [aḡ éiríge ar a tuim agor aḡ cisteán a piopa leir an bpeap eile; bpeap an piopa]—Oé gan tód mo dá d'oir agam, 7 geobd' uaim é.

COLUM [aḡ cisteán a leabap umuile le paryas]—O! á Cisteanna, naé b'eatam éiríge!

PÁDRAIS [aḡ cisteán a tuim péin]—Dá b'eatam an t'páil éam rin to baint amad aḡat ar fáil, b'peap liom é 'na amharc ar an b'laiceap.

COLUM [aḡ cisteán a tuim péin]—Clár pé opt, map clár pé opt i gcóimuróe, reo cugato mo éamín.

SÚT—Cugato an páca.

SÚT eile—Socap, focap.

SÚT eile—Leis é 'do d'uró gléad; tá' an m'áigirpeap aḡ ceacht.

MÓRÁN SÚT—Éir, tá p' ceacht.

PÁDRAIS [aḡ focapáil p'laicé Colum go veirpead fa na ceann péin 7 aḡ lóiré p'lar]—Mo leum gan t'páim an doimhín m'áiríu péin 7 tá péin a p'áigre an m'áiríu.

COLUM [aḡ véanán an tuim céanna]—I' c'páirí an c'p' éirí to beir i n-áice liom ann go, le dá m' anoir; b'peap liom an Sean-Vuacáil péin in to leabard 'na tá.

[Cagann an m'áigirpeap aḡat ar, 7 bean ar an véanús le, atá gléagta go cómp'atáil p'laicéap.]

AN M'ÁIGIRPEAP—A Colum, reo cugato mo veirp'p'p'.

BEAN [aḡ c'p'atáil agor aḡ p'áig Colum]—Ára! a Colum a d'p'óiré, naé boét an áit a b'eicim tú. Ára! go té an éam t'p'ail tú, no t'p'ail tú beo cor ar b'e?

COLUM—Á Cáit, níop éirí tú mo tuairp' le c'áig b'laicé, 7 c'p'éró tá opt anoir go t'p'ail tú ceacht cugam.

BEAN—Ná éamín tú a Colum? Fuair m'fear boét b'p' 7 tá mé i m' áonpaic liom péin anoir, 7 gan áit mé péin ann. Bí mé c'p'áil n-áiginead rin ná p'áil mé a p'eara. D'baip mé liom péin go p'áil ann ar to c'p'ar 7 go t'p'áil ann amad ar an áit reo tú.

COLUM—O! beannaéte D'opt! a Cáit.

BEAN—D'éró tú níop p'ear liom-pa 'na tá tú ann go.

COLUM—Ág'at eao é 'n t'p'áig-beata atá agat anoir, a Cáit? T'p'ail tú go p'earáta to p'áiré?

BEAN—Cá ceat m'áiríu agam, 7 tá t'p'ail uaim agam le tabairt éam an áonais i n'Dúnnóir áp'ugáil am'p'ad.

COLUM—Ág'at beap'aró tú leat mé m'áiríu?

BEAN—Sé p'ó to bí mé 'p'áil liom péin go m'áiríu pé péiré to n-áigineap liom c'p'ar to beir liom. T'p'eará p'áiré m'p'ar g'áinne agor áiré tabairt to n-áiré 7 to n-áiré, 7 g'áinne beag m'áiríu éamín to na p'áiríu 'p'ar p' beirín péin áonais m'p'ar p'áiríu.

COLUM—O! Dait ó D'á 'p'c, a Cáit.

BEAN—Cá cómhapa agam áonais ann rin, 7 tá c'p'ar áiré, agor g'áil pé uaim to tabairt áiré leir go uir mo ceap-pa m'áiríu ann tú anoir. Fuair mé ceao d'n m'áigirpeap tú to tabairt liom.

COLUM—I' m'áiríu c'p'ar, go g'áiríu D'á tu a Cáit, a p'óir.

PÁDRAIS [aḡ p'áiríu p'ear in a leabard]—Oón! oón! [c'p'áiríu pé ag aḡat 7 aḡ áigineap.] An aḡ m'áiríu uaim atá tú anoir a Colum, 7 's m' p'áiríu ann go to áiríu. M'áiríu to bí áiríu leat p'áiríu ó p'áiríu tú. Tá tú to mo t'p'áiríu áiríu p'áiríu anoir, oón! oón! [c'p'áiríu pé ar áigineap.]

PÁDRAIS—A Cáit a m'áiríu.

BEAN—Ceapó é?

PÁDRAIS—Ní c'p'áiríu mé p'ear opt m'áiríu p'áiríu beag opt.

BEAN—Ní c'p'áiríu tú.

PÁDRAIS—M'áiríu! b'ail ó D'á opt, 7 tabairt an b'eirí áonais leat.

BEAN—An ar to déil atá tú a Colum? C'p'ar áiríu beap'ann an p'ear rin liom.

COLUM—Map tá m'áiríu to áiríu opt.

BEAN—Go veirín m'áiríu, beap'ann cor, p'áiríu pé p'ar áit a b'p'ail pé, 7 i' m'áiríu go leat to é.

COLUM—Á Cáit.

BEAN—Ceapó é anoir?

COLUM—Sé p'ó to bí mé ceapáil naé t'p'ail an áit reo go p'ó to n-áiríu ar fáil—c'p'ar to n-áiríu atá p' agat 7 veiríu p'ar.

BEAN—B' áiríu go m'p'ear leat i 'na beir in mo ceap-pa.

COLUM—Ní h-eao, ní h-eao, áit, pé p'ó to bí mé p'áiríu liom péin naé p'áiríu mé c'p'ar, c'p'ar, map beap' [c'p'áiríu pé ag b'laicéat].

BEAN—Áiríu leat.

COLUM—Naé p'áiríu mé c'p'ar, tá p' agat, go té an éam beirín leat-pa.

BEAN—O! m'áiríu p'ear leat beir ann go —.

COLUM—Ní h-eao, ní h-eao! áit a Cáit an t'p'áiríu an p'ear go leat i n-áiríu liom-pa.

BEAN—Feicim anoir go t'p'ail tú ar to déil ar fáil.

COLUM—Ní h-eao a Cáit, áit —.

BEAN—O! m'áiríu p'ear leat an áit reo, i' cuma liom. M'áiríu áiríu atá mé ní b'eirí mé a b'p'ar liom péin; tá m'áiríu m'áiríu liom p'ear, ní beirí a b'p'ar agam le uir le n-áiríu, agor an t'p'áiríu cómhapa m'áiríu m'áiríu atá agam, 7 mo t'p'ar uaim ag uir éam an áonais, áiríu am'p'ad.

COLUM—A Cáit a p'óir, tabairt an b'eirí áonais leat.

BEAN—D'eamín baogal opt. Tá to p'áiríu agat anoir, c'p'ar liom-pa, no p'ar map a t'p'ail tú.

COLUM—A Cáit, tá mé ceapáil go b'p'ar mé.

BEAN [go p'áiríu ag tabairt a c'p'ar to]—D'eamín rin, t'p'ar mé to p'áiríu péin uir. Tá mé ag m'áiríu.

[S'at c'p'ar to n-áiríu ó p'ear to n-áiríu i leabard eile.]—A m'áigirpeap, p'ear, a m'áigirpeap.

BEAN [aḡ leat-c'p'ar]—Cao é rin?

SUIC—Má tá tú uaigneál íf mife uo déanfaró an fear cóir cineálta
úuit.

DEAN—Príot!

AN SUIC—Tá mé péró le 'out leat. Tóg mé 7 déanfaró mé an fear
cóir leaptán tuat. [Súipe ó na leaptáin éile.]

DEAN [as rannó óis colum]—Ní éirífaró tú lom map rin.

COLUM—Fanfaró mé a Cáit, fanfaró mé, muna dtugann tú an fear ro
leat.

DEAN—Maíreab, ná parb maí agat. Deannaic leat. [iméigean rí.]

AN SUIC CÉADOMÁ—Íf mife uo déanfaró an fear cóir leaptán rí.
[Súipe.]

COLUM—Tá rí iméigean.

SUIC—Can éise naó nreacató tú léi!

COLUM—Deic an fear-benfeamháic rin uaigneál gan tuine uo beic
as tpoio leir.

PÁDORÁIG—Cúg tu n-éiteac.

COLUM—Caeiró pé beic 'tpoio 7 gcóinnurde le tuine éigin. Deic pé
uaigneál gan mife as cup na agat.

PÁDORÁIG—Tá tú as corugab an uo éuro bpeas apir!

COLUM—Ní bpeas é rin, a fear-gluogaire.

PÁDORÁIG—Sean-gluogaire. O! fan go póit! [tógann pé a gúllóp 7
bagpáin pé an an tpeap éile.]

COLUM—A rógaire spánna [tógann pé a gúllóp péin.

SUICÁNNÁ—O! go bróipio Dia oppáinn. Féuc iao as an tpean-obair
apir. [bagpáin rian an a déile le n-a bprillíapab]

The Poorhouse.

By DOUGLAS HYDE, Translated by LADY GREGORY.

PERSONS :—

COLUM.

PAUDEEN.

A COUNTRY WOMAN.

THE MATRON.

THE DOORKEEPER.

SCENE.—*A Poorhouse Ward. Two beds with a little space between them. An old man in each bed of them. There are other beds at the side, they are not seen but one hears now and again voices of the men that are in them.*

MATRON (*comes in and stoops over one of the beds*). Are you better to-day, Pauden? Would you like anything?

PAUDEEN.—I am better than I was yesterday, may good be with you.

MATRON.—Is there anything you are wanting?

PAUDEEN.—Not a ha'porth, I am thankful to you. (*The Matron goes to the other bed*).

MATRON.—And are you better, Colum?

COLUM.—No loss at all on me, ma'am, thank you, but the cough that is sticking to me always, and the sort of itching on my heart. It seems to me that if it could be pulled out and scoured, and put back again I would have some ease.

MATRON.—Ah, Colum, I am afraid there is no doctor in Dublin itself could do that feat for you. Is there anything you are wanting?

COLUM.—There is not, but a vessel of water or of milk to be beside me; the thirst is attacking me always. I cannot satisfy it.

MATRON.—Did the doctor give you leave to have milk?

COLUM.—He did not say against it.

DOORKEEPER (*coming in, to Matron*). There is a woman below asking to say a couple of words to you. She came to take some old man with her out of this house, if she got leave from you.

MATRON.—That'll do. I will come down with you. And Colum, I will be back at the end of a half hour, and I will put a vessel of milk at the head of your bed.

PAUDEEN.—Don't give the whole of the milk to that man; give a share of it to me.

MATRÓN.—I will when I come back. (*She and the Doorkeeper go out*).
COLUM.—Aurah, arn't you the devil to be asking milk of the mistress and you not wanting it?

PAUDEEN.—And why would I not be wanting it the same as yourself?
COLUM.—There is no thirst on you no more than on the posts of my bed, but envying me and jealous of me you are, the way you always were for three score years, and as you will be for ever.

PAUDEEN (*raising his voice*).—Envying you and jealous of you. Ha! ha! ha! Aurah, isn't it a pretty old schemer I'd be jealous of! An old corpse of speckled shins that is in you.

A VOICE (*on Pauddeen's side of the ward*).—Oh murder! There is the pair of them beginning again.

ANOTHER VOICE.—Shut your mouth, and we'll have the sport.

COLUM.—Old corpse of speckled shins does he say? Aurah! O Lord, if I could rise out of this bed it is short till he would know what sort of a corpse I am.

A VOICE.—Stick to him, Colum.

ANOTHER VOICE.—Don't leave it with Colum, Pauddeen.

PAUDEEN (*rising on his elbow*).—I will not leave it, and it is not right to leave it, when he knows, in the middle of his heart, there is no old *spreadaire* in Ireland could be put beside him for lying, for knavery, for softheadedness, and for brutishness.

COLUM (*rising on his elbow*).—*Maiscaidh*, it's I who knows who is quarrelsome and lying from nature, that had not but knavery in his heart and lies in his mouth since he was put out of the cradle. The poor widow that had nothing of the store and cost of the world but the three ducks only, who stole them from her? Answer me that! I saw him doing it. Now!

PAUDEEN.—If I did that trick itself and I a boy, it wasn't to the Souper school I used to be going to get my share of learning like yourself. Now!

COLUM.—To the Souper school! O, listen to that! The most respectable man in Ireland it was that taught me my share of learning. He did not teach me to go backbiting other people and telling lies about them, to get the place for myself, the way you did about Seumas O'Connor.

PAUDEEN.—And who burned Seaghan Ban's barn? Answer me that.

A VOICE.—That's it, Pauddeen.

ANOTHER VOICE.—Now, Colum, give it to him.

COLUM.—And if I set fire to Seaghan's barn it wasn't by myself I was, but I was along with the honestest and the most respectable people in the parish, that would do nothing but the thing would be honest and right. A company that you were never in the like of, for you would not be let into it!

A VOICE.—Long life to you, Colum.

ANOTHER VOICE.—Now, Pauddeen, give him a prick.

PAUDEEN.—It's true for you. I never practised to be among the thieves

and the destroyers and the rapparees of the world like yourself. I had no acquaintance with them. It's not burning barns or robbing people I used to be, but giving heed to my own work.

COLUM.—I know well what your own work was. Who was it put a good appearance on the two bullocks that had the disease on them, and sold them, and they died on the morrow? You went bail for them that they were sound, and you denied it after.

PAUDEEN.—Who drove Seumas Ruadh's ass before him when he found it on the road, and said that it was his own?

COLUM.—And who hung his old shirt out of the window the time the King came? Seeking to be made a magistrate he was!—(*Great laughter from the beds on each side*).—And you without the use of your feet.

PAUDEEN.—I had once the use of my feet and it's a thing you never had. Didn't Nora O'Brien say of your dancing long ago it was a better dance you'd make to leave your legs at home, and to be dancing on your head?

COLUM.—But what did Nora say when she saw you scratching and scraping yourself at the Mass? She said there wasn't a girl in the seven parishes that you wouldn't scare.

PAUDEEN.—How well I didn't scare Red Sarah when you thought you had her yourself.

COLUM.—And the creature! It's little of the pleasure of the world she had after that.

PAUDEEN (*sitting up*).—I never lay for three hours of the clock in the middle of the street a fair day, and I red drunk, till the peelers brought me with them to the barracks.

COLUM (*sitting up*).—That's true for you. It was never drunkenness or anything half as respectable brought you to the barracks, but betraying and spying and telling lies on the neighbours.

PAUDEEN (*gnashing his teeth at him*).—It's finely I'd leather your bones now if I could rise up, but remember, you vagabone, the fine welting I gave you thirty years ago at the fair of Dunmore, that left your stump of an nose crushed and broken from that out.

COLUM.—Isn't it fine memory entirely you have! but don't forget the day I threw you down from the top of the bridge in the big river. You were drowned that time surely, but that it was your hanging you were born for.

PAUDEEN.—You be choked! (*Takes up his pillow and throws it at the other man.*)

COLUM.—The binding of death on you, you old *spreadaire*. (*He throws his own pillow.*)

A VOICE.—That's it, now! Hit him Pauddeen!

ANOTHER VOICE.—Give it to him, Colum.

ANOTHER VOICE.—That pair are fighting one another since the day

they were born, like two whelps, and they're going at one another's throats yet, and they two lame old dogs.

PAUDEEN (*throwing his pipe at the other man that it breaks*)—Och, if I had but the use of my two feet you'd catch it from me!

COLUM (*throwing his prayerbook at Paudeen*)—O Lord! I not to be able to rise.

PAUDEEN (*throwing his tin mug*)—If I was able to knock that crooked eye out of you altogether it would be better to me than a sight of heaven.

COLUM (*throwing his own can*)—It failed you as it always failed you. Here's at you with the can.

A VOICE.—The Pooka'll take you.

ANOTHER VOICE.—Quiet, quiet!

ANOTHER VOICE.—Quit your noise! The mistress is coming.

MANY VOICES.—Whist, she's coming.

PAUDEEN (*settling Colum's pillow hastily under his own head and lying down*)—My grief, the ridge of the whole world not to be between myself and yourself, you rogue of ill luck!

COLUM (*doing the same thing*)—It is a hard case you to be beside me here through the length of two months now; it would be better to me the Old Boy himself to be in your bed than you.

(*The Matron comes in again and a woman from the country with her, comely and comfortably dressed.*)

THE MATRON.—Colum, here is your sister.

WOMAN (*stooping down and kissing Colum*)—Aurah, Colum, achree! Isn't it a poor place that I see you. Aurah, what way are you, or are you living at all?

COLUM.—Well Kate, you never asked after me this five years, and what is on you now to be coming to me?

WOMAN.—Didn't you hear, Colum? My poor man died, and I am alone with myself now, with none but me in it. I was that lonely I could not stand it. I said to myself that I would come seeking you, and that I would bring you out of this place.

COLUM.—Oh! The blessing of God on you, Kate!

WOMAN.—You will be better with me than you are here.

COLUM.—And what way of living have you now, Kate, are you middling well off?

WOMAN.—I have a good house, and I have three lambs to send to the fair of Dunmore after to-morrow.

COLUM.—And you will bring me with you to-day?

WOMAN.—It is what I was saying to myself, it would take a share of the loneliness from me you to be with me. You could be sitting in the corner, and minding the pot, and the fire; and throwing a little grain of meal to the chickens while I would be out in the fields.

COLUM.—Oh! The blessing of God on you, Kate.

WOMAN.—There is a neighbour of my own without, and a cart with him, and he promised me to bring you home with him as far as my house, if you come now. I got leave from the Mistress to bring you with me.

COLUM.—It's I that will come. May God reward you, Kate, astore!

PAUDEEN (*sits up and begins to sigh and to groan*)—Ochone! ochone! Is it going away from me you are now, Colum, and leaving me here after you! I that was near you ever since you were born. You are leaving me among strangers now. Ochone! Ochone! (*he begins to cry*).

COLUM.—Kate, avourneen—

WOMAN.—What is it?

COLUM.—I won't anger you if I ask a little thing of you?

WOMAN.—You will not.

COLUM.—*Maisradh*, God bless you, and bring the two of us with you.

WOMAN.—Is it out of your senses you are Colum? Why would I bring that man with me?

COLUM.—Because it's I am asking you.

WOMAN.—Indeed, I will not, sorra foot. Let him stop in the place where he is, and it's good enough for him.

COLUM.—Kate.

WOMAN.—What is it now?

COLUM.—It is what I am considering, this place is not too bad entirely, not as bad you know as they say.

WOMAN.—Maybe you'd sooner be in it than in my house.

COLUM.—That's not so, that's not so; but it is what I was thinking to myself, I am not certain, certain as you might say, how (*he begins stammering*).

WOMAN.—Speak out.

COLUM.—I wasn't certain you know, what way I would be with you. . .

WOMAN.—O, if you would sooner be here. . .

COLUM.—That's not it, that's not it; but Kate, will you bring this man along with me?

WOMAN.—I see now that you are out of your senses altogether.

COLUM.—That's not so, Kate, but. . .

WOMAN.—Oh! if you would sooner be here, it's the same to me. If it's lonesome I am, I won't be long by myself. If I wanted a husband I wouldn't have far to go to get him, and the comfortable way of living I have, and my three lambs going to the fair after to-morrow.

COLUM.—O, Kate, astore, bring the both of us with you.

WOMAN.—No fear of me. You have your choice now, come with me, or stop where you are.

COLUM.—Kate, I am thinking I will stop.

WOMAN (*angrily turning her back to him*)—That will do, I gave you your own choice. I am going.

A THIN, WEAK, BROKEN LITTLE VOICE (*from an old man in another bed*)—Oh, ma'am, look ma'am. . . .

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A THIN, WEAK, BROKEN LITTLE VOICE (*from an old man in another bed*).—Oh, ma'am, look ma'am. . .

WOMAN (*half turning*).—What is that?

THE VOICE.—If you are lonesome, it is I myself would make the kind, fitting husband to you.

WOMAN.—P'suit!

THE VOICE.—I am ready to go with you; take me, and I will make the kind husband, day and night, to you. (*Laughter from the other beds*).

WOMAN (*turning to Colum*).—You will not come with me, so?

COLUM.—I will stop, Kate; I will stop, unless you will bring this other man with you.

WOMAN.—*Maiseadh*, that there may be no luck to you. Good bye to you. (*She goes away*).

THE SAME VOICE.—It is I would have made the good, kind husband to her. (*Laughter*).

COLUM.—She is gone.

A VOICE.—Why didn't you go with her?

COLUM.—That old vagabone would be lonesome without some person to be fighting him.

PAUDEEN.—You lie.

COLUM.—He must always be quarrelling with some person. He would be lonesome without me to go against him.

PAUDEEN.—You are beginning on your share of lies again.

COLUM.—That is no lie, you old glugger, you.

PAUDEEN.—Old glugger! O, wait a while! (*He takes his pillow and threatens the other man*).

COLUM.—You ugly Roguire! (*He takes up his own pillow*).

VOICES.—Oh, God, save us! Look at them at the old work again! (*They threaten one another with their pillows*).

Riders to the Sea.*

By J. M. SYNGE.

PERSONS:—

MAURVA.

BARTLEY (*her son*).

CATHLEEN. } (*her two daughters*).

NORA. }

MEN AND WOMEN.

SCENE.—*Island off the West of Ireland. Cottage kitchen, with nets, oil-skins, spinning wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc. Cathleen, a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire; then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel. Nora, a young girl, puts her head in at the door.*

NORA (*in a low voice*).—Where is she?

CATHLEEN.—She's lying down; God help her, and maybe sleeping, if she's able.

Nora comes in softly, and takes a bundle from under her shawl.

CATHLEEN (*spinning the wheel rapidly*).—What is it you have?

NORA.—The young priest is after bringing them. It's a shirt and a plain stocking were got off a drowned man in Donegal.

(*Cathleen stops her wheel with a sudden movement, and leans out to listen*).

NORA.—We're to find out if it's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

CATHLEEN.—How would they be Michael's, Nora. How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

NORA.—The young priest says he's known the like of it. . . "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting." The door which Nora half closed behind her is blown open by a gust of wind.)

CATHLEEN (*looking out anxiously*).—Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day to Connemara?

NORA.—"I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living."

CATHLEEN.—Is the sea bad by the white rocks, Nora?

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NORA.—Middling bad. God help us. There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind. *(She goes over to the ladder with the bundle.)*—Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN.—Maybe she'd wake up on us, and come in before we'd done. *(Coming to the table.)*—It's a long time well be, and the two of us crying.

NORA. *(Goes to the inner door and listens.)*—She's moving about on the bed. She'll be coming in a minute.

CATHLEEN.—Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in the turf-loft, the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east. *(They put the ladder against the gable of the chimney, and Cathleen goes up, under the blanket with the bundle in her hand. Maureva, the old woman, comes from the inner room.)*

MAUREVA. *(Looking up at Cathleen and speaking guardedly.)*—Isn't it turt enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN.—There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space *(shoving down turf)*, and Bartley will wait it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara.

(Nora picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-iron.)

MAUREVA. *(Sitting down on a stool at the fire.)*—He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

NORA.—He'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Plecty and Colum Shawn saying he would go.

MAUREVA.—Where is he itself?

NORA.—He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's tackling from the east.

CATHLEEN.—I hear someone passing the big stones.

NORA. *(Looking out.)*—He's coming now, and he is in a hurry.

BARTLEY. *(Comes in and looks round the room. Speaking sadly and quietly.)*—Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN. *(Coming down.)*—Give it to him, Nora; it's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

NORA. *(Giving him a rope.)*—Is that it, Bartley?

MAUREVA.—You'd do right to leave that rope, Bartley, hanging by the boards. *(Bartley takes the rope.)*—It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up to-morrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God.

BARTLEY. *(Beginning to work with the rope.)*—I've no halter, the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one

best going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair I heard them saying below.

MAUREVA.—It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara.

(She looks round at the window.)

BARTLEY.—How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

MAUREVA.—If it isn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a humped horse, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

BARTLEY. *(Working at the halter, to Cathleen.)*—Let you go down each day, and see the sheep aren't jumping in on the rye, and if the jobber goes you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

MAUREVA.—How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

BARTLEY. *(To Cathleen.)*—If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up west enough for another cock for the keeps. . . . It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.

MAUREVA.—It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drowned with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?

(Bartley lays down the halter; takes off his old coat, and puts on a new one of the same pattern.)

BARTLEY. *(To Nora.)*—Is she coming to the pier?

NORA. *(Looking out.)*—She's passing the green head and letting fall her sail.

BARTLEY. *(Getting his purse and tobacco.)*—I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

MAUREVA. *(Turning round to the fire, and putting her hand over her head.)*—Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN.—It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY. *(Taking the halter.)*—I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony 'll run behind me. . . . The blessing of God on you.—*(He goes out.)*

MAUREVA. *(Crying out as he is in the door.)*—He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world.

CATHLEEN.—Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and be looking

round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on everyone in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

(*Maurya takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round.*)

NORA (*turning towards her*).—You're taking away the turf from the cake.

CATHLEEN (*crying out*).—The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we're after forgetting his bit of bread. (*She comes over to the fire.*)

NORA.—And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up.

CATHLEEN (*turning the cake out of the oven*).—It's destroyed he'll be, surely. . . . There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking forever.

(*Maurya sways herself on her stool.*)

CATHLEEN *cuts off some of the bread and rolls it in a cloth; to Maurya*.—Let you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing. You'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say "God speed you," the way he'll be easy in his mind.

MAURYA (*taking the bread*).—Will I be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN.—If you go now quickly.

MAURYA (*standing up unsteadily*).—It's hard set I am to walk.

CATHLEEN (*looking at her anxiously*).—Give her the stick, Nora, or maybe she'll slip on the big stones.

NORA.—What stick?

CATHLEEN.—The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

MAURYA (*taking a stick Nora gives her*).—In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old. (*She goes out slowly.*)

(*Nora goes over to the ladder.*)

CATHLEEN.—Wait, Nora, maybe she'd turn back quickly. She's that sorry, God help her, you wouldn't know the thing she'd do.

NORA.—Is she gone round by the bush?

CATHLEEN (*looking out*).—She's gone now. Throw it down quickly, for the Lord knows when she'll be out of it again.

NORA (*getting the bundle from the loft*).—The young priest said he'd be passing to-morrow, and we might go down and speak to him below if it's Michael's they are surely.

CATHLEEN (*taking the bundle*).—Did he say what way they were found?

NORA (*coming down*).—"There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with poteen before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body and they passing the black cliffs of the north."

CATHLEEN (*trying to open the bundle*).—Give me a knife, Nora, the

string's perished with the salt water, and there's a black knot on it you wouldn't loosen in a week.

NORA (*giving her a knife*).—I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

CATHLEEN (*cutting the string*).—It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago—the man sold us that knife—and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond it would be in seven days you'd be in Donegal.

NORA.—And what time would a man take and he floating?

(*Cathleen opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a shirt and a stocking. They look at them eagerly.*)

CATHLEEN (*in a low voice*).—The Lord spares us, Nora; isn't it a queer hard thing to say if it's his they are surely?

NORA.—I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other. (*She looks through some clothes hanging in the corner.*) It's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?

CATHLEEN.—I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it (*pointing to the corner*). There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that and it will do.

(*Nora brings it to her and they compare the flannel.*)

CATHLEEN.—It's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself, aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

NORA (*who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out*).—It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul, and what will herself say when she hears this story and Bartley on the sea?

CATHLEEN (*taking the stocking*).—It's a plain stocking.

NORA.—It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up threescore stitches, and I dropped four of them.

CATHLEEN (*counts the stitches*).—It's that number is in it. (*Crying out*) Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

NORA (*swinging herself half round, and throwing out her arm on the clothes*).—And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN (*after an instant*).—Tell me is herself coming, Nora. I hear a little sound on the path.

NORA (*looking out*).—She is, Cathleen. She's coming up to the door.

CATHLEEN.—Put these things away before she'll come in. Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley, and we wont let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea.

NORA (*helping Cathleen to close the bundle*).—We'll put them here in the corner (*they put them into a hole in the chimney corner. Cathleen goes back to the spinning-wheel.*)

NORA.—Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN.—Keep your back to the door the way the light 'll not be on you.

[*Nora sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door. Maurya comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and Nora points to the bundle of bread.*]

CATHLEEN (*after spinning for a moment*).—You didn't give him his bit of bread?

[*Maurya begins to keen softly, without turning round.*]

CATHLEEN.—Did you see him riding down?

[*Maurya goes on keening.*]

CATHLEEN (*a little impatiently*).—God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you've seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you.

MAURYA (*with a weak voice*).—My heart's broken from this day.

CATHLEEN (*as before*).—Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA.—I seen the fearfulest thing.

CATHLEEN (*leaves her wheel, and looks out*).—God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

MAURYA (*starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white-topped hair. With a frightened voice*).—The gray pony behind him . . .

CATHLEEN (*coming to the fire*).—What is it ails you, at all?

MAURYA (*speaking very slowly*).—I've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara saw the dead man with the child in his arms.

CATHLEEN and NORA.—Uah.

[*They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire.*]

NORA.—Tell us what it is you seen.

MAURYA.—I went down to the spring well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him (*she puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes*). The Son of God spare us, Nora.

CATHLEEN.—What is it you seen?

MAURYA.—I seen Michael himself.

CATHLEEN (*speaking softly*).—You did not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

MAURYA (*a little defiantly*).—I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "the blessing of God on you," says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and

there was Michael upon it—with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

CATHLEEN (*begins to keen*).—It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely.

NORA.—Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God wont leave her destitute with no son living?

MAURYA (*in a low voice but clearly*).—It's little the like of him knows of the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I wont live after them. I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house—six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with everyone of them and they coming to the world—and there were some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now the lot of them. . . . There were Stephen, and Shawn, were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on one plank, and in by that door.

[*She pauses for a moment, the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them.*]

NORA (*in a whisper*).—Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the North-East?

CATHLEEN (*in a whisper*).—There's some one after crying out by the seashore.

MAURYA (*continues without hearing anything*).—There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. . . . There was Patch after was drowned out of a curagh that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby, lying on my two knees, and I saw two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. . . . I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it—it was a dry day, Nora—and leaving a track to the door. [*She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with their backs to the people, and the white waist-bands of the red petticoats they wear over their heads just seen from behind.*]

MAURYA (*half in a dream, to Cathleen*).—Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

CATHLEEN.—Michael is after being found in the far north, and when he is found there how could he be here in this place?

MAURYA.—There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had, or another man like him, for when a man is nine days in the sea, and a wind blowing, it's hard set his own mother would be to say what man was in it.

CATHLEEN.—It's Michael, God spare him, for they're after sending us

a bit of his clothes from the far north. *(She reaches out and hands Maurya the clothes that belonged to Michael. Maurya stands up slowly, and takes them in her hands. . . . Nora looks out.)*

NORA.—They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN *(in a whisper to the women who have come in.)*—It is Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN.—It is surely, God rest his soul.

(Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of Bartley, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table.)

CATHLEEN *(to the women, as they are doing so.)*—What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN.—The grey pony knocked him over into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks.

(Maurya has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. Cathleen and Nora kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door.)

MAURYA *(raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people round her.)*—They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. . . . *(To Nora.)*—Give me the Holy Water, Nora, there's a small sup still on the dresser. *(Nora gives it to her.)*

MAURYA *(drops Michael's clothes across Bartley's feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him.)*—It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. . . . It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking. *(She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.)*

CATHLEEN *(to one of the men.)*—Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

THE MAN *(looking at the boards.)*—Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN.—There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

ANOTHER MAN.—It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

CATHLEEN.—It's getting old she is and broken.

MAURYA stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of Michael's clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water.

NORA *(in a whisper to Cathleen.)*—She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would anyone have thought that?

CATHLEEN *(slowly and clearly.)*—An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying, and keening, and making great sorrow in the house?

MAURYA *(puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table, and lays her hands together on Bartley's feet.)*—They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus, and Patch, and Stephen, and Shawn *(bending her head)*; and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of everyone is left living in the world *(she pauses, and the keening rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away)*.

MAURYA *(continuing.)*—Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied. *(She kneels down again and the curtain falls slowly.)*

The Irish National Theatre.

STENDHAL said that the greatest pleasure he had ever got from the theatre was given him by the performance of some poor Italian strollers in a barn. The Queen's Gate Hall, if not exactly a barn, can boast none of the glories of the ordinary playhouse; and it was here that, only a day or two ago, a little band of Irishmen and women—strangers to London and to Londoners, gave some of us, who for our sins are constant frequenters of the regular playhouses, a few moments of calm delight quite outside the range of anything which those houses have to offer. They were members of the Irish National Theatre Society, which consists, we understand, of amateurs, all engaged in daily work, who can devote only their leisure time to the stage. That was the case, it will be remembered, with the enthusiasts who helped Antoine to found his *Théâtre Libre*; but there is this difference, that, while the French enterprise was an artistic adventure and nothing else, the Irish Theatre is that and something more. It is part of a national movement, it is designed to express the spirit of the race, the "virtue" of it, in the medium of acted drama. That is an excellent design. If the peculiarities of Irish thought and feeling can be brought home to us through drama we shall all be the better for the knowledge; and the art of drama, too, cannot but gain by a change of air, a new outlook, a fresh current of ideas. But with these larger aspects of the matter we are not now concerned. Our present business is to record the keen pleasure which an afternoon with the Irish National Theatre has afforded us, and to do our best to analyse that pleasure.

First and foremost, there is the pleasure of the ear. This, of course, is an accidental pleasure; we mean that it has nothing to do with the æsthetic aims of the Society, nothing to do with the dramatic theories or poetic gifts of its President, Mr. W. B. Yeats, nothing to do with art at all; it results from the nature of things, from the simple fact that Irish speakers are addressing English listeners. It is none the less a very exquisite pleasure. We had never realized the musical possibilities of our language until we had heard these Irish people speak it. Most Englishmen, we fancy, get their notions of Irish pronunciation from Thackeray, and though, no doubt, Thackeray's version was always good-natured enough, yet the talk of Costigan and the Mulligan and the O'Dowd tends to burlesque the truth. The association is always one of drollery, whereas the English of these Irish players gives us an impression, not of drollery at all, but of elegance. "Fool" is pronounced "fule," (with the thin

French "u"). "philosophy" is "philosopher," "argument" is "argument," and the words look funny when so written; but they do not sound funny, they sound charming. The unexpected emphasis on the minor syllables has an air of not ungraceful pedantry or, better still, of an old-world courtliness. We are listening to English spoken with watchful care and slightly timorous hesitation, as though it were a learned language. That at once ennobles our mother-tongue, brings it into relief, gives it a daintiness and distinction of which, in our rough workaday use of it, we had never dreamed. But the charm does not stop there. The Irish people sing our language—and always in a minor key. It becomes in very fact "most musical, most melancholy." Rarely, very rarely, the chant degenerates into a whine. But for the most part, the English ear is mildly surprised and entirely charmed. Talk of *lingua Toscana in bocca Romana*! The English tongue on Irish lips is every whit as melodious.

The next pleasure is for the eye. These Irish gentlemen and ladies are good to look at; the men are lithe, graceful, bright-eyed, and one at least of the maidens, with the stage name of Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh, is of a strange, wan, "disquieting" beauty: But we are not thinking so much of what Elia's Scotch friend would call their "pairsonal pretensions" as of their postures and movements. As a rule they stand stock-still. The speaker of the moment is the only one who is allowed a little gesture—just as in the familiar convention of the Italian marionette theatre the figure supposed to be speaking is distinguished from the others by a slight vibration. The listeners do not distract one's attention by fussy "stage business," they just stay where they are and listen. When they do move it is without premeditation, at haphazard, even with a little natural clumsiness, as of people who are not conscious of being stared at in public. Hence a delightful effect of spontaneity. And in their demeanour generally they have the artless impulsiveness of children—the very thing which one found so enjoyable in another exotic affair, the performance of Sada Yacco and her Japanese company. Add that the scenery is of Elizabethan simplicity—sometimes no more than a mere backcloth—and you will begin to see why this performance is a sight good for sore eyes—eyes made sore by the perpetual movement and glitter of the ordinary stage.

But it is time to say something of the vital part of our pleasure, the pleasure of mind and mood. That, too, is largely a pleasure of rest—and resignation. The mind is steeped in seriousness; the mood is uniformly sad. For anything of the same kind one would have to go to some of Maeterlinck's earlier plays or to that *Grainquille* of Anatole France which they are now playing at the Renaissance. But these are imperfect comparisons; the Irish theatre is really of its own kind and of none other. Its sustained note of subdued gravity, with here and there faint harmonies of weird elfish freakishness ("harps in the air," Hilda Wangel would have called them) is entirely Irish and entirely delightful. Take Mr. Yeats'

"morality," *The Hour Glass*. An angel gives a man a few moments wherein to try and find means of salvation before he dies with the last running out of the sand. Imagine how the ordinary dramatist would treat this, how largely the hour-glass would bulk in the foreground, how the man would writhe and shriek in the frenzied horror of imminent death. Indeed, you need not imagine it; you have only to go to Drury Lane, where by an odd coincidence this very situation fills the final act of Sardou's *Danle*. Tick, tick! goes the pendulum clock. Lo! the pendulum is the figure of death with his scythe. (Oh, symbolism! oh, Sardou!) Remark the practical actor conscientiously emptying out under the limelight the whole contents of the theatrical bag of tricks labelled "Death Scenes." Then turn for a refreshing contrast to the behaviour of Mr. Yeats' "Wise Man." He is agitated, to be sure, but quietly agitated. He hardly so much as glances at the hour-glass. What you are asked to contemplate is the inner route of his mind. . . . The whole tone of the thing, as we have said, is grave and subdued, its whole texture such stuff as dreams are made of. A little thing, it may be, but it haunts the mind for days afterwards. We can still see the virginal face of the angel, who has stepped out of some Irish Book of Hours, and still hear the wheedling chant of Telgue the Fool—"Give me a pen-nee! Give me some pen-nees!"

Another play by Mr. Yeats, *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*, gives us a whiff—or rather a sigh—of '98. . . . In this beautiful little piece we have the same dream-feeling as in the other; in this as in the other, the people move about silently, as fearing to break the dream, and speak with bated breath.

Yes, they are all from the outset to the end playing *pianissimo*, all hushed as in some sick-room, all grave and, as it were, careworn. No doubt there is a touch of affectation in their methods; they have something of the self-importance of children supplied for service at the altar, or "dressed-up" for a grand domestic occasion. A style "deliberately adopted" is the harmless little boast of their prospectus. Well, that is a matter of course. All new movements in art are self-conscious, abound in little exaggerations and affectations. Is there not an Irish precept, "Be aisy; and if ye can't be aisy, be as aisy as ye can"? We may commend that to the Irish National Theatre Society. And for ourselves we are quite "aisy"; for the "deliberate" methods of these enthusiasts will surely lose their stiffness in due course of time. Meanwhile we are sincerely grateful to them for an hour or two of real refreshment, a train of curious suggestions, a series of new "thrills."—From the *Times* of May 8, 1903.

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Broth": also a young head, who has already been paying some the young wife, not who now proposes that they shall marry, course the supposed dead man sits up, alive and well, to everyone's consternation. He suggests that his wife had better go away to the head, as they both seem to wish it; but the wooer is by no means so willing to take the lady without the house and goods she could have had as a widow.

Death as a Plaything.

It may be felt that death should not be used for comedy purposes on the stage, but it has been so treated in Irish literature—itsness "The night before Larry was stretched," and in what way it more repulsive than any ordinary Irish wake where a drunken chieftain goes on in the room where the dead man is? The callousness of the peasants to death in most countries is well known. In Germany it is a common thing for a second marriage to be arranged at the funeral of the first husband or wife. The play was certainly not untrue to life, and shows much ability; but it was not a pleasant one, though full of humour. It was received with some hisses—and thereby hangs a tale.

Maudie MacBride's Revolt.

Mrs. Maudie MacBride, who was Vice-President of the National Literary Theatre, has withdrawn from that position, and interest in the plays—it was said because she objected to the morality or religion of this play. Her recession was followed by that of Miss Quinn, the leading actress and a devoted admirer of Mrs. McBride—one of the performers indeed in the Rotunda shindy in July, the Lord Mayor declaring he was ashamed of Miss Quinn, when he beheld that young lady standing on a chair addressing the meeting at the other end of the hall—and Mr. Digges, a leading actor of the company followed Miss Quinn's example. Miss Quinn and Mr. Digges might have been noticed on Thursday evening among the disapproving portion of the audience. However, accounts vary. Another, and much more probable reason is given for Mrs. MacBride's recession—that Mr. Yeats and his colleagues were not willing to make the National Theatre subservient to the special political aim that is the one end of all Mrs. MacBride's efforts in Ireland. It is to be hoped that they will adhere to this position. Truth and beauty—a noble and sincere presentation of life should be the end of dramatic art.

The performances given in Dublin last week by the Irish National Theatre Society attracted large audiences and considerable interest. Save in "Cathleen at Houlihan"—which was most ineffective—the acting was good, especially the acting of Mr. P. J. Fay as Seanchan the poet in Mr. Yeats' new play, "On the King's Threshold." This play, like most plays Mr. Yeats has given us, was very beautiful, but it was unconvincing. If the poet desires, as Mr. Yeats' poet desired, to sit at the King's table, and feast at the King's expense, it is right he should obey the King's law. But this Mr. Yeats would not have him do. He would have him accept Caesar's wages without rendering Caesar obedience, and would deem it virtuous in him that he refuses to do so. We are firm believers in the freedom of art, but if the artist lusts after place and power, it is reasonable he should pay the price by relinquishing some of that freedom. When the homage rendered to art ceases to be voluntary, it ceases to be sincere, and it was that insincere homage that Seanchan, who no doubt had been corrupted by too plentiful red ale and tender sweetmeats and purple and fine linen, was after. As we watched the play, our sympathy went out to the honest soldier who wished to put his sword into the selfish old man who lay on the King's steps intimidating where he could not convince, contending for a soft life in a King's bosom instead of an eternal one in a people's heart. We hold it a pity that King Geaire did not hang Seanchan. Had he done so, Art would have been for all time his debtor.

The Irish National Theatre Society was ill-advised when it decided to give its impetuous to such a play as "In a Wicklow Glen." The play has an Irish name, but it is no more Irish than the Decameron. It is a staging of a corrupt version of that old-world tale on womanhood—the "Widow's Repose," which was made current in Ireland by the hedge-schoolmaster. Last week Mr. J. B. Yeats wrote in our columns about this play:—"I do not know whether Mr. Synge is as great as Shakespeare." Now that we have seen Mr. Synge's play, we are no longer in any doubt on the point. To take the Widow of Ephesus and rechristen her Mrs. Burke, and relabel Ephesus Wicklow, is not a brilliant thing. Anyone of us possessed of no modicum of Shakespeare's genius might do it, and, provided we had assimilated as much of the decadent cynicism that passes current in the Latin Quarter and the London salon for wit, produce a like play. There is no reason, indeed, now that Mr. Synge has turned a Greek lady into an Irish peasant woman and Ephesus into Wicklow, why he should not transform Alibech, by a wave of his magic pen, into a Dublin girl and place the hermit's cave in the Fairy Glen—why he should not evolve us one hundred Irish plays out of the stories Boccaccio gave the Florentines. Mr. Synge, indeed, we believe, could give us good plays, even great plays, if he studied the people of whom he writes. Yet although Mr. Synge speaks Irish and resides for a period each year in Arran, this play of his shows him to be as utterly a stranger to the Irish character as any Englishman who has yet associated us for the enlightenment of his countrymen. His Wicklow tramp who addresses an Irish peasant woman as "lady of the house," and his Wicklow farmer's wife who addresses the man who has craved her hospitality as "stranger," never existed in the flesh in Wicklow nor in any other of the thirty-

Mr. Synge's play purports to attack "our Irish institution, the loveless marriage"—a reprehensible institution, but not one peculiar to Ireland. We believe the loveless marriage is something of an institution in France and Germany and even in the superior country across the way, and if we recollect our books, it was something of an institution in that nursery of the arts—ancient Greece. We are told, indeed, that it is an institution even in this present enlightened age amongst the rulers of the earth. Such facts, however, do not make it the less to be condemned in Ireland, and be who attacks it fairly shall always have at least our applause. But Mr. Synge's mode of attack is not one to be commended. He condemns it on results. Men and women are lacking love, and, as a consequence, the woman proves unfaithful. Mr. Synge never found that in Irish life. Men and women in Ireland marry lacking love, and live mostly in a dull level of amity. Sometimes they do not—sometimes the woman lives in bitterness—sometimes she dies of a broken heart—but she does not go away with the Tramp. Mr. Synge was in a hurry, and the sadder tragedy of a woman's broken heart and a man's shivered soul cannot be written in a hurry. Neither in real tragedy can cynicism counterfeited profundity. So Mr. Synge prayed to the gods, and the compassionate, celestial sent him down a Tramp, and put the cover on top of the Will.

Mr. W. B. Yeats, writing on another page, likens the opposition to Mr. Synge's play to the opposition to the "Countess Kathleen." There is no resemblance. When Mr. Yeats drew the Countess Kathleen he drew her as a being apart. The outcry against the "Countess Kathleen"—where it was not dishonest—was ignorant. Mr. Synge—or else his play has no meaning—places Nora Burke before us as a type—a personification of an average—and Nora Burke is a Lie. It is not by staging a Lie we can serve Ireland or exalt Art. Art is Truth. Mr. W. B. Yeats, writing last week in our columns, said: "If we think that a national play must be as near as possible a page out of the 'Spirit of the Nation' put into dramatic form, then this generation will not see the rise in Ireland of a Theatre that will reflect the life of Ireland as the Scandinavian Theatre reflects the Scandinavian life." This is obvious. But it is equally obvious that if we think a national play must be as nearly as possible a page out of the Decameron this generation will pass without seeing the rise in Ireland of a Theatre that will reflect Irish life. In *Sinnéin* Mr. Yeats writes that the Irish National Theatre Society has no propaganda but that of good art. If so, the society is no more Irish and National than the Elizabethan Stage Society, and it has ceased to follow in the footsteps of the Scandinavian Theatre, which had it started out with "no propaganda save that of good art" would never have created a Scandinavian drama. From *Sinnéin* we gather that henceforth to the Irish National Theatre plays such as "The Day of the Foundation" will be said. We are unable to see how Irish drama or, in the end, good art will be thereby benefited. A new school of art, according to Mr. Yeats' dictum, must place, like the *Union of Athens*, as the door of the Irish National Theatre Society, and find the Society not at home. Yet, further on, we find Mr. Yeats announcing that Mr. George Bernard Shaw is writing a play which

is to be produced by a society which has "no propaganda save that of good art." Since when Mr. George Bernard Shaw has exchanged the role of brilliant propagandist of social reforms for that of propagandist of good art, we are unaware. But if the author of "Widowers' Houses" has been converted into an art propagandist, the play which enshrines his conversion will at least draw enormous houses.

Mr. Yeats, in *Sinnéin*, speaks of such plays as "The Saxon Shillin'" and "A Twinkle in Ireland's Eye" as political. We should call them national. The people of this country are not yet marshalled into Liberals and Conservatives. They are still the Irish Nation and the English Garrison. Mr. Yeats, last week, in our columns, defined a Nationalist as "one who is prepared to give up a great deal that he may preserve to his country whatever part of her possessions he is best fit to guard." The definition is not ours. He who is prepared to give up a great deal for his country is no doubt a good man, but unless he is prepared to give up all, we do not deem him a Nationalist. If in other days our Nationalists had given up a great deal for Ireland—not all—we fear there would be no Ireland to-day for us to hold by, no Irish tradition to inspire our artists. We do not condemn the man who parcels himself out saying—"So much of me is for art, so much for my country, so much for myself." He has a place in the economy of nations, and men will always accord him that respect which an impeccable grocer is entitled to—but his place is not an essential place, and the sun does not veil its face when he dies. As Mr. Yeats, in his most beautiful play, makes Ireland say—"If anyone would give me help me must give me myself, he must give me all." And it is only those who have given her all she keeps in loving remembrance.

We share in Mr. Yeats' belief that the next few months will, in all likelihood, decide whether the Irish National Theatre Society will accomplish a great work for Ireland or will not. If it remains national we are certain it will accomplish a great work for Ireland. If it substitutes "Kathleen ni Houlihan" by the Widow of Ephesus we are as certain it will pass and leave not a wrack behind. When it ceases to be national it will also cease to be artistic, for nationality is the breath of art. The artist who, contemplating his nation, his life, his work, his world and for all time—who was he and where is his grave? The world and time have forgotten him, as he forgot his share of the world and his share of time. If meriting the little war of a little people—his own—Demosthenes thundering against the brief insolence of the tyrant of a little state—have sung and spoken for all the world and for all time. But it was not of the world nor of all time they were thinking when the one sang and the other declaimed. Cosmopolitanism never produced a great artist nor a good man, yet it produced the Scandinavian Theatre reflects Scandinavian life—the life of a handful of people in a remote corner of the world, and because it does so it is great and wins the world's applause. If the Irish Theatre ceases to reflect Irish life and embody Irish aspiration the world will wag its head away from it. This talk of "politics" when Irish Nationalism is meant—this assurance that the Theatre intended to be free and National Theatre has no propaganda save that of good art—savours to us of consideration for the feelings of the servants of the Englishman who are among

us. We believe firmly, that, as Mr. J. H. Yeats put it last week, Irishmen as Irish men should take no criticism from the enemy, Briton or West-Indians. And with whom they should reject praise from either source. We are willing if need be to sit at the feet of Frank, the Teuton, the Sclav, and learn from them—to accept reproach, to accept praise—we shall accept neither from the Anglo-Saxon. With regret, therefore, we observe that Mr. W. B. Yeats includes in *Sinnéin* a flattering notice of the Irish National Theatre from the *London Times*—with equal regret we observe that the Irish National Theatre Society has reprinted the commendatory notices of it which have appeared in the *British Press*. The Irish National Theatre Society made a fatal step when it went last year to play in London—it makes a second when it quotes the eulogiums of London upon itself—it will make the third and fatal step when it exchanges Kathleen ni Houlihan for the Ephesian drama. We hope that step may never be taken, that our Irish National Theatre may remain Irish and National, and our greatest poet, who was a Nationalist when Respectability blushed at the name, shall still hold to his high ambition to be accounted by True Brother of that company Who sang to sweeten Ireland's wrong.

We reiterate, as we have said, the idea that a national play must be as near as possible a page out of the "Spirit of the Nation" done into dramatic form. But we also reiterate the idea that a play is not a national play because it is a page of the "Spirit of the Nation" done into dramatic form. If in the bright letters of the Irish National Theatre Society, the "Spirit of the Nation" is now writ "politics," there are two superfluous words in the title of the Society. If such is not the case, then *Sinnéin* unintentionally has conveyed a false impression to its readers' minds.

THE THEATRE, THE PULPIT, AND THE NEWSPAPERS.

I was very well content when I read an unmeasured attack in the *Independent* and *Review* on the Irish National Theatre. There had, as yet, been no performance, but the attack was confident, and it was evident that the writer's ears were full of rumours and whisperings. One knew that some such attack was inevitable, for every dramatic movement, that brought any new power into literature arose among precisely these misunderstandings and animosities. The attack was not dangerous, like the attack on "The Countess Kathleen" made by the same paper; but it was alike in its arguments, and there were too many more of the kind. The more open they are the better. One cannot fight a battle in whispers. I need not enumerate, for I have done so twice already in *THE UNITED IRISHMAN*, tumults that have surrounded the birth of dramatic movements. Drama, the most immediately powerful form of literature, the most vivid image of life, finds itself opposed, as the other form of literature does, to those enemies of the chimera of the Pulpit and the Press. Where a country has not begun to care for literature, or has forgotten the taste for it, and most modern countries seem to pass through this stage, these chimera are hatched in every basket. Certain generalisations are everywhere substituted for life. Instead of individual men and women and living

PLAYS WITH MEANINGS

SUCCESS is coming to the National Theatre Society. People are beginning to recognize that its performances are things they ought to go to see, and a time may yet come when Mr. Fay will be an object of greater interest than Mr. Forbes Robertson. Nor have these performers injured themselves by their flying visit to London. Those who would start a new movement must take our countrymen as they are, and I fear a few words of praise from William Archer will increase the box office receipts far more than any appreciation by an Irish critic. The Society is, I think, coming into smooth water, and is likely to win the meed of prosperity. All this is good. With not a few of Mr. Yeats's methods and principles I disagree, some of the doctrines held by members of the Society I consider politically and morally calamitous if they were put into practice or carried to their logical conclusion, yet, inasmuch as such plays are an intellectual food, and an intellectual food provided by Irishmen for Irishmen, I consider this movement fraught with the very greatest good for the future. Truly some of the food is unwholesome; yet I consider that in the long run, if it is fairly submitted to the approval of our countrymen, a healthy public taste will reject it, and leave behind only that which is sound and nourishing.

The performance on this occasion consisted of three parts, a play by J. M. Synge called "In the Shadow of the Glen," and two dramas by W. B. Yeats, "The King's Threshold," which is new, and "Kathleen at Houlihan," which our readers will remember was produced some time ago in Clarendon Street. It is often the fault of Mr. Yeats that his language is too occult. His symbolism is above the heads of ordinary readers. The casual student retires defeated before an assemblage of beautiful incomprehensibilities. The diction of "The King's Threshold" was, however, simple and easy to understand; it was in the plot that symbolism had to be sought for. Indeed I think it was sufficiently evident that the play was entirely an allegory. The incident of a poet starving himself to death on the steps of the doorsteps of the manner of the sitting *Chatterbox* of India, is somewhat absurd even though pathetic. A play founded on such a tale would be meaningless in the modern world. I have not the smallest expectation of seeing Mr. Yeats sitting in starvation on Cork Hill, nor even on the threshold of the National Library. But I do not think this was what he intended. In this play I conceive Mr. Yeats was dealing, not with the rights of poets, but of nations, and he desired this drama to be an embodiment of his views on the present political situation. It is a tragedy of *intrigue*. Synge represents Ireland, engaged in poetry and passive resistance, and refuses all food or help till a full measure of independence is conceded to her. A mayor enters, talks about a settlement. A monk counsels submission. Seanachan remains absorbed in his dreamings. If I am not entirely mistaken the play is intended to represent Mr. Yeats's creed of revolutionary sentiments ministered to by poetic imaginings. Though I disagree with this creed, yet the political views of the play are not what I am at present concerned with, nor is it upon its political merits that I seek to be judged. I confine myself to protesting against the short passage in which he attacks the church, in the person of the monk, making his hero use such phrases as "Has this wild God grown any tamer?"

The political allegory, to which description both Kathleen at Houlihan and the King's Threshold belong, is almost a new form of a drama. In the Moore-Martyn play of "The Bonding of the Bough," we saw it in a humorous form, which somewhat recalled the great comic drama of ancient Greece. But I cannot recall anything which could have served as a precedent to the plays I am now discussing. Yet, in a country where so much of the life of the people is intermingled with politics, where so much of the intellect and enthusiasm of our greatest men has been absorbed in it, where it has been the cause of so many crimes and so many sacrifices, it will form the matter of our comedies and our tragedies. If tragedy is an expression of action and emotion, any

nationality, if it is to be fruitful, must take heed of political actions and emotions. As a representation of these, Kathleen at Houlihan is admirable. It is a play that, unlike most modern English plays, improves on acquaintance. Both Kathleen and Mr. Yeats's later play have in common the characteristic that they exhibit a contrast between the commonplace, materialistic view of life and the heroic self-sacrifice which despises personal considerations and gives up everything for an ideal. This abnegation Mr. Yeats preaches is the virtue which makes men martyrs and apostles, but which, if indiscriminately inculcated in the case of ordinary men, may easily be carried too far. As an expression of the doctrine I do not consider the "King's Threshold" quite as successful as Kathleen at Houlihan. Without its allegorical significance it would be tedious, and when viewed as an allegory it loses that simplicity, that easy commingling of real and symbolic, which is one of the chief attractions of the author's earlier work. The inferiority is not, however, very considerable, and there are many passages of great beauty in the play, passages which, it should be added, Mr. Fay rendered with sympathy and skill.

I have spoken of some of the bad tendencies which unfortunately find a place in this society. Mr. Synge's short piece, "In the Shadow of the Glen," excellently represents them. For its length it is one of the nastiest little plays I have ever seen. A wife is drinking with her intended new husband in the same room with the corpse of her old one. This latter proves not to be really dead, and, getting up, turns her out of the house. She goes off with a tramp and the husband sits down to drink with the man who was to have taken his place. The awaking of the corpse gives room for a good deal of buffoonery. As will be seen the play is an evil compound of Ibsen and Bourcault. What is its exact purpose I am not quite sure. It seems like a satire on the institution of marriage. It may be merely an attack on those marriages of convenience which were recently so well described in one of the London-Irish stories in this paper. But whatever be its object, it is, in conceivably, grossly untrue to nature. Be the motive of marriage never so sordid I think that no woman could (outside the pages of Ibsen) be found quite so unfeeling as to behave as this one does. The play is, indeed, informed by a sort of negative idealism, which, by selecting the worst features of everything, arrives at forms much worse than anything actually existing in real life. That it should be put forward as a true picture of Irish existence and, worse still, as an embodiment of Irish reflections on life, is a species of misrepresentation that cannot be tolerated.

CHARTEL.

IRISH MEN AND WOMEN.

Mr. J. M. SYNGE, who made his bow as a dramatist last week under the auspices of the National Theatre Society, is like Ulysses "a much experienced man." Thirty-one years of age, looking a little older, he spent some time in Trinity College, Dublin, and since then has been in France, Italy, and Germany. He speaks Irish, moreover, and has lived among the fishers of Aran. Of them he has written a poignant little play "Riders to the Sea," which is shortly to be produced. The comedy which introduced him to the public is not, however, laid in Aran, but in Wicklow, with whose people also, we understand, Mr. Synge is intimately acquainted. He was perhaps a little unfortunate in not beginning with "Riders to the Sea," for not only is it a much stronger piece, but it would have saved him from the moral strictures with which a Dublin daily has visited "In the Shadow of the Glen." Mr. Synge is, according to Mr. W. B. Yeats, a creation of the National Theatre movement, and has begun so well that one is justified in hoping great things for him.

...when one is un-

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we have written, but we certainly prefer them to imply of Mr. Yeats himself that he has been a failure. It is not enough to say that he cannot be brought through by any one method. We believe him to be suffering on a mistaken policy in connection with the Irish National Theatre at the present time. We know him too well to believe he would act on what he knew to be an inherent weakness in his policy, if perceived by him, and written down by him. There is no question of influences in the matter. Mr. Yeats should have been sufficiently mature to make up his own mind as to what he ought to do to make us write what we did not believe to be the truth. In the acceptance of praise to come from English sources we stand danger of accepting it, Mr. Yeats discerns danger, and that danger we glory to be the apostle, and shall desire to see it spread the wings over our people until they can no longer discern the people of their English tax-payers except

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To those who await in eager hope the evolution of a national drama in Ireland, the criticism of the recent productions of the Irish National Theatre are pregnant with interesting National Theatre has how far beyond its embryonic stage; it has attained to such a stage of development that it is now capable of making a serious study of the matter of account how the emergence of that life may be directed; whether they may be encouraged to flourish, or whether they may be stifled; or whether they may be ruthlessly killed, or whether they may be

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Unionists have the Gaiety, the Empire, and the Royal theatres; let them keep to them and let Irish writers not trouble their heads about them.

In an article on "An Irish National Theatre," in THE UNITED IRISHMAN, Mr. Yeats writes: "Literature is always personal, always one man's vision of the world, one man's experience, and it can only be popular when men are ready to welcome the visions of others. A community that is opinion-ridden, even when those opinions are in themselves noble, is likely to put its creative minds into some sort of a prison." But Mr. Yeats forgets that the national struggle for independence is one in which the majority of the people in Ireland are personally and passionately engaged, and the thoughts of that struggle are habitual to them, and plays and poems that speak of it are plays and poems which go directly to their hearts and appeal to them as no other plays or poems can.

Mr. Yeats asks for freedom for the Theatre, freedom even from patriotic captivity. I would ask for freedom for it from one thing more deadly than all else—freedom from the insidious and destructive tyranny of foreign influence.

MAUD GONNE MACBRIDE.

ON THE KING'S THRESHOLD.

DEAR MR. YEATS—In an ill-advised moment you asked me to write about your play, and in an ill-advised moment I promised that I would. I hate sitting in judgment on anyone, much more on a young man, and friend, who has put thought and labour into his work and built his hopes upon them. But I gave you my word; also were I to keep silent you would misunderstand me, misconstruing it as indifference.

Frankly, I did not like your play. The incredibility of a man abstaining from food and drink until he died, died before our eyes, was so contrary to nature, so unhuman, that of itself it was enough to make the whole play unreal, unaffacting. Add to this the preposterous notion that the poet, the true poet, can ever demand honour and recognition from the average man, even when typified as the King. I could as easily believe in you yourself sitting *dharma* on the steps of the Vice-Regal Lodge because at some festivity there you were not placed beside his Excellency.

The central unreality, incredibility, spread an atmosphere of insincerity over the whole, so that the observer looked on apathetically, and refused to be affected even when your singular hero seemed on the point of yielding up the ghost, owing to that extraordinary self-imposed inanition.

I went to it as willing to enjoy and admire, and be pleased and affected, as anyone in the audience, and am very sorry indeed that on this occasion I am unable to praise. If you will pardon me saying so, you have a strong native and acquired tendency towards the unnatural, the unhuman, or non-human, against which, in drama especially, I would like you to be more on your guard.

I say nothing about the poetry. I am only writing of the play as a play.—I remain yours sincerely,

STANDISH O'GRADY.

keep faith have and hope able her one story in bids be rich the

HURLY BURLY CRITICISM.

There is a phrase very well known in the history of our literature which is strongly suggested by recent writings in Dublin. The phrase is *Barndroghda*, that is, the *Groveling of the Birds*. Groveling we have had notions in the extreme; but as to the motive behind the principles it has been trying to express and establish, only seems perfectly clear.

The *Independent* published a leader condemning on moral grounds one of the National Theatre Society's new plays, on the first night of its production four or five members

of the audience knoed. The play, as has already been said in these columns, was open to criticism on purely artistic grounds, and there is nothing to show that the hissing was not intended to manifest dissatisfaction with the author's dramatic capacity without any reference whatever to his ethical ideas. But whatever its motive it was a legitimate and healthy exercise of the "freedom of the theatre," to use the charter-word of the "revolutionists." As for the *Independent* article, it was completely negligible—the writer not having seen the play in question—and produced no effect whatever. But Mr. Yeats has his mind made up not to be defrauded of the martyr's crown. In his various utterances nothing is more amusingly evident than his desire to be immolated, or at all events to carry himself after the fashion of a prophet who asserts the eternal dignity of truth and beauty in face of the "evil passions" of the "mob." Accordingly we have an iconoclastic manifesto from him in *The United Irishman*. This elicits a criticism from the editor. Mr. Yeats, the apostle of courtesy, replies with a diagnosis of the particular species of "ignorance" from which the Editor is suffering. Mr. Gonno MacBride also ventures a few words. We are now awaiting a bulletin as to her deplorable condition of mind.

We do not propose to enter into the details of the controversy; those of our readers who take any interest in it know them already. But the amazing perversion and prospective collapse of the National Theatre Society, which it discloses merit a little comment. Nobody can accuse this paper of hostility to Mr. Yeats; we have written of him frequently, and if we have sinned at all it has been through excess of praise. But his recent manifestoes and declarations of war reveal a spirit of disdain and intolerance which we, at least, never suspected in him; and if he has succeeded in saying what he means, the movement of which he is the leader stands forth self-confessed as a Pagan Renaissance. We do not use the term in any inflammatory way, but things are what they are, and Ireland must learn to call them by their actual names. To Paganism we must add a leaven of anarchy for Mr. Yeats considers that his vocation is not to build, but to shatter. The traditional morality is reduced to a "chimera of the Pulpit"; antiquity with the statistics of illegitimacy is considered *de risque*; in short, to collect two of Mr. Yeats's most striking images, the artist is figured as a capricious wild animal, raging about a dim idol-house and smashing the necks of wooden gods with a silver hammer!

What does it all mean? Does Mr. Yeats soberly design to overthrow the system of rights and duties we call civilisation, and to institute life on a new basis? He has already said, we know, that "the arts are about to take up the burden which has fallen from the shoulders of religion." And is he so preposterous as to assert that everyone who identifies himself with established ideas in religion and social organisation is necessarily a worshipper of wooden gods, a creature of formulas. Is he preaching a New Dispensation, a Redemption, if one may say so, by Nietzsche and the psalter; or is it merely that his sentences have run away with him?

These are grave questions. It will be to the advantage of the National Theatre Society to discover a critic large-minded enough to realise that two thousand years of Christianity and six of civilisation are not to be dismissed in an epigram; a critic, above all, who will not think obscurity of speech a cardinal virtue. One result at least

New Ireland Oct 31

all Ireland news on 24



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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE UNITED IRISHMAN.

DEAR SIR—"Art is art because it is not nature," said the great German poet. It might also be said: "Art is art because it is not politics; in other words, art refuses for itself, and has its own laws and its own kingdoms. Let the politician be politician, and the artist be artist; the artist who is politician is not one man but two men; he cannot be both at one and the same time without making bad art and bad politics. At the present moment every Irish poet worth his salt is a politician."

As to foreign influence, I do not know what is complained of; but I know, speaking for the body of which I have the honour to be a member, the R.I.L.A., that at their exhibitions the best picture gets the best place, whether it be by Englishman or Irishman; and it would be a false patriotism that would desert this honourable tradition, of which the most vigilant guardians was the late Walter Osborne; that born painter, whose contempt for bad pictures was only equalled by his contempt for bad Irishmen. In art matters, as in the conduct of ideas, there must always be free trade; this is the sound instinct of every true painter, whatever weaknesses may do in the lesser matters of exchange in commodities.

Mr. Fay's Theatre is national, as the Shannon and the Wicklow Mountains and the Lakes of Killarney are national, because it has grown up on Irish soil and from it, and has become, as it were, one of the natural features of the country. In this present year of grace I could conceive a high-minded Englishman refusing affection to his dishonoured native land, except for certain great names and movements in its literature. And in the name of common sense, why should not every attention be paid to the works of a great master in dramatic poetry, such as under Mr. W. Yeats, to be, especially these words be commendatory and likely to help a company of players who have many enemies, open and secret, and few friends.

The outcry against Mr. Synge's play seems to me largely dishonest; the real objection not being that it misrepresents Irishwomen, but that it is a very effective attack on loveless marriages—this most miserable institution in drama. It is only thirty years ago that the peasants and among their betters, by whom anything like impulse or passion is discredited, human nature coerced at every point and sinovity banished from the land; there being for ever substituted in its place an entire system of false conventions.

My complaint of Mr. Synge's play is that it did not go far enough, when he did not make it quite clear that the wife will not return to the house into which she should never have entered, a view of the play I would earnestly commend to Mrs. MacBride, who, though a politician, is also a woman.—Yours,

J. B. YEATS.

[Art is truth, and Mr. Synge's play is not truth. It did not grow up on Irish soil and out of it. If it be a "very effective attack on loveless marriages," its effectiveness must lie in the representation of unfaithfulness on the woman's part as the consequence of such marriages in

Ireland. This is a question of morality, and the fact known to the whole world is that in no country are women so faithful to the marriage bond as in Ireland. Mr. J. B. Yeats, a fortnight since, wrote in THE UNITED IRISHMAN: "We should take no criticism from our enemies, Britons or West Britons." He now asks why in the name of common sense we should not pay attention to the criticism of some British critic who writes in the Times. We answer: Because, being a Briton, he is our enemy, and the people who allow itself to be influenced by the praise or censure of its enemies maims its own soul. The Irish National Theatre Society was founded to produce Irish National plays; if it has now no "propaganda," says that of good art? It has altered its constitution. Nobody outside its members and founders, of course, has any right to object to its altering its constitution. But if it has altered its constitution, the Irish public has a legitimate right to object to its describing itself under a false name and attempting to palm off a dramatization of an ancient and licentious foreign tale as a "reflection of Irish life." If the Society were anxious to stage an "effective attack on the loveless marriage in Ireland," it had already in its possession a play by one of its members, Mr. Colum, which attacked that institution very effectively indeed. But Mr. Colum lives wholly in Ireland, and knows the people of whom he writes, and therefore did not make the woman of his play unfaithful. It remained for a member of the Society who spends most of his time away from Ireland, and under the operation of foreign influences, to represent the Irish rural life, and to exhibit his utter ignorance of the Irish character by treating woman's frailty as a subject for laughter.—EDITOR UNITED IRISHMAN.]

L. J. M. 6-1-10

The Irish National Theatre, represented by the Fay Company (amateurs), gave an "important and ambitious performance last week at the Malthouse Hall, the programme including a drama, entitled *The King's Threshold*, by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and a comedy called *The Shadow of the Glen*, by J. M. Synge. The latter, originally conceived and conceived by amateurs, came to the stage with pleasant anticipation by persons interested in the Gaelic movement, and the hall on both occasions was crowded. It might be said with truth that the first of the plays named there is a slightly fantastic, but decidedly poetical, mingling of the spirit of Maeterlinck and Villon, with, as a critic whom I can confidently quote, says, a bewitching flavour of "Druid enchantment" drawn in. The story, briefly glanced at, is as follows: Seanchán, the chief poet of Ireland, having been touched by King Guaire of Gort from the high table at which the lords from time immemorial had the right to sit, resolves to share himself to death upon the King's threshold, because in ancient Ireland, as in India, to die in assertion of an ancient right was always an ultimate refuge of the wronged. The criticism takes place on the steps of the King's palace. King Guaire, wearing a silver and jewelled crown and a shimmering regal robe, explains the possible tragedy to his Court, and begs of all, especially of Seanchán's pupils, to prevent upon him to eat and live. Seanchán, in a robe that is grey for sorrow, yet jewelled because he is of the Court, lies crunched upon the steps in a dream of "Images of the life that was in Eden," when his pupils come to arouse him. One after another they parley with him, and for each he finds a splendid answer, beginning with the foolish Mayor of Kinnara, who cannot remember his speech, and whose head it were rather on an Ogham stick, to the self-conscious Chamberlain, the gorgeous soldier, the beauty of the Court, and even the little Princesses. A monk con-

siders it time that the reign

of the poets should be broken; aid ascetics tempt young and dainty from rigour, and finally his beautiful sweetheart, Fúdel, prays him to break his fast for her. His answer is that if he does the kiss of multi-

ties will be poorer to all here, and as his death seems inevitable. Then King Guaire brings him bread with his own hands, and the poet gently puts it aside. The King, unable to do so, and bids Seanchán's pupils plead with him, with hollers round the neck, saying that if he still remains obdurate they shall die together. But the words they speak are not such as Guaire anticipates, for one after another the boys cry out,

"His sentence, and proclaim the right of the poets."

Then the King sees that the strength of the poet's soul is a greater force than any that the material world can bring against him, and crying in a great voice, "He has the greater power!" he places his crown on Seanchán's brow. But the poet, discarding his own pride, doffs the offering and restores it to the King, who thereupon calls on the trumpeters to blow for the great race that is to come, and a long, sweet note from

them brings the play to a close. Mr. F. J. Fay, who acted admirably throughout, delivered the last lines of the man in tones of extraordinary beauty, and Mr. G. Roberts, who took the part of the eldest pupil, was decidedly intelligent and clever. Miss Mary Walker made a beautiful Fúdel, but although nobody ought to propose the adoption of theatrical "trick and manner" to a company of amateurs whose charm lies in *simplicity*, it is pardonable to suggest the striving after some such ideal of effective yet high simplicity as made the spell of "Everyman."

The play above described was followed by Mr. J. M. Synge's comedy, *The Shadow of the Glen*, a rather delicate production, which has already led to occasion and schism, in the society. Personally, I am in accordance with some who think that the morality that could be injured by witnessing it must be of the weak-kneed kind; but to speak candidly, while admitting the cleverness of the dialogue, the excellent acting of Nora and the tramp (Mr. W. G. Fay), the play is dull and distasteful. A man and odious old man, pretending to be dead in bed while his pretty young wife provides refreshment for stray tramps, and is asked to arrange an immediate marriage with a young sailor with whom she absconds when her husband comes to life, seems an extraordinary choice of subject for a society that aims at a higher standard than ordinarily characterizes things dramatic. Mr. Synge has plenty of power, both in irony and dialogue, and surely he could display it by showing in some other way a way that would not end in a star upon Irish womanhood—the wrong of a necessary marriage. Mr. Yeats made a short and telling speech at the close, thanking his audience for their cordial reception of the plays. The verdict regarding *The Shadow of the Glen* was not, however, by any means favourable or "cordial."

ARMAGH.

(a) Oct-24

On October 31st, November 2nd and 3rd, there will be presented to the public a series of plays in the Molewouth Hall which promise to create a stir in certain circles in Dublin. In view of the new position taken up by Mr. Yeats as to the proper ratio between political preaching and dramatic rendering, these plays will prove of an interest more or less temporary. At the present moment of Mr. Dudley Digges, the manager of Cumann na nGaedheal Theatre Company are putting their best into it, and it is probable that there be given a due estimation of their artistic merits, but the political and social lessons will receive an additional emphasis from the enthusiasm, wholehearted and sincere, of the actors. These plays possess a human interest that appeals to the living soul. In "Robert Emmet" the failure is set off by an exposition of the cause at work in such a way as engages our sympathy and yet does not dampen our spirit and hope in the final success of the cause. "Pledge and Bulgoil" will prove a very amusing satire on the anti-Irish deeds of T.C.D. In "A Man For All Seasons" there is much food for serious thought and we trust the audience who will attend this play will be keen to grasp its inner meaning. These plays are now about to be produced for the first time. Besides there will be produced "Cathleen ni Houlihan," "The Sign of the Cross," "Dermot," and "A Twinkle in Ireland's Eye." The last-mentioned is one of the most epic not to say brilliant satires that have yet appeared in the political life of modern Ireland. It was produced at the time of the visit of the King to England, some months ago, to the country. A reference to our advertisement column will give further details.

By JOSEPH KEAN

Freeman → Jones

On Saturday night the opening performance of the Samhain Festival was given by the Limerick-based Gaelic Irish Theatre Company in the Moleworts Hall, Moleworts street, when "Robert Emmet," a special centenary play in three acts, by Henry Connell, was produced for the first time, followed by Mr. W. B. Yeats' play, "Kathleen ni Houlihan." There was a very crowded audience and, indeed, long before the performance commenced every inch of seating accommodation was occupied. A very large number of people had to be content with standing room.

The production of the *Ennui* Contemporary play excited very great interest. It was a big task to write a play worthy of a man who for a century has been worshipped, not only in Ireland, but in every corner of the globe where Irishmen find a home. Such a task was full of difficulties, created, not only by the personality to be portrayed, but also, perhaps, by the exacting character of the popular expectations—in a word, it was a bold effort for the dramatist, be his power what they may—to present upon the stage a hero whom a nation loves and whose memory it deeply reveres. The faults, the errors of judgment, the cold, naive reason not aided by ardent conviction—all these things need to be shown, if not, unreasonably, no doubt, again and again. One of the great plays, suggesting and fascinating as it undoubtedly is, helps to emphasize to some extent this side of Emma's character.

The Plays will be produced by THE CUMANN NA
 nGARDHEAL IRISH THEATRE COMPANY.

Tickets may be had at THE UNITED-IRISHMAN, 57 FOWNE-STREET; MESSRS. CRAMER'S, MESSRS. PUGH'S,

The air of late has been full of noises on "Art" and "Politics." Mourners around our ears bid us cease all propaganda save the propaganda of good. Art if our souls are to be saved to feast with the Immortals, and Wisdom of a foreign breed has been unlearned to bark at the heels of "Politics." But this Wisdom being blind of the right eye, has mistaken Nationalism for the other, and barked itself upside down. Now, my father was not born in Boetia, nor did he wed a daughter of the Philistines, and when I submit that in Ireland there is neither room nor necessity for any propaganda save that of good Nationalism, let no young man who worships Art because it is to him an unfathomable mystery smite my ears with peals of derisive laughter. I am willing to essay discussing art with the artist, but I am incapable of defending myself against the artist's devoted young man. I beg to submit to the consideration of the artist [avast, young man!] the following facts, which I vouch to be accurate:

Ireland is an island of some 32,000 square miles in extent, inhabited mainly by the descendants of an artistic and unlighted people. These descendants are held in a state of social and political subjection by a foreign people, themselves neither artistic nor enlightened. These foreign people levy oppressive taxation on the natives, who are, accordingly, impoverished and, as a consequence, neglect their old manners, customs, language, and lower their ideals. Thus body and soul they are threatened with destruction, and the only question which has any real interest for them is the question, "How are we to preserve ourselves from annihilation?"

Now, this being so, I assert that it is no answer to art, "Despise politics and propagate nothing but good Art." Firstly, you cannot despise politics; secondly, you cannot make a people in political servitude to another people in great artistic people. Grace was great in Art when Grace was free; with her gilded chains she lost her artist's soul. Freedom is the mother of Art, and he who thinks we can create a great artistic Ireland before we have a politically independent Ireland, thinks poorly of Art. Look at Scandinavia, they say, forgetful ones. Aye, look at Scandinavia, and see what free countries can do. And reflect that it is not what she does to us, but what she prevents us from doing, that is England's great crime against us.

Tyrannus was, if I remember aright, a so-so artist, but he was a very good Nationalist, and he put a soul into a nation by playing war-jigs on the lute. No doubt if I, having a musical ear, had marched in his army and admonished him for a discord here and there, Tyrannus would have replied to me, "My dear Cogan, you are very right, but it does not affect the quick step of the fighting man, and we shall have leisure to mend our music when the battle is over." Gentlemen, it is Tyrannus we want in Ireland to-day. This is no time, when our nation is wasting away, to talk of Art-for-Art's-sake. We want Art for Ireland's sake; we want Art to be the handmaid of Irish Nationalism—aye, I have said it. Our best service to Art is to save Ireland. To the service of Ireland—to the cause of Ireland's freedom—to the hastening of the day when she shall arise again mistress of her own destinies—to that day when, having achieved our task, we may return to our books or our play—each of us must labour—artist or politician—the poet must sing for her, the painter paint for her, the orator

speak for her, the sculptor carve for her, the student glean for her, the journalist fight for her, the novelist weave tales for her, the statesman plan for her. Thus it was the glorious Young-Irelanders did. Think you there were in that band none who would have wished to live for Art alone? Aye, there were a score of them. But they served Art best by seeking to liberate the nation, which in its days of liberty had honoured Art above all.

Is it not plain? If you can limn excellently a horse or a tree, young man, limn it for Ireland. If you can raise a ranc, raise it for Ireland, if you can carve a cup, carve it for Ireland to drink from. So shall Art and Ireland be exalted. Wherefore I went in a pleasant mind to the Samhain plays last week to the Molesworth Hall, and laughed comely at "Pleughadh na Bulgoide" and "A Twinkle in Ireland's Eye," although Art was little in either of them. Into three of the plays, however, the Art element entered—Kathleen Ni Houlihan, a triumph of Art, is an old play now, and need not be considered. Of the three, "A Man's Foes" is artistically the best. The author has struggled with its softness and overcome them. It is a little picture, of which we cannot crumple a corner without spoiling the whole—therefore, artistically, it is perfect. But it is not a great work of Art, which is not to be wondered at seeing that great works of Art are produced at the rate of, perhaps, three per century.

"The Sword of Dermot" I had seen before and liked better. It was the one play of the series in which the acting of one of the principal characters was weak, and I do not think the omission of the light badinage in the opening of the second scene has been a gain. It is in many ways a beautiful play, and should see the stage again, but Shakespeare was the wisest of men when he showed the drunken gatekeeper after Duncan's knell had rung.

"Robert Emmet" was the play which carried the audience most with it. It is an historical play in the true sense. No one who saw it, and knew the story of Emmet, could fail to note that it was written by an exact and conscientious man—and the number of exact and conscientious playwrights who have existed can be counted on the fingers of the left hand. But another thought about the writer was inevitable—that he was a born dramatist. The man who constructed "Robert Emmet" was born to construct historical plays. He knows precisely how much to put in; he almost knows how much to leave out. Here, quoth I to myself, we have found our historical dramatist.

The two leading actors were, of course, Miss Quinn and Mr. Digges. Miss Quinn was excellent in "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," in "The Twinkle," and in "A Man's Foes." She was good in "Pleughadh na Bulgoide" and "Robert Emmet," but she was weak in "The Sword of Dermot." Mr. Digges was good in every part he undertook, but he was superb in "A Man's Foes." His acting in that part was a triumph of Art. The other actors were, the least of them efficient, the most of them good, especially Cathal MacGarvey, as Professor MacGaffy; Mr. Fitzpatrick as Lord Norbury and the actor who impersonated Thomas Russell were admirable. The orchestra was not admirable. Now the people came in hundreds to see these plays and appreciated them. They are drama. Some of the pieces I have seen recently on the stage are not drama. "The Hour-glass" and "Seanchaib" are very beautiful, but they are not drama. And when people go to see drama they want to see drama, and the cultivation of Art as the

We have started another new industry in Ireland. This time it is the industry in drama, in the form of an Irish literary theatre, judging from the support given by the public, though Mr. Yeats and his fellow poets of the Celtic revival profess to have scorn for the commercial side of the undertaking.

The Literary Theatre has opened its doors for the winter season, and this past week six plays have been produced, actors and authors alike being Irish. A good deal of interest centred in a new play, "The Currying of the Bubble," by Dr. Douglas Hyde, the well-known Celtic scholar. He had been promised a satire on the Duns of Trinity College and their somewhat openly-expressed contempt for the literary possibilities of the Irish language. Expecting a satire, one was disappointed in finding only a lampoon.

U.S. IRISH VIRTUE. *Nov 2*

In thinking on the criticisms of "In a Wicklow Glen" one is forced to wish that some of our energy should be transferred from the unnecessary defence of Irish sexual morality to the very necessary defence of other social virtues. No doubt that particular virtue is the only one for which we can, as a people, take credit. Nevertheless, a man or a woman or a nation may be quite angelic from that point of view, and yet be very unworthy and contemptible. A critic of the Irish people might very well say that if we were stronger in our passions we should be nobler in our virtues. Who are our patriotic virtues? If it is rare to find sexual immorality amongst us, it is equally rare to find the high principles, the steadfastness, the moral courage, the independence of thought, the thorough manliness of good citizens. We are well-trained in the virtues of the cloister, the peaceful retreat of obedience and prayer. We are taught all the monastic virtues. They are excellent virtues; but they are not enough for a people living in the world, and striving for its very existence. Such a people needs more than those virtues that develop the strength of character, the virility which builds up nations, a virility which we Irish most grievously lack. To teach a people the former virtues only, and to neglect the teaching of the latter, is to emasculate that people. Our teachers have always neglected these stronger virtues; these virtues languish amongst us, and our nation decays. We are taught to be meek and humble of heart; but we are not taught the Pride of self-respect. We are taught Faith, but we are not taught the Doubt and Judgment which would question and condemn the falsehoods that follow that degrade. We are taught Patience, but we are not taught the worldly Steadfastness which accomplishes great things. We are taught Obedience, but we are not taught to withstand oppression. Our wills are made pliant, but they are not made strong. Our character is made pleasing, perhaps, but it is not made manly. We are kept as far as can be in ignorance, but we are kept at the same time in awe and drawn of water—diggers of ditches and carriers of brack. In a word, we are taught the Heavenly virtues, but not the Earthly ones; and as a natural consequence, though we are perhaps, excellent Christians, we are bad citizens; though we are, perhaps, fitted for Paradise (to which we are rapidly disappearing), we are unfitted for nationhood and

Dissension

On the whole, we cannot congratulate the Irish playwrights and players of last week as heartily as we have done the National Theatre Company on former occasions. We most appreciate Mr. Yeats and M. E. as writers, and Mr. Fay and his company as actors—*à la contrain*. Last week we had the co-eds—the objectors to every contras. Last week we had the non-political and non-church-dance Mr. Synge's play, or to be led by M. M. Brin. I did not see—who are supposed to be led by M. M. Brin. I did not see—"Robert Emmet," so connect each of it, let after witnessing "The Sa-ri of Denny," by Mr. Cousin, and his temperance play, "I can only recommend the friends of this gentleman to endeavor to induce him to turn his talents into another direction. There is a hopeless absence of perception in him of when he is ridiculous. It was difficult to believe that "A Man's Pose" was anything but a parody on plays of the His n'ys. Indeed, with a few alterations it would make an excellent parody. But this was far from the author's intention. Its crudeness and bathos were indescribable. The play must be seen to be appreciated.

Dr. Hyde's Efforts.

Dr. Douglas Hyde's two farcical pieces were eighty years, since they made no pretensions to any literary standard, or any aim, except to cause a laugh among partizans of certain views against those who do not see eye to eye with them. "Ireland's Eye" was without point since the King's visit turned out a success, not the reverse. Both plays are unworthy of their author. The acting made us appreciate how much credit is due to Mr. Fay for the successful production of other Irish literary plays. "Literary" indeed, is the last word that the performances of the 2nd and 3rd inst. could be described by. It would be a melancholy farce if this were all the Irish Literary Theatre was to come to. Happily, it is left an obscure due to our fatal tendency to split into factions just when approaching success.

BELFAST IRISH LITERARY
THEATRE SOCIETY.

TWO PLAYS IN ST. MARY'S HALL.

[illegible]

at least moment in Dublin they have a company of Irish actors, with Dr. Douglas Hyde at their head. It is no more than any dramatic language may write in English or Gaelic. The movement is spreading and having as good an influence as the *Yiddish* Goyish better, indeed, but it goes deeper into the hearts of the people, and is not merely educative, but directly productive of a culture that excellent movement seems to touch but superficially.

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Mr. Coombs' play "The Rector's Wife" was a good device to start with it brings Under Pressure to the front stage for the first time. It is supposed to come from overseas. There were some lull in the audience during the first two acts, (March, 1935). And the characters are—Johnny (an old farmer), Mr. P. O'Rourke (a young man), Mrs. M. M. (a young woman), and Mr. W. J. Green (a young man). Mr. M. M. (a young woman) is a minister—Mr. J. Dudley Dwyer. I shall not record the plot of the play, but it is a play of the type which we have seen about half-a-dozen times, but will merely say that it was presented seriously and inconspicuously, a type of certain stage plays that are presented in the theatre. The play, indeed, is helped to calibrate the performance into shape. There are two scenes, one with one stage set, the interior of the

[illegible]

Irish National Theatre Society.

MOLESWORTH HALL
THURSDAY, FRIDAY, and SATURDAY
3rd, 4th, and 5th December.

AT 8.15 P.M.

"THE HOUR GLASS."

By W. H. YEATS

"BROKEN SOIL."

(First time on dry slope)

By PADRAIC MACCORMAC COLUM

"A POT OF BROTH."

By W. B. YEATS

Reserved Seats, 3/- Admission, 2/- & 1/-

Tickets at CRANFORD Wood's and Brown's.

Freeman Dec 21

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTION

The Irish National Theatre Society will produce the following plays at the Metropolitan Hall on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the 2nd, 4th, and 6th December.—"The Hour Glass," a morality play, by W. B. Yeats; "Broken Sails," a new three-act peasant play, by P. O'Donnell; and "A Pot of Broth," by W. B. Yeats. "The Hour Glass," which has already been presented both in Dublin and London, will be staged on the decorative plan. "Broken Sails," by P. O'Donnell, a new dramatization, is a three-act play dealing with peasant life, and is in the nature of a Greek play, and scenes are observed without producing any improbability. This delightful little comedy, "A Pot of Broth," will again be welcomed by Dublin playgoers. Mr. W. G. Fay will resume his original role of the Beggarsman, which he delighted Mr. William Archer when the company played in London last May. He will again be supported by Mr. P. J. Kelly and Miss M. O'Connell. The casts will also include Messrs. F. J. Fay, G. De Geare, S. O'Sullivan, P. Mac Sheehy, G. De Geare, Miller, the Misses Maine, Mrs. Sheehy, De Geare, Laura Lavin, Sam Alipho, etc., etc.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE
SOCIETY.

For the second time this season the Irish National Theatre Society have engaged the Mallowville Hall for a short series of representations. The bill this time is again a triple one—"The Hour Glass," by W. B. Yeats; "Broken Soil," by Padraic Mac Cormac Caim; and "The Pot of Broth," by W. B. Yeats. The "Hour Glass" and the "Pot of Broth" have both been produced before. But they bear repetition. They seemed as fresh last night as when we saw them for the first time.

"The Hour Glass" is an impressive morality play, in which Mr. F. J. Fay takes the chief part, a wise man, who doubts the existence of God, and who is brought to believe by a miraculous intervention. "A Pot of Breath" is a delightful farce, and it is no exaggeration to say that Mr. W. G. Fay's interpretation of the Beggarman is as good a piece of comic acting as anyone could wish to see. Mr. W. G. Fay

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IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE

LAST NIGHT'S PERFOR-
MANCES

IN THE *REVUE* OF THEATRE, the rights the Irish National Theatre Society produced, and the play by Padraic MacDonagh, entitled "Broken Soil," and revised two plays by Mr. W. W. F. Yeats—namely, "The Hour Glass" and "A Pot of Brimsh." All who have been following the fortunes of the Society in their arduous and memorable work of endeavoring to give the people a real native drama, built upon original facts, and expressive of various phases of Irish life as it is lived to-day and as it was lived in the far-distant past, where legends of the old chronicles and flights of poetic fancy are the only guides to go upon, have watched the progress of the work with the deepest interest, and, on the whole, have not been disappointed. Some of the plays were eminently successful. Some of them may fairly be said to have been, in their own way, triumphs of dramatic art. All of them, undoubtedly, give promise of a wide and permanent appeal. One of the first was established to promote. This is particularly true of the new play produced last night. In "Broken Soil" there is a distinct mark of originality, a something throughout with the quaintly-weird actuality of every-day existence in the humble homesteads of the rural poor. If it travels at times above and beyond the actual, it is only to give a more vivid and life means for the average observer of Irish human nature in the concrete the exaggeration, at all events, is not too forced, and if it shows a tendency to dwell rather too long on the psychological aspects of the relations that govern the daily intercourse of such people the digression is not unnatural, because, from first to last, the play grips the imagination by the force of its unsurpassing reality. It is a play powerfully conceived and charmingly written. It is full of fine dramatic elements, and the deep paths of it all penetrate, like in the interest as to the sympathy of the audience.

The action of the play takes place on the borders of Longford and Cavan, and its story is concerned with a passing incident in the lives of Con Horgan, a fiddler, and his young daughter. Con is the typical, light-hearted musician of the Irish country, who, with his company of volunteers, has been called in to help in the border towns and villages. He is a good fellow, and a good neighbor, or at the crossroads on the summer evenings. Having had a roving sort of life from parish to parish, he has at last become the owner of a house and farm of his own. Maize Horgan, the daughter, is a girl with a high sense of morality in her character. She cannot stand the idea of her father's going to the fair to see the spectacle of her father losing his money, and the world's carousals that take place on the neighboring gubbins, and she, as father's sister, is the first to tell him so.

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The Irish National Theatre Society.

President : W. B. YEATS.

Vice-Presidents :

DOUGLAS HYDE and GEORGE RUSSELL.

Stage Manager : W. G. FAY.

Secretary : FRED RYAN.

Programme.

Molesworth Hall, Molesworth Street,

DUBLIN.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY EVENINGS,

3rd, 4th & 5th December, 1903, at 8.15.

Prices of Admission : 3s., 2s. & 1s.

"THE HOUR GLASS,"

A Morality in 1 Act.

BY

W. B. YEATS.

THE WISE MAN F. J. FAY

BRIDGET (His Wife) HONOR LAVELLE

HIS CHILDREN ... { EITHNE NIC SHIUBHLAIGH
PADRAGAUN NIC SHIUBHLAIGH

HIS PUPILS ... { P. J. KELLY
SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN
P. MACSHIUBHLAIGH
DE COURCY MILLAR

THE ANGEL MAIRE NIC SHIUBHLAIGH

THE FOOL G. ROBERTS

Production (first time on any Stage)

OF

"BROKEN SOIL,"

A Play in 3 Acts

BY

PADRAIC MACCORMAC COLM.

CON HOURICAN (A Fiddler) F. J. FAY

BRIAN MACCONNELL P. J. KELLY

BREHID MACCONNELL (His Sister) SARA ALLGOOD

ANNE KILBRIDE HONOR LAVELLE

MAIRE HOURICAN MAIRE NIC SHIUBHLAIGH

Scene—The Interior of Hourican's Cottage.

The action of the Play takes place on the borders of Longford and Cavan.

ACT I.—EVENING.

ACT II.—NEXT MORNING.

ACT III.—A MONTH LATER.

CONCLUDING WITH

"A POT OF BROTH,"

A Farce in 1 Act,

By W. B. YEATS.

A BEGGARMAN W. G. FAY

SIBBY MAIRE NI GHARBHUAIGH

JOHN (Her Husband) P. J. KELLY

The Society's next Performances will
take place early in January, when the
following plays will be presented:—

“THE SHADOWY WATERS,”

(First time on any Stage)

BY

W. B. YEATS.

“TWENTY-FIVE,”

BY

LADY GREGORY.

AND

“THE TOWNLAND OF TAMNEY,”

(First time on any Stage)

BY

SEUMAS MacMANUS.

and his own device of hiding and overbearing; its faults are interior, psychological. By no means is it "thin" or attenuated: on the contrary, it gives a sensation of fulness and a feeling as of something seeking escape but held back by a jostling crowd. The face at the window is obscured by its own breath on the pane, and the breathings of the strugglers behind. The voice of the master of the feast—the dominant idea—is drowned in the babble of attendants. I recognise the vision and the voice; but I affirm also deflection and disintegration. Potentiality is there; but it needs the fashioning and vivifying of a great conviction. God is there, but it awaits the refining fire of a full, balanced, conscious life; there is food for body and mind (not yet for the soul), but it must first cross the threshing floor and pass through the knocking fingers of vivid, authentic experience.

This internal deficiency has for its external counterpart a subtle technical defect. It was my privilege to read the play before seeing it performed, and in doing so I noted several points round which revolved a suggestion of significance; and at the end of the play, where the fiddler and his daughter take the road, and Brian the "hard" and his sister follow them into the dawn, I felt a thrill as I closed the manuscript on the words: "Anne goes over

and blows out the candle." A fine touch, I thought. The words grew into something large and significant, haunting, pathetic. When I saw the play acted, I was appalled at the metamorphosis of a pregnant situation into a mere commonplace act—and considerably enlightened thereby. This, I think, is the greatest lesson to be learned by our playwrights: the perfect adjustment of means to end in full knowledge of all the circumstances operating for and against; the realisation that the art of the novelist is one thing, the dramatist another; the apprehending of the mere natural fact that the sweet emotional effect, when externalised, may vanish into thin air; that degradation is absolutely essential to the expression of the highest truths, since all manifestation is necessarily the materialisation of that which is in its ultimate analysis, immaterial. The abstractly emotional is as futile for dramatic purposes, as an aboriginal spirit is for the upliftment of humanity unless it has passed through the gross medium of the material to the state of spirit again, laden with the wisdom that lurks in the caverns of mortality and in the secret places of illusion. To turn from generalities: a further defect in "Broken Soil" is the absence of sequential development. There is, of course, chronology; there is a beginning—the impulsion of Maire to take the road—and an ending—the taking of the road. Between these two there is much inconsequential coming and going, gyrations between intended departures and determinations to remain. Much nicely-phrased introspection, which sounds somewhat stultic on peasant lips; much talk of black blood, bitterness, and hardness; but no emotional aggregation, no unveiling of character, except in the case of Hourican, who stands upon the threshold of "creation" gazing through the imprisoning bars of what I have termed "immature inadequacy." I cannot admit that Brian MacConnell is a character study; neither can I allow that he is a study in temperament, for the strictly temperamental is manifested unconsciously, or at least with the balance in favour of the unconscious, while Brian MacConnell is wrapped in perpetual harping on one string of his nature, a constant black brooding, and that way lies not development, but stalling and sadness.

In short, the author has done himself and his ideas an injustice by adopting a swift method in place of one of slowly accumulating detail. In no other way than the latter can be, I am convinced, build up his Irish Hedda Gabler, and render acceptable and convincing her desire for and effort to attain power. Her passionate explanation that she has the power to influence her father is vitiated by the consideration that the true possession of such power would have altered the whole tissue of life preceding the opening of the play, and also made impossible her collapse into loneliness when the dusk came down and the lights came out in the windows of far-away homes.

I shall sit corrected if I have misread or misheard a word of "Broken Soil," and reconsider my opinion in the light of any new revelation that may be forthcoming; but in the meantime I am of opinion that Mr. Colm has gone the wrong way round; that the limitation of a logically-developed story is as essential to the creation of Drama as resistance is to the electric lamp; that the atmosphere of Drama should be one of repose—the repose of perfectly-adjusted burden and utterance—not of perplexity born of complexity; and that my criticism of the play, which is inspired solely with a desire to ascertain truth, may be as far from apprehending the mind of the author of "Broken Soil" as it is from truly expressing the feelings evoked in me by the play.

Spealadóir.

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BROKEN SOIL.

ONE thing can always be said for the productions of the National Theatre Society; they make one think. The authors have over an object in view, and that fact alone serves to enable their work, just as a life that has an object even if it be a failure is better than a purposeless existence. Not that I mean to indicate that the present production was unsuccessful. Quite the contrary. But anyone who was inclined to grumble at unevenness here and there, could solace himself with the reflection that the purpose of his visit was not amusement alone. On this occasion the performance consisted of three plays, two old, one new; "The Hour Glass" and "A Pot of Broth," by Mr. Yeats, and "Broken Soil," by Mr. Padraic MacCormac Colm. Of Mr. Yeats's two plays the first was a "morality" play, the second a farce. Mr. Colm's play, which is a drama of feeling, formed the middle portion of the programme.

In a recent article, I expressed a fear which is common to many people that this movement was developing in the direction of unbelief. This, however, was quite a believers' night, and so one could possibly object to the performance on theological grounds. "The Hour Glass" is a strange play in which Mr. Yeats seems consciously or unconsciously to have composed a satire on himself. It is largely modelled on "Everyman," with this difference that the hero's sins are of the intellect and not of the body. He is a wiseman who has converted the countryside to share in his unbelief. He trains up a body of scholars around him on the best non-sectarian principles, much as students are educated in present-day France. His agony, when suddenly brought face to face with death and eternity, is depicted to us. Only in the person of a fool can be found the single believer that has resisted his influence and is to be his salvation. In the case of a writer whose religious views are known to be so original as those of Mr. Yeats this play is certainly a strange one.

The chief interest of the evening was naturally centred in the new play by Mr. Colm. Mr. Colm's drama is one of those plays of Irish peasant life of which we have now seen three or four. The scene is Edilier's house on the borders of Longford and Cavan, a part of the country new to Irish drama as far as I can remember. Colm

"did not want the sky. They held the realities of life; and dispensed with the dreams. They solved riddles in their own way. But, as a consequence, whatever of art they possessed was imported; their great temples were Grecian; Corinthian columns supported their forums and palaces; their greatest poem dealt with a Grecian hero; and their greatest orator derived all his graces of diction and all the subtleties of his eloquence from Grecian models, whose inspiration he never acknowledged, possibly because in the translation into his own speech it was diluted into the thinness of rhetoric and the most vapoury in suggestion or reflection." The italics in this passage are mine, and I think the sentence so marked is distinguished by that rare intellectual wit which is perhaps the highest form of vivacity.

If the strenuous propagandist, or the stony utilitarian, wants to know, "What use is a book like this?" I should be ready with an answer. Suppose yourself to be a person of some taste and cultivation, stranded in some locality—or in some stratum of society—where good conversation is simply not to be had; well, in that case here is a book which will meet your need; which will often seem to actually talk to you, and to talk about a sufficient range and variety of topics to please anyone who is worth pleasing. I do not pretend to agree with absolutely all Dr. Sheehan's dicta or critical verdicts, but I am sure that a book like this last of his will perform an admirable function of its own by spreading some of the results of modern culture amongst minds prepared to receive them.

IRMA.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE THEATRE.

MY excuse for again dealing with this subject must be the article of your correspondent Cuan in which he calls on me for suggestions. In his interesting contribution he seems to charge against my criticism that it is not of a sufficiently constructive nature, that I attack the actually existing institution without myself doing anything to promote the cause of an Irish theatre. I fear I must necessarily lie open to this accusation; articles in a newspaper must ever be rather directive than constructive; paper and type are not the materials out of which one builds a theatre. The actual work must be done by other hands. Whilst in many things I am at variance with Mr. Yeats and his friends, I think it is only just to recognise that, judged by their actual works, they deserve very great credit, for whatever their doctrines, whatever their mistakes, it is at any rate due to their efforts that we have an Irish theatre actually existing and producing the plays of Irishmen in our midst.

It is, then, of the highest importance that our national theatre once established should not be perverted, or become itself an instrument of perversion. One need not mind an occasional error of moral judgment on the part of a dramatist. But should our newly established theatre set before it the deliberate purpose of opposition to Christian morality, as we in Ireland understand it, and even to Christianity itself, this would certainly be a matter of grave national concern, and the criticism which should deal with it would not be a carping opposition. The attitude of the ordinary Irishman is, as Cuan points out, one of steadfast adherence to Catholicity, and unless our new dramatists wish to be identified in the popular mind with other Molesworth Street institutions, they will have to clearly recognise that fact. *J'y suis; j'y reste* is the religious motto of Irishmen.

I do not, however, maintain that the members of the National Theatre Society have yet formulated either to themselves or anybody else any such set purpose as an attack on Christianity. Were this the case they would be worthy of unlimited denunciation, but it is certainly not as yet the case. A tendency to experiment with moral explosives would, I think, most clearly express their present attitude. Being little versed in the chemistry of ethics, they do not clearly realise the terrible power of their playthings. A writer talks of liberty, new found morality or the like, whilst he gives halting expression to doctrines of which he does not clearly recognise the dire consequences to society, should they ever be applied in practice. It will be the greatest of pities if the movement drifts in this

direction. There are so many subjects on which valuable Irish plays may be written, without attacking the national religion, that there is no need for the dramatist to depart from the real problems of Irish life, in order to discuss questions which are perhaps living ones for English or German speculators, but have no actuality for Catholic Irishmen. It is with all earnestness that I hope, both for the sake of Ireland and themselves, that our new playwrights will keep on the straight path. If they continue to produce "Kathleen-ni-Houlihan" and avoid such works as "In the Shadow of the Glen," Cuan will not need to call on me for suggestions towards the establishment of a national theatre, for a national theatre will have been already established.

I now come to a point where I find myself on the side of Mr. Yeats and opposed to Cuan. Like Mr. Yeats, I believe that the theatre has a higher purpose; in favour of which view I may also plead the authority of the greatest of philosophers and of the medieval church. Cuan, however, holds diametrically the opposite opinion. He looks somewhat askance at dramatic art and, indeed, at most other forms of art as well. "As a rule, high art, philosophy and new morality trouble them (*Irishmen*) very little," he tells us. He goes to the theatre to be amused after his day's work, and if the amusement is Irish in sentiment he thinks that is sufficient. Why should an Irish playgoer not be allowed to digest his dinner in peace, undisturbed by problems, just like the English patron of "Charley's Aunt." There does not, indeed, seem to be any valid reason why the digestions of Irish Irelanders should be unduly prejudiced, if digestion be their object. I understand Cuan's article as a plea for the Irish toffee-manufacturer; I am entirely with him in the movement. There is no reason why drama, whose only purpose is amusement and recreation, should not be produced in Ireland. I can and do enjoy, a good farcical comedy, a play such as "Charley's Aunt," or "The Admirable Crichton" quite as well as Cuan. I recognise that, like sugar-candy and nongat, it has its proper place in the social scheme, I am willing to encourage its manufacture by Irish producers, but I cannot call it Art.

In treating of Art, I have perhaps given that word a somewhat narrow definition. I confine the term to that form of imitation, be it through the medium of painting, sculpture, music or drama, which deals with the ideal, which endeavours, however imperfectly, to express the ideas in the mind of God, by representing something better than anything actually existing in the imperfect life which we see around us. Plays which deal with such subjects, and I conceive both Mr. Yeats's and Mr. Martyn's plays to do so, I call dramatic Art. Such plays alone I deem worthy of the honour which is paid to Art by all civilized communities. I know that the term Art is frequently used in a different sense. It is applied either to all forms of imitation, even including "Charley's Aunt," or, at least, to such forms as convey instruction and supply a mental exercise by the original view of life and the clever representation of its circumstances which they present. The best comedies, such, for instance, as those of Molière, or the Anglo-Irish comedy-writers, belong to this class. Though it may seem strange to say so, I do not consider them Art, in the sense in which I use the term. As being a vehicle of mental instruction—not moral instruction—however, and an exciting cause of thought they fulfil a very useful function and a much higher one than plays such as "Charley's Aunt." Their object is no doubt amusement. They are not directed towards the high and lofty aim of true Art. But the amusement is of an intellectual type; mental improvement and instruction are its result. As such they impart a higher form of pleasure than that derived from the mere drama of enjoyment, and I conceive that our object in Ireland, if we desire to resist the debasing tendencies of Anglicisation should be to make our pleasure of as high a type as possible, that is, of as high a type as is consistent with enjoyment.

When we come to the practical question raised by Cuan as to that form of play we should most encourage in Ireland, whether it should be the drama of (1) Art, of (2) Instruction, or of (3) Enjoyment, the question is less easy to answer. The drama of Art we already have; if

the movement keeps on the right lines, it will continue to flourish and develop. I agree with Cuan, however, that comedy, for which there is always a natural demand in every country, has not as yet been sufficiently developed amongst us. With the exception of the "Bending of the Bough," and a few farces, we have seen little of it. Yet, as Cuan tells us, there are many occasions when one is not ready for the appreciation of high Art. At such times the English theatre is our only resource. Again, there are many people who won't stand either Art or instruction, unless largely diluted with amusement of a less elevated type, who won't put up with Hamlet, unless there be a large admixture of the gravedigger. In such cases comedy of a higher class would go a long way to meet the demand, and would, no doubt, be a better antidote for the English theatre than plays which embody the highest form of dramatic Art. As a practical criticism, Cuan is no doubt right in suggesting that, if comedies are to be successful, they require to be longer than those which we have seen up to the present. I await with some interest the work of Mr. G. B. Shaw, which the National Theatre Company promises to us.

I agree, then, that there is a demand for Irish plays of a lighter type whose main purpose shall be neither Art nor Instruction, but merely amusement. Such plays are not however deserving of very high honour, though, as they become more intellectual, they will become more worthy of respect. But in no case should they be permitted to oust from our Irish theatre that form of dramatic production which is really true Art.

CHANEL.

WOMEN AND THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.

RECENTLY there was held in University College the inaugural meeting of the Debating Society of that institute. An address was read by the auditor, the subject chosen, "The Modern Idea of a University," being one of universal interest, with particular application to our own country and our own day.

Now, the prominent part taken in University matters by women during the last ten or twenty years, and the enormous success they have achieved in open competition with the superior sex, no doubt rendered it impossible that the question of "female education" should be altogether ignored by the Auditor and other speakers. It were better, perhaps, had they consented to ignore it, for it was handled in a (to our seeming) most unsatisfactory, not to say, flippant manner. Some of us had hoped that the reign of "cant" and "twaddle" with reference to this particular subject was over, that University men, at least, would approach the matter with something like seriousness. The "sweet girl graduate with the golden hair" may be all very well in a "medley," like Tennyson's "Princess," or on the stage of the comic opera, but one grows a little impatient when it perpetually recurs as the comic element in a serious question. Surely University men have learned ere now, and learned, I should say, to their cost, that women are quite in earnest in the matter of "Higher Education." Annual results of R.U.I. examinations are proofs sufficiently substantial of this.

I take it, then, that, for most of us, at least, the subject is a serious one with serious issues at stake. That being so, it is not to be disposed of with a smile, a shrug, and a quasi-indulgent. "Let them come, but let us try and dissuade them." The Auditor is, I have no doubt, over-young, or he would know that a serious purpose is not so lightly or so easily waived.

Why are we to be dissuaded? Have we toiled in a University which has been, as Dr. O'Dwyer said, only a "makeshift" to be put aside now that there is a promise of something better in store? Are the men afraid that, being once beaten, they may be so again; and that the last defeat may be, perhaps, worse than the first; or is it a case of superiors in their wisdom legislating for the inferiors in their folly? "Let them not lick the sweet which is their poison." The result of this last assumption being granted we thank them, of course, for their consideration, but we respectfully beg the right to cater for our own intellectual needs.

I am not a "woman's rights" woman in the ordinary acceptance of the term. Nor do I hold that woman's intellect is always and at all times equal to man's. I prefer to think of the one as the complement of the other. But I do not see why women endowed with every faculty of mind and brain should not be granted educational facilities equally to men. Not that University Education is desirable for all women in an equal degree—there are some of us for whom it would, perhaps, be better had we never touched a University text-book; and I do not deny that the rush of women into University examinations at present is out of all proportion to the benefit, material or otherwise, which they may expect to derive from it. But that is no reason for denying women the least fraction of University advantage. What is true of some women and of their unfitness for University life, is true of men also; and, if they be allowed to choose, why should not we?

America and Germany furnish us with abundant proof, if any such were needed, of the excellent work done by women who have been admitted, free citizens, to the Republic of the Universities. A few examples we have had in a short space of time in our own country—of women who achieved distinctions refused to male competitors, and concerning whom it is a matter of sincere regret to us all that they could not, owing to the restrictions placed on women by our "makeshift," continue in a position they were so admirably fitted to fill.

I am quite aware that this question of admitting women to University privileges embraces also the question of co-education on the whole. But surely that has been triumphantly solved even in a country which, until a short time ago, did not allow women to ride on the top of a tram car. I fail to understand the reason for the waste of energy implied in separate lectures for men and women on topics equally interesting to and equally capable of being understood by both. Ample scope for the development of talents and accomplishments peculiarly feminine would be afforded by the halls of residence for women apart altogether from the lectures shared in common. Let, then—not any side entrance—but the great doors of the new University be open to women as to men—or, if not, then at least let us have some good reasons for our exclusion, apart from the ever-recurring cant of the "sweet girl graduate" and her proverbial "golden hair."

A WOMAN-GRADUATE.

EVOLUTION AND THE POSSIBLE.

IT has been said that Ireland wanted a soul. The statement expresses only half the truth. It is quite as true to say that Ireland wanted a body. A strong, virile mind cannot for any great length of time continue to inform a weak body, without being influenced by it, for the simple reason that the body and soul interacting, the condition of the body must influence the condition of the soul. This maxim, generally true, is in the case of Ireland almost necessarily true, for the moment we compare Ireland to a man whose body is expressive of the material, and his soul of the intellectual life of the nation, or more correctly the whole living hypostasis expressive of the life of the nation—intellectual and material acting as one entity. Now the body of this man is weak, for its development has been checked. The soul, therefore, is weak by interaction, with a weakness increased by a direct persecution of its ideas and a bad education. Now, how is the man to be restored to full bodily and mental vigour. Begin with the body! No. Why? Because in that case—if that course could be persevered in at all, which I doubt—you would be only creating a pampered fool, or a monstrosity, or a creature of merely animal instincts, since the man Ireland, not knowing the permanent possibilities which now lie in him, and which are always founded on an intellectual basis, would not be able to develop himself according to the nature of things. Clearly, then, the process of restoration must begin with the soul. This man, by a potent draught, must be awakened to a consciousness of what his real life should be. His intellect must be made to rise above his present surroundings, into the region

Hourian, the father of the heroine, is a person of some renown. In earlier life he has wandered through the country with his daughter practising his true vocation, his musical art. He has now settled down and has a fixed address at which his creditors can call; but he still contributes to the philanthropic joy of a local home or a entertainment. His character, if not a very strong or a very admirable one, has yet a certain charming simplicity about it. As acted by Mr. Fay he completely won the heart of the audience. His delightfully naïf statement that he had been beaten for the prize at the Grandeur Tour, but that everyone admitted he had played better than the man who won, was a home touch that appealed to all who have ever read the angry correspondence of a newspaper. A hundred other similar weaknesses make us love this not very estimable old man, and I think he will rank as one of the best drawn and most human characters the Society has given us.

Around this very unlike old fiddler there revolves a strange medley of passions, real and unreal. Maire is loved by Brian MacConnell, a man of strong passions of the Covenant type, who unhappily suffers from the domestic affliction of an impossible sister. Maire has decided to resume the wandering life with her father, seemingly in order to break him off his habits of intemperance. Brian, in order to keep them at home, and win the daughter, seeks to confirm the father in his habits. Maire, who really loves him, yet gives up her love to save her father, and, as the curtain drops, she and he are once again setting out on the road. The impossible sister gets mixed up with the transaction at intervals; she is finally persuaded by Maire's example to refrain from emigrating to America, with money she has robbed from her brother in rags, and becomes united to him in a way that she has never been before.

The great merit of the play is that it deals with ordinary persons, and with the typical problems of Irish country life. It has none of the inner grand significance which is wont to ruin literary drama. Con Hourian's household furniture includes no symbols. In representing the sacrifice of a love to a higher duty, it is in sharp contrast with the cynical sensualism of the Wicklow drama. The strife between a lower and a higher longing has ever been the most fruitful topic with which drama can deal, and it is a problem that very frequently confronts an Irishman. The play is, however, liable to serious criticisms in one respect. There is too great a complexity of motive and the passions are not sufficiently clearly delineated. What the impossible sister is driving at is utterly impossible to make out; but even Maire's motives are far from clear. At the end of the play, one is left in doubt, whether it is a desire for a roving life, the hope of making her father sober, or the wish to allow him to develop his musical art that has influenced her in abandoning her love. The weakness of the father and the strong passion of the lover we can easily comprehend; but the feelings of the woman, which should clash with them are lost in a variety of complex and inconsistent details. The value of an emotional drama must necessarily be impaired when some of the chief emotions are hazy in their outlines and difficult to distinguish. It is only fair, however, to point out that the shortness of the piece necessarily makes explicitness and consequently clearness on the author's part not a little difficult.

I am rather inclined to think that Mr. Colm would be wisest to devote himself to comedy. For this, as I have said in previous articles, there is a great want; whilst Mr. Colm certainly seems happiest in his lighter touches. The enthusiasm with which "Pot of Broth," broad farce as it is and old as the hills underlying it, was received, showed that there is really in existence a craving for Irish amusement. Why not try a comedy of Dublin life. You could find sufficient subject matter in the neighbouring National Library alone to keep the Middlewich Street stage occupied for a year. The greater complexity of life in a city would also supply more matter for the subtleties of comedy than the simple existence of the country. Even if the play were intended to be of a propagandist nature, comedy, as the "Bending of the Branch," would be excellently suited to such a purpose. In English literature, the best writers of comedy have been men of Irish birth and education. Why not have a Gaelic Sheridan. If Mr. Colm turns his thoughts in this direction I wish him and indeed I

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY— A NEW PLAY.

We shall soon be obliged to open a special department in this paper if we are to keep abreast of the activity of our young players and playwrights. Between them the two companies now established in Dublin have for some time past been giving us half-a-week of excellent drama every month, and what was once a delightful but dubious adventure has now almost attained the dignity of a vested interest! Doubtless the National Theatre Society has arrived. No doubt there is some deep significance in the phenomenon, some grave reason why the ideas and circumstances of contemporary Ireland should find the drama a peculiarly congenial mode of expression; and if one could trace the matter to its roots he might deduce something as to the ripening future of the country. Without professing to go so deep as that, we may content ourselves with saying that given a body of clever and energetic young men and women with a turn for acting, a certain stock of stage properties and costumes, a small but increasing band of conscientious dramatists, and a community, the intelligent part of which has long been waiting for a theatre, informed with some artistic sincerity—given these elements, and we have them all in Dublin, you may with assurance forecast a period of dramatic fruitfulness. In Ireland, more even than elsewhere, one is on his guard against premature rumours of victory, and those who have not seen the performances of the National Theatre Society will incline to the incredulous side. But everyone who has watched the growth of its enterprise will bear me out when I say that the Society has already justified its very ambitious name, captured the ear of an audience on which it can permanently count, and made its mark on every thoughtful mind at least in our capital city.

Last week's performance comprised "The Hour Glass" and the "Pot of Broth," by Mr. Yeats, and "Broken Soil," by a new writer, Padraic MacCormac Colm. The two former are already well known. "The Hour Glass" is a one-act morality, based on a traditional story, one version of which will be found in Lady Wilde's "Legends." In the original the theme of the legend is very clear and simple, the struggle, namely, between Christianity and Sensualism in the soul of a proud-tempered priest. Under Mr. Yeats's treatment it naturally becomes a symbol embodying the eternal quarrel between sense and spirit, and suggestive of the shapes under which that quarrel manifests itself to the present generation. I do not think the symbol quite equal to the weight of idea it is forced to carry, and the specialised form in which Mr. Yeats presents it removes it somewhat from general appreciation. Nor was the stately and bloodless acting of it, however appropriate, calculated to take a grip on an audience. On the whole it is Mr. Yeats's least successful essay in drama. That delightful and exuberant farce "The Pot of Broth" merits criticism of a very different kind. Though belonging to a far inferior kind of art, it is within its limits a perfect triumph. Like "The Hour Glass," it is also based on a traditional story of the County Limerick. If the reader wishes to pursue inquiry into the matter, he will find an admirable recital of the story by Gerald Griffin's Barber of Listowel in "The Collegians." The acting of Mr. W. G. Fay as the eloquent beggar with the soap-producing stone was in every point admirable.

The most interesting part of the programme was, however, the new play, "Broken Soil." Its author, Mr. Colm, has already attracted favourable attention by some very fresh and individual verse in "The United Irishmen," and a little one-act play, "The Saxon Shillings." "Broken Soil" is a rendering from the life of the peasants of Londonderry and Cavan; and in sincerity of passion and vitality of dialogue invigorates one from beginning to end with the savour of actuality. The story is very simple,

It is concerned merely with the struggle in a girl's heart between love for her father, and the competing and antagonistic love that draws young people away from their fathers' hearths to new hearths and new affections. It is, as I said, a little human tragedy that has been out, warm and throbbing, out of the fibre of life. The young author had a most enthusiastic reception, and well he deserved it. His skill in characterization and construction, taken together with the quality I have already insisted on, namely, his sincere and fresh-eyed vision of life, give the very highest promise. Mr. F. J. Fay as Con Hourican the father, Miss Maïre Nic Sibbighigh as his daughter, and Mr. F. J. Kelly as Owen McConnell the lover, were as effective as usual. But I think they should "make up" a little for their parts. When one sees the same players in three different plays of an evening he becomes a little confused, and transfers individualities from one piece to another with disastrous effects. The minor parts in all these plays were most satisfactorily discharged.

Lady's Pictorial Dec 12

I HAVE been sent a report of the proceedings of the Irish National Theatre Society, and have pleasure in reproducing some particulars of it. On three nights last week the Melesworth Hall was crowded, to witness a performance at a morality play, called *The Hour Glass*, by W. B. Yeats; *A Pot of Brath*, by the same author, and *Broken Sod*, by P. MacCormack Colm. *A Pot of Brath* is one of the most innocent and laughable of plays. The three characters that figure in it—the Beggarman, the Stingy, shallow Sibly, and her husband John—are capitally drawn. The dialogue is humorous and lively, and the scheme by which the Beggarman secures a good meal in exchange for an old stone, which he points off as a thing of magic, is worked out artistically to the very climax of absurdity. The play was ably produced,

Mr. W. J. Fay being an inevitable Beggarman, Miss Maïre Nic Sibbighigh a first-rate Sibly, and Mr. P. J. Kelly an effective John. A morality in an act, entitled *The Hour Glass*, by the same author, contains a good deal of fine writing, but is somewhat unconvincing. The Fool becomes the saviour of the Wise Man who denies and, Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. Still, one feels that the grand truth he utters does not elevate the fool who begs for pennies to bring "luck" and to buy "nuts" and "bacon" and unspiritual fare of that description. Nor is one's reason or imagination satisfied by the conversion of a wise man on the moment that he sees an angel, made up on the unsanctified lines of a Rossetti female, bearing in her hand a cross, posed not unlike that of the angel in Rossetti's "Annunciation," and wearing round her head a burnished "glory." The angel's message is of death, and one suspects that it is rather fear of death than sorrow for past sin which brings conversion to the wise man in the twinkling of an eye. The third play, *Broken Sod*, is a work in three acts by Padric MacCormack Colm, a young writer of great promise. It is a cleverly constructed work; the dialogue is natural and energetic; the idea running through the three acts is of the very essence of sound drama; the characters are clearly drawn; and there is not from first to last a moment without interest.



7. Fay as the Wise Man



7 Fay & P. Colm

Picture Dec 16

The Irish National Theatre Society is hard at work rehearsing the three plays which are to be produced at the next performances by the Society, which will take place early in January. The pieces do resistance will be Mr. W. B. Yeats's poetic drama, "The Shadowy Waters," which is to be given with appropriate decorative scenery and costumes. The role of the Deceiver will be played by Miss Walker, the lady who took the part of the Angel in "The Hour Glass," while the principal male parts of Purgall and Alvaro will be filled by Mr. F. J. Fay and Mr. Kelly. A comedy of Irish peasant life in the North of Ireland, by Thomas MacManus, and Lady Gregory's "Twelve-Five," which has been partially rewritten, will complete the repertoire.

The Irish National Theatre Society.

President: W. B. YEATS.

Vice-Presidents:

DOUGLAS HYDE and GEORGE RUSSELL.

Treasurer: FRED RYAN. Secretary: G. ROBERTS.

Stage Manager: W. G. FAY.

PROGRAMME.

Molesworth Hall, Molesworth Street,

DUBLIN.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS,

14th, 15th, & 16th January, 1904, at 8.15.

Prices of Admission: 3s., 2s., & 1s.

Plans and Tickets at Cramer Wood's.

an Cló-Chumann (Coöperative), Clódoirí Gearrclóige, &c. Clóid.

PRODUCTION (FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE)

OF

"THE SHADOWY WATERS."

A Dramatic Poem, by W. B. YEATS.

Forgael	F. J. Fay.
Aibric	P. J. Kelly.
Helmaman	Seumas O'Sullivan.
Sailors	G. Roberts.
	P. MacSiubhlaigh.
	U. Wright.
Dectors	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh.

The Prologue will be spoken by Honor Lavelle.

SCENE—THE DECK OF A GALLEY.

"TWENTY FIVE,"

A Play in One Act, by LADY GREGORY.

Michael Ford	P. J. Kelly.
Kate Ford (His Wife) ..	Maire Ni Gharbhaigh.
Bridget Ford (His Sister) ..	Sara Allgood.
Mary Brennan (A Neighbour) ..	Honor Lavelle.
A Fiddler	De Courcy Millar.
Christie Henderson	Seumas O'Sullivan.

SCENE—MICHAEL FORD'S KITCHEN.

PRODUCTION (FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE)

OF

"THE TOWNLAND OF TAMNEY."

A Folk-Play in One Act,

By SEUMAS MacMANUS,

The Wise Man	W. G. Fay.
Feargal (A Bird Catcher) ..	De Courcy Millar.
Conal	G. Roberts.
Donal	P. MacSiubhlaigh.
Teague	P. J. Kelly.

The Society's next Performances will
take place in February, when the
following Plays will be presented:

"On Baile's Strand,"

(FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE).

By W. B. YEATS.

"The Laying of the Foundations,"

By FRED RYAN.

Society.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

PLAYS AT THE MOLESWORTH HALL.

Last night the Irish National Theatre Society produced three plays at the Molesworth Hall. Two of them were new, namely, "The Shadowy Waters," by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and "The Townsman of Tannery," by Mr. Seamus MacManus. The third, Lady Gregory's "Twenty Five," was staged under the auspices of the Society, on former occasions, both in Dublin and London.

Mr. Yeats describes his play as a dramatic poem. It is more a poem than a play, and as the poetic characteristics are enhanced in an all-pervading atmosphere of dreamy mysticism, elaborated in the style which Mr. Yeats has more peculiarly his own, it does not lend itself very easily to a successful presentation on the stage. This was probably the salient impression which the play made upon the audience last night. They had ample reason to admire the manner in which the players spoke the beautiful lines of the poem, but they were left in some doubt as to where the dramatic elements came in. In the performance though creditably and carefully and, at times, brilliantly carried through, seemed somewhat to lack the quality that appeals to what one may call the emotional instincts, and accordingly fell short of the triumph of arousing in the audience feelings of strongly-stirred enthusiasm. As a literary effort, "The Shadowy Waters" is certainly a fine work. It shows a brilliance of poetic imagery and a soaring imagination that only a writer of Mr. Yeats's distinctive gifts could hope to reach or achieve. In the prologue to the play, which was read by Miss Lavelle, the idea of the author took in sufficient explanatory detail.

"Among the seven woods of Coole" is a dream of being happy men, moving round in slow. To these beings the seavens to give a local habitation and a name. And thus we have in this poetic play or Fergal and Eithne. The scene is the deck of a galle, sailing over a sea in mist. When the action of the play Fergal is sleeping, and his sailors, acutely of wandering over the waters of ocean and of raging war among the seas, are plotting his death. Sadness of the sailors espies another ship in the fog. Her captain, Eithne, and they find a smacking's daughter, addressing the proud and haughty reminds her presence as an unwelcome one.

Deceit, under the exporting one, declares that she will follow him to the end of the earth. Fergal struggles to escape, but she puts her father's pen his head and, in the passionate cry of sin whose love comes every clinging, binds him as her kind. Her is splendidly portrayed in the play by Mr. MacNablaigh played the part of with a force and distinction that was in keeping with the spirit of the scene and her lines with a clearness of tone and an expressiveness that made sometime really admirable. Mr. F. J. Fergal, was also very successful in the part. Mr. P. J. Kelly, as was also a notable figure, and the three most excellent representatives in Mrs. Ma, Mr. U. Wright, and Mr. P. Ma. Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan filled of the brilliant very effectively. The were a remarkable feature of the play, and the entire mounting of the set in the dim colours of a subdued luminous, beautifully with the metal the action of which takes place on the deck of a cold Northern sea.

The second play presented by the Society last night was Lady Gregory's "Twenty Five," the story of which is well known to all who take an interest in the work of the Irish National Theatre. This play

was very equally performed. Miss Mary Ni Ghabhghaigh and Mr. P. J. Kelly, in the leading parts, were very successful. Miss Mary Ni Ghabhghaigh's performance indicated clearly that in her the Irish National Theatre Society have secured a very promising artist. Miss Sara Allgood, Miss Honor Lavelle, Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan, and Mr. De Courcy Miller were also in the cast, and contributed materially so that they be regarded as a very pleasing performance.

The author of the third play is Mr. Seamus MacManus, whose folk stories have become so deservedly popular. "The Townsman of Tannery" is a folk-play in one act. It is cleverly constructed, and contains a pleasant element of humor, which the artists engaged in last night's performance brought out in a very telling manner. The plot may be told in a few words. The Wise Man of Tannery, a venerable old personage, bowed under the weight of years, is asked by three brothers—Conal, Donald, and Teague—to decide for them which of the three is entitled to obtain possession of the townland of Tannery. The legal document in which the legacy is made over to the rival claimants is submitted to the Wise Man. Like Solomon of old, the Tannery townsman has a difficult problem to solve. But he rises to the occasion of the occasion in a way that delighted the audience with uncontrollable laughter. Each of the claimants is asked to tell what he can accomplish in certain circumstances, and the manner in which this is done is most amusing. The settlement of their claims practically resolves itself into a contest of rival displays of dead story-telling. Some of the stories are not new. They have been more produced at many an Irish inn, that position of smiles that neither won't nor can't come off. But they serve their purpose admirably, and the play was in every respect a success. Mr. W. B. Yeats was especially funny as the Wise Man. Mr. J. Robert, Mr. J. MacNablaigh, and Mr. P. J. Kelly were highly applauded for their contributions to the comedy of the piece. Altogether, the night's performance did the utmost credit to the Society.

To-night each of the plays will be repeated.

4 Feb
Robert



aged, and we trust he may prove as successful a playwright as he is an Irish storyteller.

freeman Jan 9



early work of Mr. Yeats, and contains some of his most beautiful lines. It is being staged for the diversion of the clever lady who supposed the scenery and costumes for "The King's Threshold," and, as in the case of the latter play, all the accessories will be the very same as mentioned there suggested

Talking of the prospects of an Irish dramatic revival, sufficient attention has hardly been drawn to the lines on which other national dramatic revivals took place. Mr. Yeats is always insisting on the necessity of literary drama; Mr. Maugham has hitherto gone in the direction of character, problem and society drama; Dr. Hyde has mainly given us poetical brown of the Gaelic variety. It remains to be pointed out that Shakespeare and the Elizabethans in England; Schiller and Goethe, in Germany; and the Greek tragedians were national interests in the drama by presenting historical subjects. Of course, Shakespeare and the other moderns did not touch the high water mark of their craft in the history plays. "Hamlet" and "The Tempest" stand above "Henry V." and "Richard II." But the history plays won the interest of the public, and after all, for a dramatic revival we must not only dramatists and actors, but an attentive and interested public.

Bo

Irish National Theatre Society.

MOLESWORTH HALL,
THIS THURSDAY, FRIDAY, & SATURDAY,
14th, 15th, & 16th January, 1904.

AT 8.15 P.M.

"THE SHADOWY WATERS."

(First time on any stage)

By W. B. YEATS

"TWENTY-FIVE."

By LADY GREGORY.

"THE TOWNLAND OF TAMNEY."

(First time on any stage)

By SEUMAS MACMANUS.

Reserved Seats, 3/- Admission, 2/- & 1/-

Tickets at CRABER WOOD'S.

The Irish National Theatre Society will reproduce at the Molesworth Hall this week, Lady Gregory's "Twenty-Five," and produce for the first time Mr. W. B. Yeats' "Shadowy Waters," and a new play by Seumas MacManus, "The Townland of Tamney." The production of Mr. Yeats' "Shadowy Waters" is, in general opinion, an experiment which will excite our interest. "The Townland of Tamney" is, we think, the first piece of Seumas MacManus's to be staged, and we trust he may prove as successful a playwright as he is an Irish storyteller.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

FORTHCOMING PERFORMANCES.

The plays to be produced by the Irish National Theatre Society at the Molesworth Hall on next Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings are now in active preparation. The programme offered promises to be most interesting, as it includes not alone plays by Lady Gregory and Mr. Seumas MacManus, but also Mr. W. B. Yeats' beautiful dramatic poem "The Shadowy Waters," which will be staged on the dramatic method. Lady Gregory's "Twenty-Five"—a play of peasant life, which has already been seen both in Dublin and London—will also be given, and will be cast in follow—by Michael Ford, P. J. Kelly, Kate Ford his wife, Mary St. Clair, Mrs. Bridges Ford (his sister), Sara Alford, Mary Bonner, a neighbour, Honor Laville, a Fielder, De Courcy Miller, Chris Handman, Seamus O'Sullivan. The scene will be laid in Michael Ford's kitchen. The programme will conclude with Mr. Seumas MacManus's new folk play, entitled "The Townland of Tamney." Considering the excellence of the programme and the amount of patronage bestowed on the Society's previous performances, large audiences will doubtless assemble at the Molesworth Hall next week.

The forthcoming performance of the National Theatre Society, which are to take place at the Molesworth Hall on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, promise to attract large audiences, and a good deal of interest is being taken in the production of Mr. Seumas MacManus's peasant play, "The Townland of Tamney," as well as in "The Shadowy Waters" of Mr. W. B. Yeats. This latter play, though only published recently, is an early work of Mr. Yeats, and contains some of his most beautiful lines. It is being staged under the direction of the clever lady who "cropped" the poetry and costumes for "The King's Threshold." And, as in the case of the latter play, all the accessories will be

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

PLAYS AT THE MOLESWORTH HALL.

Last night the Irish National Theatre Society produced three plays at the Molesworth Hall. Two of these were new, namely, "The Shadowy Waters," by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and "The Townland of Tamney," by Mr. Seumas MacManus. The third, Lady Gregory's "Twenty-Five," was staged under the auspices of the Society, on former occasions, both in Dublin and London. Mr. Yeats describes his play as a dramatic poem, it is rather a poem than a play, and as the poetic characteristics are exalted in an all-pervading atmosphere of dreamy mysticism, elaborated in his style which Mr. Yeats has made peculiarly his own, it does not lend itself very easily to a successful presentation on the stage. This was probably the salient impression which the play made upon the audience last night. They had single reason to admire the manner in which the players spoke the beautiful lines of the poem, but they were left in some doubt as to where the dramatic centre came in. In the performance though creditably and carefully and, at times, brilliantly carried through, seemed somehow to lack the quick and responsive quality that one may expect of a play, and accordingly fell short of the triumph of arousing in the audience feelings of intense stirred sentimentality as they often do.

"The Shadowy Waters" is unquestionably a fine work. It shows a brilliance of poetic imagery and a soaring imagination which is not any ordinary writer's. Its distinctive gifts could hardly be taught or achieved. In the prologue to the play, which was read by Miss Honor Laville, the idea of the author was set forth in sufficient explanatory detail. A walk "among the seven woods of Coole" suggested a dream of things happening that were shadows. To these beings the poet endeavours to give a local habitation and a name. And thus we have in this poetic play the story of Forged and Decora. The latter is laid on the deck of a palmy, sailing every day hidden in mist. When the action of the play begins Forged is sleeping, and his sailors, and are apparently wandering on the shifting waves of dream and of raging war, when the ancient seas are plotting an death. Suddenly one of the sailors, who has been long hidden in the fog, a sea-king follows, and on board they find a bewitched daughter, Forged, addressing the proud and laughing woman, mentions her ancestry as an unbroken temptation. Decora, under the cunning spell of love, declares that she will follow him to the ends of the earth. Forged struggles to throw her aside, but she puts her father's crown upon his head and, in the passionate language of one whose love overcomes every other feeling, leads him on. Her triumph is splendidly portrayed in the play. Miss Marie Nic Shuibhéal played the part of Decora with a force and distinction that was entirely in keeping with the spirit of the drama. She read her lines with a clearness of enunciation and an expressiveness that made the performance really admirable. Next, as J. Fay, we Forged, was also very successful in his reading of the part. Mr. P. J. Kelly, as Achree, was also a notable figure. And the sailors played excellent representatives in Mr. D. Roberts, Mr. E. Wright, and Mr. P. MacShibhéal. Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan filled the role of the audience very effectively. The costumes were a remarkable feature of the performance, and the entire mounting of the scene, set in the dim colour of shadowy green, harmonised beautifully with the mood of the drama, the action of which takes place on the dark waves of a cold Northern sea.

The second play presented by the Society last night was Lady Gregory's "Twenty-Five," the story of which is well-known to all who have been interested in the work of the Irish National Theatre. This play

was very rapidly performed. Miss Marie Nic Shuibhéal and Mr. P. J. Kelly, in the leading parts, were most successful. Miss Marie Nic Shuibhéal's performance indicated clearly that in her the Irish National Theatre Society have secured a very promising actress. Miss Sara Alford, Miss Honor Laville, Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan, and Mr. De Courcy Miller were also in the cast, and contributed materially to what must be regarded as a very pleasing performance.

The author of the third play is Mr. Seumas MacManus, whose folk stories have become so universally popular. "The Townland of Tamney" is a folk play in one act, a cleverly constructed, and contains a pleasant element of humour, which the artists engaged in last night's performance brought out in a very telling manner. The plot is simple, and the few words. The Wise Man of Tamney, a venerable old personage, beared under the weight of years, is asked by three brothers—Gael, Deval, and Tegan—to decide for them which of the three is entitled to obtain possession of the townland of Tamney. The legal document in which the legacy is made over to the three claimants is submitted to the Wise Man. Like Solomon of old, the Tamney settler has a difficult problem to solve. But he goes to the fountain of the occasion in the way that convulsed the audience with merriment and laughter. Each of the claimants is asked to tell what he can accomplish in certain circumstances, and the matter in which this is done is most amusing. The settlement of the claims practically resolves itself into a contest of rival displays of dull story-telling. Some of the incidents are most new. They have are now produced at nearly as fresh from the people's stores of smile that neither wear nor can't come off. But they serve their purpose admirably, and the play was in every respect a success. Mr. W. B. Fay was ably assisted as the Wise Man, Mr. G. Roberts, Mr. P. MacShibhéal, and Mr. P. J. Kelly were kindly applauded for their contributions to the comedy of the piece. Altogether, the evening's performance did the utmost credit to the Society.

To-night each of the plays will be repeated.

Talking of the prospects of an Irish dramatic revival, sufficient attention has hardly been drawn to the lines on which other national dramatic revivals took place. Mr. Yeats is always keen on the opportunity of literary drama; Mr. Martin Armstrong has gone in the direction of character, problem, and a certain drama; Dr. Hyde has mainly given us present history of the Gaelic variety. It remains to be pointed out that Shakespeare and the Elizabethans in England; Schiller and Goethe, in Germany; and the Greek tragedians were national subjects in the drama by presenting historical subjects. Of course, Shakespeare and the other moderns did not touch the high water mark of their craft in the history plays. "Hamlet" and "The Tempest" stand above "Henry V" and "Richard III." But the history plays won the interests of the public, and after all, for a dramatic revival the public, only dramatic and actors, but an attentive and interested public.

more pleasing from the point of view of metaphor than that of Mr. Yeats's latest play, neither is he judged as poetry or drama. In "The Shadowy Waters," which was produced last night in the Moleworth Hall, Mr. Yeats leads his audience upon another expedition into the untrampled land of mysticism, through which he wanders with such ease, but to which no mere commonplace mortal is an unknown and unknowable region, as thick with uncanny visions and as densely populated with weird phenomena as are the wilder dreams of a fever's delirium.

It is just possible that I possess neither the poet's eye nor the poet's ear, and it may be that I should accept my indifference; but night to my own defects rather than those of Mr. Yeats; for in any case I must confess that when I left Fergal and Deictora drifting amiably along on "The Shadowy Waters" at half past nine o'clock last evening, I had not the remotest idea why they were there, or where they were going, and only the haziest knowledge of what they had been talking about. Yet I have seen—and endorsed—many plays not applauded so far as common intelligence is concerned. Neither do I lack compassion, and as the weather is somewhat severe, I would suggest that someone should fit out a relief ship and send it to tow Mr. Yeats's nameless galley to the Land of Heart's Desire; that, I think, was the direction on the baggage label when I last saw Fergal and Deictora. If such an expedition were fitted out it might add to the sociological and ethnological knowledge of the world, for just before the certain descended Deictora saw a scarlet horror and a massive door—I am not quite certain of the colour—rumpling jeopously over the waves, while Fergal had visions of milk-white towers and ethnological specimens of phantoms of the moonlight period. I may mention that just before these apparitions appeared Fergal had ordered an act of piracy and assassination which was calculated to make Captain Flint or Black Dog or Long John Silver turn green with envy in their graves; so that it is just possible that the phantoms were the result of a bad conscience. I can offer no explanation of the hazard or the disaster.

I have no desire to write flippantly or to vex the poet's mind; therefore, I will not suggest that there is anything so commonplace as a plot in Mr. Yeats's dramatic poetry, and assuming that is something like this—Fergal had received a magic lamp from a Ford, and going across the shadowy waters in search of some Will o' the Wisp of poetry, which seems to be a kind of ideal lure into which nothing human enters. His sailors are in a condition which would be described in a criminal court as morose on the high seas. They are sick of this hare-brained chase, and like sensible men desire to return to their beds and ploughlands. They plot the assassination of Fergal. He awakens them, however, and craves the melody so easily that one at once decides that he is a relative of that eminent seaman, Captain Knute. Of course, there is no accident in the business, nor does Fergal swear "by James." He simply twangs his harp and, to their bewilderment, then another galley appears in the offing, and these prehistoric plebeians board her and challenge the crew after the manner which was fashionable on the Spanish Main some few centuries ago. When they are added to the average annual death rate is

this poetic way Fergal's crew return to the galley bringing with them Deictora, whose loyal husband has just been cut into travelers' food. Fergal thinks that in her he has found what he was looking for, and he tells her so; but, unfortunately, Deictora is not having any graces, and is not in the mood to play last night Lady to Fergal's Richard of Gloucester. She appeals to the sailors, and offers them rich rewards in beads and lands if they will take her to her kingdom. (By an oversight she did not say anything about the beads, or indicate the number of yards' purchase, and as a result it is impossible to say how far Mr. Yeats's scheme of land transfer will fit in with the interesting tale of purchase which is a standing dish in the columns of a contemporary.) Fergal, however, is not a man of resource. He sends his magic lamp strums her into a slumber, and when she wakes she has lost a decade of her life, and is deeply at odds with her poetical admirer. Even in the land of mysticism, however, the course of true love is full of rats. For some reason or other Fergal discovers in a few minutes that Deictora is not his affinity. He is anxious to rid himself of her, but she cuts the rope which laces the two galleys together, and sets the other adrift. With it goes Fergal's crew, and when the curtain falls a desolator was drifting about the shadowy waters, and on its deck were Mr. F. J. Fay and Miss Maize Nic Shuibhlaigh, which, being translated, means Walker.

Such is the story of Mr. Yeats's play so far as I understood it, but what it means I cannot say. It seemed to me to be a compound of white-wings, black magic, mysticism, druidism, mythology, and a collection of queer animals which were existed outside the arithmetic and sociological gardens of the Land of Delirium. The rhythm of the lines is more musical, and there is in them a wealth of imagery which is almost Oriental. But it is impossible to snatch a guiding idea from them or to understand what it is that the poet desires to tell or to teach. To two of the actors—Mr. W. G. Fay and Miss Maize Nic Shuibhlaigh—the highest praise must be given. It is very seldom, indeed, that a player goes down such perfect emulation on the stage or can derive such positive pleasure from the delivery of lines even when it is difficult to understand what the lines mean. To the lady who spoke the prologue this compliment, I repeat to say, does not apply.

The other two poems were Lady Gregory's well-known "Twenty Five," and assuming but somewhat tedious ball play by Mr. Seamus MacManus entitled "The Townland of Tanyer." I may remark that all the plays were staged with orthodox simplicity, that there was a disregard for practicality which may have been poetic, but was also very trying, and that an artist's dwelling might have been built while the simple scenery of Michael Ford's Kitchen was being arranged.

B. M.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.
THE PLAYS AT THE MOLESWORTH

The Moleworth Hall was fairly well filled last night for the performance of the three plays staged by the Irish National Theatre Society, of which a full notice appeared yesterday. Mr. W. R. Yeats's dramatic poem "The Shadowy Waters," formed the first part of the night's programme. Whatever may be said of the satisfactoriness or unsatisfactoriness of this work for dramatic representation, there is no denying the fact that to see the performance

of it on the stage by the members of the Irish National Theatre Company is a very interesting and novel experience. "The Shadowy Waters" may not strike the student of drama as a work of considerable dramatic power, calculated to stir one's feelings into a condition of strong tension or to affect the interest of the audience by its attractive treatment of any special phase of life or character. There is too much of the poet's visionary idealism in it, and too little of the backstage art of the dramatist, to expect such an effect from its presentation on the stage, or, nevertheless, "The Shadowy Waters," with all its excessive flavor of poetic fancy running red in pictures of strange beings, half animals, half men, wandering through what Mr. Yeats calls "the sandy meadows of the dawn," is not without a weird sort of intrinsic attractiveness when interpreted by a company of highly competent players such as the Irish National Theatre Society have, as evidenced in the work of popularizing a native and original drama. The measured rhythm of beautifully written lines, overlaid with fine expression by the various players taking part in the performance, even the play from being justly judged as either dull or tedious, if there was to other means to recommend it. Amongst those who came very creditably through the difficult ordeal of interpreting this interesting work, special praise is due to Miss Maize Nic Shuibhlaigh, Mr. F. J. Fay, Mr. G. Roberts, and Mr. P. J. Kelly. The plays by Lady Gregory and Mr. Seamus MacManus were also very favorably received last night, and while "Twenty-five" has already won the way to recognition, it seems likely that "The Townland of Tanyer" will also deserve a permanent place amongst the successful productions of the Society. Each of the plays will be repeated to-morrow.

Irish National Theatre Society
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evening
Tellyn
Nov 16

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY was formed to continue on a more permanent basis the work begun by the Irish Literary Theatre. Its objects are to endeavour to create an Irish National Theatre, by producing plays written by Irish Writers, on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to develop an interest in Dramatic Art.

The Society has already produced the following plays :—*Deirdre*, by "A.E."; *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, *A Pot of Broth*, and *The Hour Glass*, by W. B. Yeats; *Twenty-five*, by Lady Gregory; *The Laying of the Foundations*, by Fred Ryan; *The Sleep of the King*, and *The Racing Lug*, by Seumas O'Cuisin, and *Eilis agus an Bhean Deirce*, by P. T. MacGinley.

Since the first performance the Society has repeated many of these plays in Dublin, in some Provincial towns, and in last May, at the invitation of the Irish Literary Society, gave two performances at the Queen's Gate Hall, London.

At present the work of the Society is done under great disadvantages, there being no hall in Dublin properly equipped for Dramatic Performances, but it is hoped it will be possible to secure such a hall in the near future; where performances can be more frequently given and a centre created for the Dramatic Movement in Ireland.

At the opening performances this season the following new plays will be produced :—*The King's Threshold*, by W. B. Yeats, and *In the Shadow of the Glen*, by J. M. Synge, and during the ensuing Winter and Spring :—*Broken Soil*, by Padraic MacCormac Colm; *Riders to the Sea*, by J. M. Synge; *The Townland of Tamney*, by Seumas MacManus; *The Shadowy Waters* and *On Bailé's Strand*, by W. B. Yeats; and probably new plays by Lady Gregory, Douglas Hyde, Fred Ryan, and George Bernard Shaw.

For the convenience of those interested in the work of the Society it has been decided to admit Associates at the subscription of 10s. for the season (payable in advance), which will entitle them to one reserved seat on the opening night of the five ensuing monthly performances (exclusive of the October performances). These seats, however, will be reserved only till five minutes before the curtain rises.

Applications for Election as Associates will be received by the Secretary,

FRED RYAN,

34 Lower Camden Street,

Dublin.

THE IRISH PRESS ON THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY'S WORK.

We are convinced that Mr. W. Fay is the man in Ireland most competent to train an Irish school of actors, and we are convinced, moreover, that in less than five years we shall have Irish actors equal to any actors in the world, and an Irish National Theatre which will command the admiration of other countries.—*United Irishman*.

A new departure in dramatic representation in this country. . . . To a very remarkable degree free from the conventional stage tricks and time-honoured traditions with which we are all too familiar.—*Freeman*.

Mr. Fay's company, in spite of plenty of inexperience, are to be congratulated on their present performance.—*Irish Times*.

An Irish Théâtre Libre, which will take dictation from no quarter, which recognises that goodness and beauty and truth are independent of language questions, that they have from the point of view of art no necessary connection with political or sectarian controversy, can do much for Ireland, and is entitled to support as patriotic in the highest sense. The acting in both plays was excellent.—*Daily Express*.

Both plays were splendidly staged, and produced by Mr. Fay's Irish Dramatic Company. . . . The production of the works in question was attended with brilliant success.—*Independent*.

The performances of last week, though labouring under some necessary disadvantages, were free from many of the most objectionable features of the Literary Theatre. There was of the clique about them. Neither actors nor scenery were imported; they appealed to the people, and not to the educated caste, and were supported by the shillings of Gaelic Leaguers, and not by the guineas of men like Lecky; in a word, there was so much both of the popular and spontaneous about the circumstances of their production that they were well calculated to form the nucleus of a national drama.—*The Leader*.

Its work is still chiefly pioneer work, but that it has a character and a promise of its own, few that have seen the drama produced, or seen the unconventional performances of the actors can doubt. . . . The Irish National Theatre Society pays no regard to stage upholstery, little to the ordinary histrionics of the modern actor. Its stage management is bold; its acting is such as sinks the actor in the dramatist; its method is almost primitive in its simplicity.—*Evening Telegraph*.

A few words of recognition must be accorded to the acting of the two playlets (the Hour Glass and Twenty-Five), on Saturday night. Taken as a whole, it was extremely good.—*Evening Mail*.

THE ENGLISH PRESS ON THE PERFORMANCES IN THE QUEEN'S GATE HALL, LONDON.

. . . If there is one thing clearer than that we have no national drama, it is that the Irish have, and a drama that for sincerity of feeling and simple eloquence of expression can, rarely, if ever, have been surpassed. . . . These Irish playlights, however, do not seem to trouble their heads about precedent; it is their glory to write as if they had never been inside a theatre.

. . . It is to be sincerely hoped that our visitors will make some more appearances in

London. Their work has only to be known to be most popular, and, perhaps, to have an influence on our own drama.—*Morning Post*.

The productions which were given at the Queen's Gate Hall, on Saturday afternoon and evening, could scarcely have failed to impress anyone who assisted at them with the conviction that here was something more spontaneous, more organically independent, less influenced by transient literary or artistic fashions, or by foreign literary or artistic forces than anything which we have done for many years in drama in this country. There were days—the great Elizabethan days—when we, in England, had a characteristic national theatre. We shall soon have one again. But the Irish may get there before us, for they have this tremendous advantage, that while our dramatists are hugging foreign models for their form, and groping through the darkness of petty social unrealities for their ideas, we can see already the beginnings in Ireland of a drama which is founded on the bed-rock of simple emotion and sentiment, instead of the falsities of complicated motives and warped ambitions, and which breathes the free air of national instead of petty social character. With these productions of the Irish theatre we feel that in Dublin the theatre is beginning to be what it has not been for hundreds of years in England—the expression of the aspirations, the emotions, the essential spirit and movement of the people, both in the sense in which it is so in France, in the sense of being a recognised platform to which come those who have something important to say, and those who seek something important to hear, but also in the sense in which it expresses the idealism and the poetry of the national sentiment.—*Daily News*.

. . . The Irish Literary Society have done excellently well in inviting these clever amateurs over here, and we hope that like the "München Scharfrichter" they will wander farther afield and win more laurels.—*Daily Chronicle*.

On the whole the performance of both afternoon and evening amply justified what we have heard of the Irish National Theatre, and gave a most interesting sample of their work.—W. A. in the *Manchester Guardian*.

. . . Stendhal said that the greatest pleasure he had ever got from the theatre was given him by the performance of some poor Italian strollers in a barn. The Queen's Gate Hall, if not exactly a barn, can boast none of the glories of the ordinary playhouse, and it was here that, only a day or two ago, a little band of Irishmen and women, strangers to London and to Londoners, gave some of us, who for our sins are constant frequenters of the regular playhouses, a few moments of calm delight quite outside the range of anything which those houses have to offer. . . . The Irish theatre is really of its own kind and of none other. Its sustained note of subdued gravity, with here and there faint harmonies of weird elish freakishness ("harps in the air" Hildda Wangel would have called them) is entirely Irish and entirely delightful. We are sincerely grateful to them for an hour or two of real refreshment and a train of curious suggestions, a series of new thrills.—*The Times*.

. . . I turn gladly to matters which concern the healthier side of modern drama. By the courtesy of the Irish Literary Society, I had the opportunity of witnessing the performance of Anglo-Hibernian plays, given by the Irish National Theatre Society, under the direction of Mr. Yeats, at the Queen's Gate Hall. It was an interesting experiment. The best hope for the future of the drama lies in its seeming to writers like Mr. Yeats a possible means for expression of the truth that is in them. And the plays which we saw had the advantage of being produced

by a company of clever amateurs, who, if they lack something of technical training, have also escaped many of the irritating conventions which technical training is only too apt to bring with it. They are able, for instance, to stand still, and do not think it necessary to wriggle in the background when they have nothing to do or say.—E. K. Chambers in *The Academy and Literature*.

It is a weakness of mine to be intolerant of the amateur in art. . . . I lack the coterie spirit which prompts one to worship in the conventicles rather than the cathedrals of art. . . . Consequently, it was not without misgivings that I went to the Queen's Gate Hall to witness a performance which, though given by the Irish National Theatre Society, no less, was evidently of the nature of a conventicle celebration. . . . I remained if not to pray, at any rate, to applaud and admire with the utmost sincerity. The company, indeed, were amateurs, with most of the characteristic faults of their class, but in almost all of them there was a clear vein of talent, while the work they presented was all of it interesting, and some of it exquisitely and movingly beautiful.—William Archer in *The World*.

. . . Perhaps it seems a touch of coxcombry in the announcement of a company of amateurs . . . as an Irish National Theatre. But consider what their claim to such a title implies—that a dozen unimportant people acting a parochial drama, and a drama of the soil, with such talent as they have gathered from their surroundings do, to some extent, dramatically represent Ireland to a much greater extent than any fashionable drama being acted to-day within our sacred half-mile radius of Charing Cross can possibly be said to represent England. . . . Much of the acting was well nigh perfect, this, also, because of its simplicity.—*Star*.

. . . They were only amateurs. In Dublin they are ordinary citizens. . . . and they only played in Queen's Gate Hall, which gives little scope for scenic effect; but they aroused such interest and enthusiasm as many professional performers would be glad to awaken in the finest theatres in the West End. Irish drama has been dead for years. Plays there have been in numbers written about Ireland, and by Irishmen. Need one mention Sheridan? Must a forgetful world be reminded of Dion Boucicault? But Irish drama, in the sense in which the Irish Literary Society of London, and the Irish National Theatre Society of Dublin understand it, is something much more racy of the soil, much more distinctively Celtic. . . . The amateurs acted, as we have said, with rare spirit, and a distinction that just suited their programmes. After the evening performance they went back to Dublin with the applause of the London audience ringing in their ears, and with the satisfaction of having justified their flying journey, and left behind a wish for another taste of their quality before very long.—*Morning Advertiser*.

We sincerely trust that the Irish National Theatre Society will, before returning to Dublin, give us some more performances. Of their success we do not think there could be a doubt.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

The visit of the Irish players will, it is hoped, be repeated at a less busy time of the year, and in a theatre in Central London. The affair, however, attracted much notice.—*Glasgow Herald*.

SAMHAIN: An Occasional Review, Edited by W. B. Yeats: containing Notes and an Article on Theatrical Reform by the Editor; a play in English by J. M. Synge; a play in Irish by Dr. Douglas Hyde, with translation by Lady Gregory. Price Sixpence. Sealy, Briers & Walker: Dublin, 1903.



Yeats - Fine

NEW IRELAND.

January 23, 1904

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY—ITS FUTURE.

THIS month's programme consisted of three one-act pieces, "The Shadowy Waters," by W. B. Yeats; "Twenty-Five," by Lady Gregory; and "The Townland of Tamney," by Seumas MacManus. The performances were given, as usual, for half a week in the Molesworth Hall, and, although by no means as crowded as one has seen them, the houses may fairly be described as excellent and enthusiastic.

"The Shadowy Waters" has been before the public for two or three years, originally in *The North American Review*, and later in a thin quarto embellished with a mysterious ro.

Practically no changes seem to have been thought of in preparing it for the stage, so that one enjoyed not only the immediate pleasure of the fine verse but also the pleasure of anticipation and recognition. The play is very simple; it is merely one of the many incarnations of that idea so characteristic of Mr. Yeats's work that it may almost be called a good obsession. It is the problem of the eye which is not filled with seeing, of the spirit which rests satisfied in no earthly triumph, but plucking itself from the warm hearth and the plentiful feast.

"Follows after shadows when all your chase is done."

It is, to borrow Mr. Arthur Symonds's suggestive inversion, the problem of a man who willingly loses the whole world that he may gain his own soul. From this idea the sensuous body of the play proceeds with that almost physical necessity which proclaims good poetry. The noonday region of clear perception and, consequently, of limit, yields place to the inexhaustible suggestiveness of half-lights, and the earth, kindly and solid, to the deck of a storm-battered galley blown about a remote sea. In this galley, the last of a fleet now driven back or dispersed, Forgue has come sailing westward, led on by the music of his harp and the flight of grey birds which are the souls of men liberated by death, hoping to pierce through the gates of the sunset and to reach the land of Heart's Desire. But his sailors, weary of their long and, as it seems, fruitless labor, are growing mutinous; they have begun to deride as a fool's dream the

imperishable happiness of which his harp murmurs, and urge him to abandon his fantastic hopes and turn home to tangible bread-and-butter. Even Albric, the shipmaster, a chieftain of generous birth, has begun to take sides with them, when suddenly a Lochlann vessel heaves in sight. Forgue bids or permits his men to attack her. They do so, slay those on board, including the Lochlann king, and bring his Queen Deictora back to Forgue, hoping that her comeliness will tempt him back to mortal pleasure. She, to save her honor, offers the sailors bribes of land and cattle if they will slay Forgue and restore her to her kingdom. They bend their swords against him, but he repels them with the enchantment of his harp, and abandoning their design for the time, they retreat on board the Lochlann ship to comfort themselves with a skin of ale. Deictora also the music subdues, but in far different fashion. It fills her with dreams which at first she attaches to shapes of earthly dominion and pleasure, but gradually the perception comes to her that

all mortal love
Is but brief longing and deceiving hope
And bodily tenderness.

and she rises to Forgue's desire for a happiness that will not perish. For his part he repels her at first, not believing that she has freed herself from the yoke of sense; but when she cuts the rope that holds the two vessels together, and commits herself irrevocably to his fate, he takes her to his breast; she crowns him with her husband's crown, taken now of a nobler empire, and they sail together into the night.

It was discouraging, moving through the audience to hear talk of "unintelligible mysticism," and the like, for surely to anyone who believes at all in the existence of the soul there never was a play so actually translucent. We all bear witness in prayer and proverb and by the grave-side of friends that this life is a valley of tears, and that all its pleasures are merely vanity and vexation of spirit, but if a poet expresses this truth in the language of art we hunt about for an excuse for cavilling! But then (certain critics may) granted even that "The Shadowy Waters," has a true soul nevertheless its body is inadequate, it does not come up to the conventional pattern of a drama, there is no movement, no action, no complexity of character. If the conventional conception of drama is such as to exclude plays of the kind and quality of "The Shadowy Waters," then so much the worse for the conventional drama. Will you reject the fragrance of next June's roses because they never grew before? Such criticism is very simple-minded, and rests at bottom on the delusion, very prevalent in Ireland, that because A is different from B it is therefore contradictory of B. In a National Theatre there is ample room for drama, as bustling, complex, and modern as you will; but surely there is also room for a drama in which, as Maeterlinck says, "the characters have time to live precisely because they do not act," for a drama poetical, statuesque, and occupied less with conflicting individuals than with the expression of general facts of spirit!

It seems to me that much of the carping which one constantly hears in private against Mr. Yeats and sometimes in public springs from two or three very plain causes. In the first place he has always insisted on compromising himself, and that in the worst of all possible ways, namely, by overstating himself. It is not merely that he tends ever to represent his own type of drama as the best and the only possible; that is an outcome of his artist's enthusiasm and excusable enough. But leaving the domain of art altogether he has been taking on himself to compromise society at large, and to put all the world, priests, press, and politicians in their right places. Thus naturally produces a re-action as absurd as the pretension itself, and estranges many who would otherwise be warm enthusiasts for his work. It will be a serviceable day for the National Theatre Society when the average man ceases to think of it as identical with Mr. Yeats; ceases also to be "mystified" before that distinguished writer, comes to discern his limits, and consequently to appreciate the excellence of his achievements within these limits. Another source of impatience is this. Mr. Yeats, as I have said, has only one message, the nothingness of material things. That is a lesson the soul must learn in

and it is a positive picture of our time," other reviewers. Just it is not the last lesson, and our final idea if it is the most appropriate to contemporary Ireland. "They were not," said Cowley, "with character about the personalities of human things. That is exactly what we are here for, to put on those things an imperishable stamp. If once a National Drama that will follow us like this, actual, concrete, everyday life that does about as well as slides over through our heads. The present generation is pre-eminently an economic generation in its life, and we want play-writing who will see the poetry of it. A firm character, working out its fiddle in the metaphysical stuff of city life, and triumphing over selfishness, prejudice, and selfishness of mind is an object quite as timely to the imagination as any foreign. And it is much more likely to be the circumstances of this wicked country, the importance exhibited towards Mr. Yeats's work by those who are occupied mainly with industrial matters. Such imitations is unnecessary, for there is room within a costume; National Theatre for economies as well as for costumes; and as a token thereof I am glad to see that Mr. Ford Esmond's "Laying of the Foundations" is to be produced next month. This is a play eminently human and comprehensible, and such as comes home to the emotions and bosom of everyone.

THE LEADER JANUARY 30, 1904

PLAYS THAT ARE NOT PLAYS

THERE is a time-honoured jest about Bradshaw's railway guide which, having commemorated the achievements of the train-service therein set forth, finally deigns as its supreme mystery the train which starts on Saturday and goes nowhere, being only recognised by its having a flying and intermittent career across the pages. Mr Yeats's play, "The Shadowy Waters," is very much in the nature of a Bradshaw's railway guide. The number of persons present at such a month's performance in a Manchester Street, who could, at the end of the performance, have given you any clear answer to the question: "What is it all about, woe, I fear, very small, indeed. There was a ship; a man and a woman on it; their conversation seemed to be very beautiful; they appeared to speak much of chrysope and chrysanthemum; but beyond that one could not much. No doubt, there would be throughout, a certain striving for something higher, something supermundane, but when, how, for what, and by whose was a problem entailed in a mist as deep as that which was supposed to hang over the Irish rivers.

It will be seen that whatever judgment may be founded upon it, such a work certainly differs very greatly from what is ordinarily understood by a play. The most serious of philosophical critics begins his definition of a play, usually by saying that it is an imitation of action, and that much of the definition, it may be gathered from his language, he would extend to all forms of drama, for instance. The word drama itself properly means no more than a play. I venture to maintain that this definition of what a play essentially is, is still the correct one, that it correctly expresses not only the essential distinctness of theoretic reasoning, but also the feelings of ordinary men on the subject, and that the species of composition has not yet been discovered, which, while it excludes action, can yet in any proper sense be called a drama. No

doubt the recitation of a poem in costume, if the elocution be of such high quality as that of Mr. Fay and Mr.

MacShuibhainn most certainly is, may be a very pleasant form of entertainment, but it is not that form which we call drama. The

play where nothing happens, the work of which the subject is purely infra-mundane, has found many advocates in modern days; but it has never produced dramatists or attracted audiences. Nor is it difficult to see the reason. For the conflicts of ideas and interior feelings are a suitable theme for literary treatment, but the conflicts of that word and reason are the only proper subject-matter for that special form of literature—the drama.

In speaking to "The Shadowy Waters"—the drama forming to this standard, I am not actuated by mere dislike of those whose productivity. I believe that the complete absence of any clearly defined or understandable action constitutes a fatal defect in any drama. In favour of the National Theatre, and I think that both this undertaking and my country, whose object is to create a native Irish Drama is fully deserving of public support. But if it seeks to have the people as an audience to meet positive plays that can be regarded as a drama, it is bound to produce plays that are well founded in mystery, plays that represent defined human beings, and have a clearly defined action moving from the beginning

to the end, in a word, plays that are plays in the true sense of the word. Experiments in drama, that have only a literary and not a dramatic justification, will in the long run only result in boring and repelling the ordinary man, and if long indulged in are certain to bring about the ultimate collapse of the movement. It is only from a dramatic point of view that I condemn this play. Though I am so great a lover of the indistinct and the incomprehensible as any of the arts yet I recognise that they are much more profitable in some of them than in others. I am more profitable in architecture, in decoration, in painting, for instance, and in literature, than in poetry, though the poet's post has never yet been equalled elsewhere. There may yet be room for a sublimation of art which, being able to muse, shall be vague and ill-defined, which shall rather convey than express, in sentiments which shall be incapable of clear intellectual comprehension and analysis. About the value of such a vehicle of expression, opinions will differ very greatly and I am not concerned to deal with it in this article. But that such a vehicle is entirely unsuited to dramatic poetry is a proposition about which I think there can really be no doubt whatever.

Of Lady Gregory's "Twenty-Five," which formed the second item in the programme, I have already spoken in a former issue.

The "Townland of Tannoy," by Seamus MacShann, was very different in style from Mr. Yeats's drama. As a farce it was so far successful that it kept the audience in tears of laughter. This was, no doubt, largely due to the farcical manner in which it was acted. Mr. W. G. Fay's acting being particularly brilliant. Yet, here again the same strange want of appreciation of what the true essence of drama is, made its appearance. The idea was that the three sons of a testator whose will displayed qualities of indelicacy revealing that of a literary drama had come to the wisdom of Tannoy to have it decided which of them was entitled to the inheritance. He thereupon proceeds to test them by setting them a series of tasks long familiar to humorists, such as to "tell the greatest lie." This gives room for six or seven jokes of the Gogginian-Scottishman-Irishman type, which were fairly well worked out and improved by giving the second humorous a tannoy. As the result of the last joke the case is decided, and the curtain goes down.

The Irish National Theatre Society.

President: W. B. YEATS.

Vice-Presidents:

DOUGLAS HYDE and GEORGE RUSSELL.

Treasurer: FRED RYAN. Secretary: G. ROBERTS.

Stage Manager: W. G. FAY.

PROGRAMME.

Molesworth Hall, Molesworth Street,

DUBLIN.

THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENINGS,

25th, 26th, & 27th February, 1904, at 8.15.

Prices of Admission: 3s., 2s., & 1s.

Plans and Tickets at Cramer Wood's.

An Cló-Ceann (Ceárpanta), Cláróipí Gearrúige, &c. Cluab.

"DEIRDRE."

A Play in Three Acts, by "A.E."

Deirdre	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh.
Lavacam (Her Foster Mother, a Druidess)	Maire Ni Gharbhlaigh.
Fergus	Seumas O'Sullivan.
Guinne } Sons of Fergus {	Doreen Gunning.
Illaun } " {	George Roberts.
Ardan } The Sons of Usna {	U. Wright.
Ainle } {	P. MacSiubhlaigh.
Naisi } {	P. J. Kelly.
Messenger	W. G. Fay.
Concohar (Ardrie of Ulla)	F. J. Fay.

Act I. The Dun of Deirdre's Captivity, at Emain Macha.

Act II. In Alba. Naisi's Dun on the Banks of Loch Eitive.

Act III. The House of the Red Branch at Emain Macha.

PRODUCTION (FIRST TIME ON ANY STAGE)

08

"RIDERS TO THE SEA,"

A Play in One Act, by J. M. SYNGE.

Maurya	Honor Lavelle.
Bartley (her son)	W. G. Fay
Cathleen }	{ Sara Allgood.
Nora }	{ Emma Vernon.
her two daughters	

Men and Women—P. J. Kelly, Seumas O'Sullivan, G. Roberts, Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh, Maire Ni Gharbhaigh, and Doreen Gunning.

SCENE—COTTAGE KITCHEN ON AN ISLAND OFF
THE WEST COAST OF IRELAND.

WILL APPEAR EARLY IN MARCH

"DANA,"

A MAGAZINE OF INDEPENDENT THOUGHT,

Edited by

John Eglinton and Fred Ryan.

Amongst the Contributors to the First Numbers are :—

A.E.

George Moore.

W. B. Yeats.

Edward Dowden.

John M. Robertson.

Stephen Gwynn.

Lady Gregory.

J. M. Synge.

MONTHLY SIXPENCE.

Publishers: Hodges, Figgis & Co., Dublin.

Irish Literary Society, London

20, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY, under the management of Mr. W. G. Fay, have consented to play a matinée and evening performance for the benefit of this Society at the Royalty Theatre, on Saturday, March 26th.

The plays produced at the matinée will be "The King's Threshold," a drama in verse, by W. B. Yeats, in which the central figure is a poet at the court of an ancient Irish king, and two short dramas of Irish peasant life by J. M. Synge, a new playwright. The first of these, "In the Shadow of the Glen," is a comedy, the second, "Riders to the Sea," a tragic idyll of fisher folk in the Aran Islands. In the evening will be played "Broken Soil," by Padraic Colum, a drama, in three acts, of Irish peasant life; "The King's Threshold" will be repeated, and Mr. W. G. Fay will be seen again in Mr. Yeats' little farce, "The Pot of Broth," which was so successful last year.

The matinée will be at 2 p.m. and the evening performance at 8 p.m. Doors open at 1.30 and 7.30 p.m.

Seats can be booked by application to the Secretary of this Society and also, at a higher price and with less advantage to the Society, from the usual agents. They can be booked at the Box Office of the Royalty up to March 18th, when the theatre closes.

STEPHEN GWYNN,

Hon. Secretary.

February, 1904.

1904

Now all this was fairly amusing, but it was not a play. Seven jokes don't make a comedy any more than three grey birds a tragedy. A costume recital of jokes is as par with a costume recital of action quite as a dramatic effort. Comedy needs plot and complications and its development. In this field, as in the other, the one criticism that I would pass is that what Irishmen need is plays, plays in the proper sense of the term. Unless the Society give us these, they will, at most, succeed, if they are fortunate, in avoiding boredom; they can never establish a drama that shall be lasting or that can compete in any serious way with the English theatre at present established in our midst.

CRANF.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IRISH PLAYWRIGHTS.

DUBLIN, Feb. 1st '04.

DEAR SIR—Allow me through the columns of your paper to say a word or two in reply to "Chanel's" article in last week's issue on the National Theatre Society and its work.

Now, I agree with "Chanel" as to what drama is or ought to be, and I am under the impression that the National Theatre Society is not ignorant of it either; but in criticising the Society and its doings he seems to overlook the fact that it is entirely at the mercy of its dramatists. Now, if our budding dramatists do not turn out good work, what can a society do except produce the best that can be got, and I think in doing this it has been so far successful. Of course, "Chanel" is perfectly justified in expressing his opinion as to the class of drama the company should produce, but he omitted to state where the society is to find it. Rome was not built in a day, and neither will the National Theatre Society find an Irish Shakespeare for some time.

Perhaps, our young dramatists—especially those who write in Gaelic—do not take their work quite seriously. Have they studied the Greek Drama, or the methods of construction of the foreign masterpieces! There is one thing I would suggest the National Theatre Society might do, which would be of help to our dramatists, and that is to produce at least one foreign masterpiece in the season.

I think "Chanel" will agree with me when I say that the Society is not so much to blame as our would-be dramatists.

However, their object is a laudable one, and to my mind they are doing their best to attain it. We must remember that a society that sets out to create a National Drama by producing the work of young authors and instructing them in every possible way, has a very difficult task before it. At present we can only hope that by this Society's patriotic work, Ireland may produce a great dramatist. Until that time arrives we should support it as much as possible.—Yours faithfully,

R. T.

P.S.—Perhaps, "Chanel" might try his hand at play-writing.

Irish National Theatre Society.

MOLESWORTH HALL,
THURSDAY, FRIDAY, AND SATURDAY,
25th, 26th, and 27th February,

AT 8.15 P.M.

"DEIRDRE,"

By "A. E."

"RIDERS TO THE SEA."

(First time on any stage)

By J. M. SYNGE.

Reserved Seats, 3/- Admission, 2/- and 1/-

Tickets at CRANF, WOODS.

NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY PLAYS.

The National Theatre Society will present some plays at the Molesworth Hall, Molesworth street, this evening. "Deirdre," a play in three acts, by "A. E.," will form the first item on the programme. This will be followed by a new play entitled "Riders to the Sea," to be produced for the first time on any stage. It is a play dealing with peasant life in the West. The following well-known players will appear: Messrs. P. J. Fay, P. J. Kelly, George Roberts, S. O'Sullivan; the Misses Honor Laville, Sara Allgood, Maire Mac Shabbagh, Emma Kepone, &c. A complete set of new costumes has been prepared for both pieces. Those who have not witnessed the previous productions of the National Theatre Society will, by paying a visit to the Molesworth Hall to-night, have an opportunity of seeing what this excellent company of players are doing in the endeavour to establish a theatre of art in this country. The plays will be repeated to-morrow (Friday) and Saturday evenings.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

Last evening the Irish National Theatre Society produced two plays in the Molesworth Hall—"Deirdre," a three-act piece by "A. E.," which has been already noticed in these columns, and "Riders to the Sea," a one-act play by J. M. Synge. Of "Deirdre" it may be said with truth that it is shy and admirably written. The subject and the treatment are perfect, and there is sufficient of dramatic interest in the work to entertain any audience which enjoys literary drama. The piece was capital, played last evening. Miss Maria Monahan was a splendid Deirdre, and Miss Marie N. O'Garra a very creditable Lavinia. Mr. P. J. Kelly as Niall, Mr. P. J. Fay as Conchobair, Mr. Thomas O'Sullivan as Fergus were capital, and the remaining characters were ably presented. Of Mr. J. M. Synge's play, "Riders to the Sea," it is difficult to say exactly what one thinks. The idea underlying the work is good enough; but the treatment of it is so cold and repulsive. Indeed, the play develops into something like a "wreck." The long exposure of the dead body before an audience may be realistic, but it certainly is not artistic. There are some things which are lifelike, and yet are quite unfit for presentation on the stage, and we think that "Riders to the Sea" is one of them.

Man Kuan Vernon as Nora, acted throughout

The Irish National Theatre Society.

President :

W. B. YEATS.

Vice-Presidents :

MAUD GONNE, DOUGLAS HYDE, GEORGE RUSSELL.

Stage Manager :

W. G. FAY.

Programme.

MOLESWORTH HALL,

MOLESWORTH ST., DUBLIN.

Saturday, 14th March, 1903,

AT 8 O'CLOCK.

RESERVED SEATS, 2s.; ADMISSION, 6d. and 1s.

PROGRAMME.

Production (for the first time on any stage) of a
Morality Play, in One Act, by
W. B. YEATS,

ENTITLED —

"THE HOUR GLASS."

The Wise Man	J. DUDLEY DIGGES.
Bridget (his wife)	MAIRE T. QUINN.
His Children	EITHNE and PADRAGAN Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.
His Pupils	P. J. KELLY.
	SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN.
	P. COLUMB.
	P. Mac SHIUBHLAIGH.
The Angel	MAIRE Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.
The Fool	P. J. FAY.

LECTURE :

"The REFORM of the THEATRE,"

By W. B. YEATS.

Production (for the first time on any stage) of a
play in One Act, by
LADY GREGORY,

ENTITLED —

"TWENTY-FIVE."

Michael Ford (a middle-aged farmer)	W. G. FAY.
Kate Ford (his young wife)	MAIRE Nic SHIUBHLAIGH.
Christie Henderson	P. J. KELLY.
A Neighbour	DORA HACKETT.
Another Neighbour	P. Mac SHIUBHLAIGH.

SCENE: Michael Ford's Kitchen.

THE VOICE OF ONE.

Dramatis Personæ:—BATES, BARTON, AND M'CLURE.

BATES.—I'd rather scrub floors on my marrow-bones,
Throw chairs at mayors, or fling the Ogham stones!
At English King's processions in hot weather,
Than hear your players playing plays together.

BARTON.—'Tis true, the modern play is awful rot,
'Tis true, the theatre is gone to pot.

M'CLURE.—I in fine raiment fain would clothe my skin,
But yet I toil not, neither do I spin.
I left Egyptian flesh-pots in a hurry,
Bearing with fortitude all kinds of worry,
Because I knew that surely somehow I
Might thrust a finger into someone's pie.
It doesn't matter whose the pie, or where
Where'er the pudding is, M'Clure is there.
My metaphors to you, I know, are clear;
I'll reform everything—that's why I'm here.
I see the first thing is to cleanse the stage.
And—with your brains—to do it I'll engage.

BARTON.—M'Clure, as far as all your friends can gather,
You don't wash well, although you raise a lather.

BATES.—Look here, M'Clure, I'll wash my hands of you—
That's the all the washing you and I will do.

M'CLURE.—Why, you amaze me, what is it I've done?
I who love all men, and would injure none!

BATES.—You stole my plot . . .

BARTON.—And faked up all my play.

M'CLURE.—Don't fling the chair at me, I'll go away (*going*)
It's very queer, I long to be of use,
But all my efforts only earn abuse.
'Tis true, for that I do not care a jot,
I'd rather be abused than be forgot.
The Dublin pagans have given me a show,
Now at the Romans I will have a go.
If these do not my overtures receive,
The Protestants I've still got up my sleeve.
And when about me no more's left to say
From "Parnell's Island" I will sail away
To dreamy Brixton, there to end my days
With the respectability that pays. (*Exit*.)

BARTON.—Good riddance; now, then, Bates, we will forget
Old scores, and have an Irish drama yet.
I have the money and the player's art,
And simple things are dear unto my heart.

BATES (*amused*).—That's it, that's it, simplicity's the thing;
Art is choked up by over-furnishing.
To make life simple is my whole design—
I who spend years upon a single line,
Setting a letter here, a comma there—
Sorely simplicity's my only care.

BARTON.—No doubt, no doubt; the thing is this, we want
A theatre and all the usual plant.

BATES.—The usual plant! That's just the very thing
We must avoid; no over-furnishing.
The play must tell just by mere force of Art—
This is a matter I have much at heart.

BARTON.—You must have clothes and properties and that,
Or else your play will fall completely flat.

BATES.—Had I the heavens embroidered clothes indeed,
My stage and actors would no others need.
But these gay clothes long since in rain did fall,
So I won't bear of any clothes at all.

BARTON.—You mean accessories, properties, and such,
You will not have your actors dress too much?

BATES.—The passionate pulse of life is beating slow,
The warring lips of life are murmuring low,
I gaze upon wan Beauty's shaken hair,
Actors and clothes and—everything are there!

BARTON.—What do you mean? Why, Bates, you must be
mad.

And will you wreck our drama for a fad?
Think you I will good money fling away
To make the British critic holiday?

BATES.—You're absurd, Barton, vulgar, and that's worse.
Money I leave to publishers, if course.

Of gold and silver little do I know,
But to my plays the gabbling world shall go.

BARTON.—Faith, and I think they'll go there without me,
I leave you to your spectral company.

(*Exit in a rage*.)

BATES.—The mouthing would has frothed itself away,
And left me with my little plans to play.
Ocean of thought, how strange your ebb and flow!
No plans had I one little hour ago.

Dull people have their places, and my friends
And are used by the gods for their great ends—
The thrifty gods, who will true genius guide
To oysters with most precious pearls inside.
So these vain babblers, with their talk of plays,
Suggest new thoughts, wherewith I will amaze
The stale old world that to the play-house goes
To look at scenery and look at clothes.

I've had my dreams of clothes and scenery, too,
But well I know that way lies nothing new.
No gaudy, pinchbeck theatre for me,
The after-dinner lounge of bourgeoisie.
I for my plays will find a simple hall;
My stage—Shall I have any stage at all?

"The world's a stage," a well-known writer states.
It is well said—though Shakespeare isn't Bates!
I'll have no stage, then I'll no scenery need,
(Article two of my dramatic creed.)

My players' clothes I will have wan and plain—
Ah, I forgot, from clothes they must refrain.
A pious thought, and near to Nature's plan,
My theatre of the primeval man!

A thought I hold by one long gleaming tress,
A thought of delicate, dim loveliness.
The Drama of to-morrow draweth nigh,
I its inventor, its creator I.

No theatre, no scenery, no stage,
No clothes the roving fancy to engage,
No actors either, for their gestures rude
Break in upon the spirits' solitude.

And neither shall my plays have any lines—
The straitened word the winged thought confines.
No, I will cause that a new thing shall be,
Plays shall be played in wordless stardry.
For I shall sit in any room apart.

Just sit, and sit, and gaze in my own heart.
And when I toss the dim locks of my hair,
Dramas are born in men's minds everywhere.

And when I wave my slender pearl-pale hand
Tragedy glides dream-beauty through the land.
All the world over the uncommercial few,
Gathering in companies of one and two,

Shut humbly while the miracle is wrought
By the unerring ravens of my thought,
While the mob theatre's expensive cloth
Makes ever still more fat the maddening moth;
And dew-pale ladies gather lilies tall
To weave o'er my white brow Fame's coronal!

(*Enter a Friend carrying patterns of costumes for Bates' next play "The Shadowy Daughters."*)

FRIEND.—I've got some beautiful materials. See,
Silks opalescent, yes, and crimsonise.
I've thought out some great colour harmonies,
And I am sure we shall our audience please.

BATES.—Ah! I've a scheme how clothes may spoken be,
In coloured notes unto the psaltery,
Show me the stuffs. . . .

(*Enter Manager of a theatre.*)

MANAGER.— . . . I have just found a man
Who has for scenery a novel plan.

BATES (*eagerly*).—I have a theory of waves of light
And chanted words—I thought of it to-night.

(*Pressing his head to his forehead*.)

To-night, to-night—my Vision!—Woe is me,
Drown me in age-long dreams, sackbut and
psaltery!

(*Exit*.)

FINDABAIR.

THE war-lords pass you by in glittering throngs,
 Glad and victorious, but you turn away
 All wearily, as though it were a day
 Of shame and they defeated. Ancient wrongs
 Sleep now avenged, and the feast belongs
 To-night to you. No bard will chant a lay
 That is not made to please you, sad or gay;
 Yet Finovar, you will not praise the songs.
 Naught that we do can make your eyes resume
 The smile they had, and you cannot restore
 Our old content, but lay on us your doom
 Of weary sorrow for a joy withdrawn;
 We love and lose you, and have evermore
 The longing of the midnight for the dawn.

EIRA OGE.

THE PRISONER OF LOVE.

S TILL, although I know our ways
 Are divergent through all time,
 Following love will shed its rays
 On the path you choose to climb.

And your eyes my thought will meet,
 Shining in your guiding star;
 Flowers will spring before your feet
 From my brooding love afar.

But I hear your voice that cries:
 "Oh, the brambles trip my feet—
 Oh, the lights that blind my eyes,
 When shall love and freedom meet?"

GEORGE ROBERTS.

GREY.

THE light of twilight's consecrating ray,
 Now varies on the hills and sky and sea.
 In lilac lights and purple shades that flee,
 In restful grey that lingers on to stay.

The dove-like wings of pity now seem nigh
 To bless more closely than day's flashing light;
 The opal hush lies on the cloud hats bright,
 A calm content sounds now in evening's sigh.

Be still, allow the benediction grey
 To clasp thee like a cloak of loving rest,
 Now ceasing from the day-time's constant quest,
 Now ceasing from the restlessness of day.

ALBERTA V. MONTGOMERY.

UNTO THIS LAST.

P ERFUME of rose and mignonette,
 The chirp of a drowsy bird,
 Stale through the lattice open set,
 And no one spoke or stirred.

Her aged fingers touched the notes
 With a soft, uncertain sound,
 For memory had wandered back
 O'er long untrodden ground.

At last she played a melody,
 So joyous, light, and sweet;
 We knew it meant the golden hours,
 Of youth and childhood fleet.

We heard the murmur of the brook,
 The whispering of the leaves,
 And then the moan of winter winds,
 The sighs of one who grieves.

A crash of chords, a plaintive air,
 Most willy, sadly sweet,
 And then the roll of muffled drums.

Which slowly, softly died away
 Till all the notes were dumb,
 And, in the garden, nightingales
 Proclaimed their hour had come.

M. G. BRERETON.

THE LIVING CHALICE.

THE mother sent me on the Holy Quest,
 Timid and proud, and curiously drest
 In vestures by her hand wrought wondrously,
 An eager, burning heart she gave to me.
 The Bridegroom's feast was set, and I drew nigh,
 Master of Life, Thy cup has passed me by.



Before, new drest, I from the mother came,
 In dreams I saw the dazzling Cup of Flame.
 Ah, divine chalice, how my heart drank deep!
 Waking I sought the love I knew asleep.
 The Feast of Life was set, and I drew nigh
 Master of Life, Thy cup has passed me by.

Eyes of the soul, awake, awake, and see
 Growing within the ruby-radiant tree!
 Sharp pain has wrung the clusters of my vine,
 My heart is rose-red with its brimmed wine.
 Thou hast new-set the Feast, and I draw nigh,
 Master of Life, take me, Thy cup am I.

S. L. M.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE.

THE performance of *Deirdre* last week was especially interesting, as the production of that play in Clarendon Street was the first outcome of the National Theatre movement in its present form. It seemed a very long time since I first saw *Deirdre*; the play called up many recollections. It was but natural to reflect on the history and fortunes of the literary theatre, to consider form and what are likely to be the chances of its future success.

In some ways it has been far from a failure. In all that appertains to the actor's art it has succeeded in a very high degree. It has shown us that the creation of a company of native Irish players, skilled both in comedy and tragedy, was an achievement not beyond the powers of Irishmen. It has produced many a play by Irish authors dealing with Irish subjects. Almost all of these have provided food for thought, and have directly or indirectly added to the sum total of Irish introspective knowledge. Yet in one respect it has been a sad disappointment. It has not, I fear, "caught on." The one feature in which it has been particularly deficient is in the matter of audiences. The hall in which the performances are given is not particularly large, yet it has seldom been well filled, and even those who do come seem always to be the same people. There has somehow been a want of public interest in the productions. The enterprise appeals to a special clientele, but otherwise seems to be incapable of expansion. It lacks that penetrating power which would make it productive of a national movement of wide extent and the parent of many similar undertakings throughout the country.

What, we may ask, is the true cause of this stagnation? Is it the public or is it the authors who are to blame, for it is certainly not the performers, or does it in truth arise from the very plan and constitution of the theatre itself. No doubt a theatre society which sets a high ideal before it has very great difficulties to contend with. Lack of money and of university facilities have prevented the general standard of culture throughout the country

from being high; whilst most of the English plays with which we are familiar are tinged with anything rather than artistic feeling. It may be doubted whether even the plays of Shakespeare, if staged for the first time in Dublin to-day, would be likely to prove serious competitors for Irish favour with the *Cousin Girl* or the *Orchard*. It may be then that the plays of the new Irish school are but passing through a novitiate of neglect, and that one of these days they will burst suddenly into popular favour.

Yet I fear that the neglect is not entirely unmerited. There has been too great a tendency on the part of the writers to make their appeal to a small and specialised audience. The mystic has been much abroad in the productions of the society. There has been an unfortunate tendency to regard the plot as the least essential element in the construction of a drama, a tendency that naturally conduces to the creation of dramatic poems, rather than poetic dramas. As a result the common throng has repaid contempt by abstention, and these Irish plays have in truth evoked more interest in London than in the actual venue of their production.

Deirdre, as it has commonly been considered the best, so it is also perhaps the most characteristic production of the school. In its several details it has all that beauty which is indeed generally to be found in the setting and in the working out of these dramas. The beautiful costumes and scenery did much to enhance its charm on the present occasion. Yet on the whole one feels there is something wrong with it. It is as a piece of music in which the several notes are beautifully rendered, but yet the time is at fault. The plot lacks that regular development, that rise and fall, which are ever of the essence of drama. Alike the flight and the return are too sudden; the catastrophe is not naturally led up to;

the introduction of the magician as a sort of *deus ex machina* is ruinous to the reality of the whole. In one point moreover the acting fell short; not, I believe, through fault of the performers, but owing to the fade of the authors. The chanting tones and the restrained gestures even in highly emotional situations still further took away from the realism of the performance. It should be said, however, that, at any rate on second hearing, A. E.'s verses compared favourably with those of Mr. Yeats in point of comprehensibility.

Mr. Synge's play was in everything the antithesis of A. E.'s, and though I would a thousand times sooner go to see the pieces of the latter, yet I think that "*Riders to the Sea*" is really the more hopeful production of the two. A. E.'s play was, I have said, beautiful but unreal. "*Riders to the sea*" was, on the contrary, hideous in its realism. I think it is the most ghastly production I have ever seen on a stage. It had all the horrors of a nightmare and reminded me of a visit to a dissecting room. In it there was terror and pity to the full. All that good acting could achieve was done to harrow the feelings of the audience. The distraught wailings of an Arran mother, who has had her eight sons lost at sea, over the drowned corpse of the ninth, who dies within a few days of the eighth, are horribly depicted, the calm forming the while a dire obligato to her murrainings. The air of the whole is one of unrelieved gloom and misfortune borne for the most part with callous fatalism.

Though realism is necessary to a play, it may go too far, and with Mr. Synge it becomes morbid. We have horror for horror's sake, a horror that is unrelieved by any noble feeling or by any of the better and higher sentiments of humanity. He rouses our emotions, he can stir in us feelings of dread and commiseration, but he does it without having any apparent purpose or any higher end in view. His play is, in a word, rather a "shocker" than a tragedy. I verily believe that, had he produced it before an audience of ancient Greeks, he would have shared the fate of the dramatist who was condemned to pay a heavy fine for making the people un-

happy. Yet I do not despair of Mr. Synge. If he can learn to avoid the morbid, and to take a saner and less crabbed view of existence, I think he may be capable of writing a really valuable play, a play which, while it is healthy, shall yet be effective. If we could arrive at a mean between Mr. Synge and A. E. we would have the ideal. But as it is I think that, perhaps, there is greater hope of Mr. Synge becoming healthy minded than of A. E. developing the true faculty of dramatic effectiveness. Perhaps, however, some new author may arise who will be endowed with true qualities of the successful dramatist. On the production of such a man largely depends the ultimate success or failure of the National Theatre.

CHANEL.

March 5

The National Theatre Society's performances last week at the Molesworth Hall were fairly well attended, but not so well as they deserved. A's "*Deirdre*" was reproduced, Miss MacShibbalaigh in the title-role, and she played the part excellently. Mr. J. M. Synge's "*Riders to the Sea*," which was printed in *Saulna* last year, was produced for the first time, and its tragic beauty powerfully affected the audience. We think, however, Mr. Synge could get his effects without the introduction of the body of a drowned man on the stage—this is the cheap trick of the Transpoutine dramatists. We have seen the sea in its role of the All-Devouring and Ridentless, but there is another aspect in which Irish eyes see it—the All-Purifying and All-Pitying, and we hope to see the National Theatre Society showing us in that aspect one of these days. The east wind does not always blow on the Irish soul, and there is mirth still in Erin. Up till now our stage has not been remarkable for diffusing sunshine around, and we need sunshine badly.

Leigaro march 5

1904

Heeman Feb 29

The National Theatre.

The two plays presented by the Irish National Theatre this month are certainly gloomy in the extreme. In both, most of the *dramatis personae*, after much suffering, are killed off at the end of the play. Nor are they of the nobler kind of tragedy which carries a core of joy and comfort, through exhibiting the heroism and goodness that human beings can show in adversity, so "making of their necessities glorious gain," or which teach some great moral lesson, as do tragedies of Shakespeare, in which the fate of a Macbeth, Hamlet, or an Othello is shown to follow from the weakness and error of the man himself. No. "Deirdre" and "Riders to the Sea" belong to the class of hopeless tragedies, showing helpless beings suffering through no fault of theirs, from external powers or resistless fate. In "The Fate of the Children of Usnach" the only crime is the flight of Deirdre with Naisi, the man she loves, to avoid a loveless marriage with Conchobar. True, in some of the primitive versions Deirdre is already the wife of Conchobar before her departure with Naisi, but this is not Mr. Russell's version, and in any case the sympathy of all the story-tellers is with the hapless lovers. In "Riders to the Sea" the Arran fishers live in a desperate struggle with the awful powers of storm and ocean, and are ever worsted in the conflict. Such tragedies have no consoling hope. They teach nothing but that the sorrow of life is unavoidable—which it is not.

Pure and Beautiful.

HOWEVER let us be thankful now-a-days for any drama so pure and beautiful. "Deirdre," notwithstanding the great beauty of its tone and language, I have always considered tedious, and, in its conclusion, feeble. It was exceedingly well acted last week, Miss Walker especially playing the heroine finely. The dresses (designed by the author) were lovely and appropriate. "Riders to the Sea"—one scene, a mere situation though it be—shows much greater dramatic power. The atmosphere of the wild west coast and sea, and the piety, superstition, and gloom of the peasants is finely caught. The scourge, relentless fate, borne with fear and patient sorrow by the women, is full of pathos. Like "In the Shadow of the Glen," the play struck many as gruesome, and Mr. Synge would do well to avoid bringing corpses on the stage in his next play; but the power and poetry are certainly in the play. It is not really an acting play. It reads better than it acts. But Mr. Synge appears to me to show more genuine literary ability than any of the younger band of Irish playwrights, always excepting Mr. Yeats.

Lady Gregory, who had travelled all the way from her Galway home for the purpose, attended Mr. Stephen Gwynn's lecture on "The Irish National Theatre" to the Irish Literary Society in London on Saturday evening. Lady Gregory had an amusing story to tell about Mr. Synge's play "Riders to the Sea," which is one of those to be produced at the Royalty on the 26th. In the last scene "leaving" is introduced; and so far has this word funeral custom come out in Ireland, that the Dublin players desired of being able to study their parts from the life—if such a bull may be permitted. Lady Gregory, however, happily knew of an old Galway woman living in Dublin, and the players sought her out. She was quite willing to learn, but said this was the only way in her sitting-room and without a dead body. Nothing deterred by no reasonable a request, the leading gentleman at once died in the old lady's bed, and she forthwith sewed over his dead body till, says the "Daily Chronicle," we wonder what the Dublin players thought of it.

Watkins
Chapman
hands

Irish National Theatre.

Mr. Stephen Gwynn delivered an address on the Irish National Theatre at a meeting of the Irish Literary Society held at 20 Hanover square, London, on Saturday evening. He said the Irish National Theatre was worth supporting in every way. The attempt to create a national drama dated from 1877, and was initiated by Lady Gregory, Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. Edward Martin. Mr. Gwynn referred to particular plays that had been produced, and remarked that Mr. Martin's play, "The Heather Field," gripped the Irish of all classes, and was the first to earn a reputation for making people think. The movement as yet has not accomplished much in the direction of pure comedy. At the present time in Dublin he understood Gaelic plays were drawing enormous audiences. The audience waiting for Irish drama would produce the drama in time. The Irish National Theatre and the production of Gaelic plays represented their hope of seeing a great Irish drama that should excite the spirit of Ireland as it never yet had been expressed in literature. In the course of his

At 20 Hanover square, London, on Saturday night, Mr. Stephen Gwynn delivered an address to the members of the Irish Literary Society on "The Irish National Theatre," the chair being occupied by Miss Florence Keeley. Having given a short resume of the history of the National Theatre movement, Mr. Gwynn went on to deal with some of the most important plays which had been produced. "The Countess Kathleen," by Mr. Yeats, was not an unqualified success, but on the other hand, Mr. Martin's play, "The Heather Field," gripped the Irish of all classes, and was the first to earn a reputation for making people think. The movement as yet had not done much to bring out pure comedy. At the present time in Dublin he understood Gaelic plays were drawing enormous audiences. The audience waiting for Irish drama would produce the drama in time. To Mr. Gwynn's mind the great hope of the Irish drama was the way in which the writers had responded to the audience and the audience responded to them. In the course of his remarks Mr. Gwynn made reference to Mr. F. H. O'Donnell's adverse criticism of "The Countess Kathleen" prior to its first production, seeking to show that the strictures which he passed upon it were groundless. After Lady Gregory had spoken in support of the general movement, Mr. F. H. O'Donnell rose to defend his position, complaining that he had had no notice that his name was to be introduced. He protested against what he described as "a cowardly attack" upon him, and went on to give his reasons for asserting that Mr. Yeats' play was un-Catholic and un-Irish. If he had said anything otherwise of Mr. Yeats, he publicly apologised, but with regard to what he wrote concerning the play, he maintained that every word was justified, a statement that drew forth general applause. On concluding his remarks, Mr. O'Donnell displayed much emotion, and was visibly affected. Dr. Twiss also addressed the gathering, remarking that one thing especially appeared to him to be favourable to the National Theatre movement, and that was that players were interested in the National movement, which was a very great advantage. The actors were surrounded by things which were going on in their own country, whereas English actors merely lived in stagelands.

Independent Feb 29

remarks Mr. Gwynn made reference to Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell's adverse criticism of "The Countess Kathleen" about a week before it was first produced, while he also referred to the comments at the time of "The Heather Field," in which that paper pronounced, in the name of religion and nationality, against Mr. Yeats' play, namely, said Mr. Gwynn, which appeared to him to be invoked on many important occasions in Ireland. Another member of the Society also spoke against Mr. O'Donnell's criticism, which had the effect of bringing the letter to his feet. He characterised the attack upon him as a cowardly one; and proceeded to defend his last impressions of "The Countess Kathleen." In the last scene "leaving" is introduced, which, he said, put into the mouths of some of the characters expressions which were absolutely foreign to the religious instincts of the Irish people. Towards the close of his remarks Mr. O'Donnell was overpowered by his emotions, and broke down, but he added that by the play he stood, a remark that caused Father Martin, who was sitting some rows behind, to cry out, "Quite right, quite right." The audience seemed to be completely brought over to Mr. O'Donnell's side by now, and when he had not down the lecture was closed.

Mr. Stephen Gwynn made a very interesting point, in his lecture on the Irish National Theatre, given on Saturday evening to the Irish Literary Society, when he said that, unlike the writer who exercises another profession besides that of letters, the actor who does not give up the whole of his time to acting is always dubbed an amateur; and he disclaimed this title as applied to the company of players who are coming over to give their second annual performance of Irish plays in England on March 26. It is true that nearly all of them earn their living off the stage; that their actor-manager, Mr. W. G. Fay, whose acting made such an impression on the English playgoer last year, is an artisan as well as an artist; but the careful work of a company of working men and women, whose playtime for years has been given up to serious dramatic study, should no more be called amateurish than that of the professional who never does anything off the stage except perhaps play golf.

Chronicle Feb 29
Lady Gregory, who had come all the way from her Galway home to support Mr. Gwynn, had an amusing story to tell about Mr. Synge's play, "Riders to the Sea," which is one of those to be produced at the Royalty on the 28th. In the last scene, "keeping" is introduced; and so far has this weird funeral custom gone out in Ireland, that the Dublin players despaired of being able to study their parts from the life—if such a ball may be permitted. Lady Gregory, however, happily knew of an old Galway woman, living in Dublin; and the players sought her out. She was quite willing to learn, but said this would be impossible in her sitting-room, and without a dead body. Nothing deterred by so reasonable a request, the leading gentleman at once died in the old lady's bed, and she forthwith knelt over his dead body till we wonder what the Dublin neighbours thought of it.

Irish Literary Society, London

20, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY, under the management of Mr. W. G. Fay, have consented to play a matinée and evening performance for the benefit of this Society at the Royalty Theatre, on Saturday, March 26th. Five plays will be produced, the work of three playwrights, two of whom are new names.

The plays produced at the matinée will be "The King's Threshold," a drama in verse, by W. B. Yeats, in which the central figure is a poet at the court of an ancient Irish king, and two short dramas of Irish peasant life by J. M. Synge. The first of these, "In the Shadow of the Glen," is a comedy, the second, "Riders to the Sea," a tragic idyll of fisher folk in the Aran Islands. In the evening will be played "Broken Soil," by Padraic Colm, a drama, in three acts, of Irish peasant life; "The King's Threshold" will be repeated, and Mr. W. G. Fay will be seen again in Mr. Yeats' little farce, "The Pot of Broth," which was so successful last year.

The matinée will be at 2 p.m. and the evening performance at 8 p.m. Doors open at 1.30 and 7.30 p.m.

Seats, viz.:—Boxes, £4 4s. and £3 3s.; Stalls, 10/6; Dress Circle, first three rows 7/6, other rows 5/-; Upper Boxes, 4/-; Pit, 2/6; Gallery, 1/-; can be booked by application to the Secretary of this Society and also, at a higher price and with less advantage to the Society, from the usual agents. They can be booked at the Box Office of the Royalty up to March 18th, when the theatre closes.

STEPHEN GWYNN,

Hon. Secretary.

February, 1904.

Pall Mall Gazette March 26

THEATRICAL NOTES.

Those who take an interest in the development of the drama, and happen to find themselves in London and free this afternoon and evening, may be advised to pay a visit to the Royalty Theatre, where they will find a performance, in aid of the Irish Literary Society, with a programme of a particularly interesting character. It consists of various short plays written by young men in the van of the new Irish literary movement, headed by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and acted by a company composed of performers who have not adopted the stage as a profession, but, from giving up practically the whole of their rare leisure to further the good cause which they have at heart, have acquired a skill not usually expected from amateurs. The company have visited London once before, but this is their first appearance in a regular theatre.

Daily Mail March 26

NEW IRISH DRAMATIST.

A special interest attaches to the performance to be given by the Irish National Theatre Society at the Royalty Theatre this evening in that a new play by Mr. Padraic Colum, a young and hitherto unknown Irish dramatist, will be produced.

"Broken Soil" is Mr. Colum's first work, and is a drama, in three acts, dealing with Irish peasant life, and is said to be an exceedingly powerful and well-written play.

The society is also giving a matinee, at which plays by Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. J. M. Synge will be performed.

Wald March 22

MISCELLANEA.

The Irish National Theatre Society, which paid a flying visit to South Kensington last season, is this week to make another equally brief incursion into the Metropolis of the Saxe-rach. It will give one afternoon and one evening performance on Saturday at the Royalty Theatre. In the afternoon the programme will consist of *The King's Threshold*, a drama in verse, by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and two short peasant dramas by Mr. J. M. Synge, entitled *In the Shadow of the Glen* (a comedy) and *Riders to the Sea*, a tragic idyll. The evening entertainment will consist of *Broken Soil*, a three-act peasant play, a repetition of *The King's Threshold*, and Mr. Yeats's farce *The Pot of Broth*, in which Mr. W. G. Fay will repeat the admirable performance of the rustic humorist which was so much applauded last year.

Sanctuary Times
March 27

YESTERDAY'S PREMIERE

THE IRISH THEATRE AT THE ROYALTY.

On the whole, the debut of the only national theatre in this realm was a very happy one. There were three little pieces in one act: "The King's Threshold"—in verse—by Mr. W. B. Yeats; "Riders of the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen," both by Mr. J. M. Synge.

Mr. Yeats is hailed by his countrymen and by most of us as the Monteverdi of the Green Isle, but, with due admiration of his Muse and patriotic inspiration, he is more enjoyable in book form than on the boards. His imagination and his power of expression are both great, but his sense of the drama seems to get lost in the fertility of his imagery. He holds us by cadence, not by action and characterization. It must be pleasant to read this little play, in which the poet by the grace of God has eased about his king encircled by rot poppils. But on the stage, somehow, the theme seems prosaically and slightly wearisome. It might stand a better chance if acted by professional players of the highest rank, but in it beyond the range of well-mentioned amateurs, whose dealing with rhythm betrays inexperience and stifle.

If Mr. Yeats is a poet born, and a dramatist merely by force of will and desire of conquest, Mr. Synge is a writer in whom there lurks a poetic vein, but whose dramatic gift is manifest. He has been forecasted by Meyermaers in the poemist plot that underlies the "Riders of the Sea"—"the sea that exacts its tribute in the souls of the people"—but for all that the little play struts home and creates a dramatic effect. It is a vivid picture of life on the Irish coast, of the sorrows of the lowly, of the singular restraint of the Celtic race in moments of great affliction. The end of the playlet was too much upon our nerves, but it gripped the audience, and the acting of Mr. W. G. Fay and of the Demoiselles Lavelle, Allgood, and Vernon gave a nice taste of the dramatic temperament generally credited to all Irish folk. "The last picture of the iron," "In the Shadow of the Glen," was a mere joke—something à la George Bernard Shaw with an Irishish touch for final note—but, again, it was indicative of histrionic promise. The show of an old peasant husband feigning death in order to see what his young wife might do, who is truly "of the soil," and Mr. Synge, with a devious hand, makes the most of the complication. His actors, too, helped to maintain the quaintness of the conceit. They played as if it were a very serious affair, but from time to time they cast a roguish glance into the audience and made us understand that the picture, seemingly grim, was all "blarney." Thereupon everybody laughed—even the Irish Secretary and C.-B., both present, and for once whose party feelings. Evidently the Irish theatre is destined to play a considerable part in the esthetic evolution of the sister-nations.

J. T. GREIN.

Referee March 27

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

NEW PLAYS AT THE ROYALTY.

THE Irish National Theatre deserves the attention and support of all good friends of the drama. For the performance given yesterday afternoon and evening by the members of the society have an interest beyond that which is so well served by the Gaelic League, which designs to keep alive the national spirit in the Irishman. You need not be a good Irishman to wish well to such a cause. You need not be an Irishman to wish such an entertainment as that which was provided by the Irish National Theatre, or to sympathize with the feelings of pride and enthusiasm with which the members of the society are animated. The ladies and gentlemen who were once invited in order to take part in the performance would hardly have been more cordially welcomed in Dublin than

they were in London, nor they brought talent as well as faith and zeal to their work, and the Irish accent could hardly have sounded less agreeable in an Englishman's ear than it may have sounded to the most patriotic Irishman among the audience. The performers, one and all, spoke with an Irish accent, but so long as the members of the society do not speak in Irish, no Englishman with any ear for music could find in that a cause for complaint.

The subjects of all the five plays given yesterday afternoon and evening were distinctively Irish.

"The King's Threshold."

by Mr. W. B. Yeats, is more imaginative and poetical in conception than in execution, for the verse is not strikingly lofty, and the action of the play until it nears the end, where it quickens wonderfully, is undramatic.

Leannehan, the chief poet of Ireland, has refused to eat bread again until King Gairse restores their ancient rights to the poets. The starving poet is entrusted to eat, first by his ladies of the Court, then by the Royal princess, and by his own sweetheart, whose appeal avails nothing more than the rest. Finally comes the King, bringing a loaf with his own hands. Still Leannehan refuses, and the King threatens that the poet's people shall die by the halter on the death of their master. So they are set to use their persuasions with the poet, and one after another bids him die rather than surrender the rights of the poets. The King, moved by their high and noble spirit, offers her crown to the poet, as one having more power than he, and the poet takes the proffered crown, and, not to be outdone in magnanimity, places it again on the King's head.

Mr. J. M. Synge, the author of the two little plays which followed at the afternoon performance, has a more sense of the theatrical proportions than Mr. Yeats, and is able to produce very clearly, in good nervous English (if we may say so without offence), the "atmosphere" of Irish life. He writes the humbler classes in language distinguished for its literary character, yet free from showy effects of literary splendour.

"Riders from the Sea."

he tells, with dignity and pathos, how a poor mother, whose six elder sons, all but one, and their father have been claimed by the sea, is still mourning the drowning of a son when the dead body of the last of his race, killed by accident, is brought in. The sentiment is unstrained, unadorned, and extremely touching.

"In the Shadow of the Glen."

confirms the impression that Mr. Synge has the instinct of the theatre and an Irishman's natural share of the gift of humour. Thoroughly human is the story of Nora Burke, who is married to an elderly farmer, who is supposed to be lying dead when the play begins. But the old man is simply practising a trick upon his young wife, who is not inconsiderable. A passing tramp, to whom she offers hospitality, is left alone to watch the body while Nora goes off to find Dara, a young herd, and there is a good comic scene, when the old man addresses the tramp, and asks for his sickle to be placed beside him in his bed. There is the promise of a striking effect—the pun is accidental—when Dara returns with Nora. The conclusion is unconventional, unexpected, yet not so unrealistic as it may seem in a bald narrative. The extended husband turns his wife out of the cottage, and she goes off with the tramp, while the mean-spirited Dara stays to drink with the lonely old man.

In the evening Mr. Yeats's little play was given again, followed by "Broken Bed," a little piece of peasant life by Mr. Padraic Colum, a young man whose work is said to have stimulated discussion in Dublin, and Mr. Yeats's last Irish farce, "The Pot of Broth," which was produced last year.

The actors and actresses taking part in the performances played generally with an intelligent and sympathetic understanding of the authors' intentions, and in some cases with very remarkable aptitude for the stage. Mr. Synge, who has the born dramatist's faculty of stirring the emotions, gave the players the best of their opportunities; and Miss Honor Lavelle, as the old woman in "Riders from the Sea," Miss Sarah Allgood and Miss Emma Vernon, as the two daughters, acted very feellingly; and the nameless auxiliary parts were one and all so well played that the piece lost nothing of its artistic value in the general interpretation. Mr. W. G. Fay distinguished himself particularly by his performance of the tramp of "In the Shadow of the Glen." His alarm at being left alone with a dead body was expressed without exaggeration, and his attitude towards the husband and the wife was a choice morsel of comedy. The young wife was played with a touch of nature by Miss Nee Birchbligh, whose name, as it stands in good Irish in the programme, is easier for an Englishman to write than to read.

MORRIS.

THE ROYALTY THEATRE.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

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PERFORMANCES OF PLAYS BY THE
Irish National Theatre Society
AT THE
ROYALTY THEATRE
DEAN STREET, SOHO

ON SATURDAY, MARCH 26TH
At 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

At the Matinée will be presented—

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“IN THE SHADOW OF THE GLEN”

AND

“RIDERS TO THE SEA”

By J. M. SYNGE

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the Irish Literary Society.

STEPHEN GWYNN,
Hon. Secretary.

Among those present at the performances of the Irish National Theatre Society, at the Royalty Theatre on Saturday afternoon and evening, were the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen, Lady Marjorie Gordon, the Hon. George Wyndham, Lord Monteagle, the Hon. Alice Spring Rice, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Sir James Mathew, Lady Margaret Sackville, Mr. L. L. Courtney, Mr. Henry James, the Rev. Stopford Brooke, Mr. Gordon Craig, Mr. Hugh Law, M.P., Mr. Carruthers Gould, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Hinkson (Katherine Tynan), and Mrs. Emery. The dramatists whose pieces were represented, Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. J. M. Synge, were present, as was also Lady Gregory, who has done so much towards making the English-speaking reader familiar with the old Irish heroic tales.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE

PERFORMANCE AT THE ROYALTY THEATRE, LONDON.

(FROM OUR REPORTERS)

The Royalty Theatre, Dean street, was crowded both in the afternoon and evening on Saturday when the members of the Irish National Theatre Company, under the direction of Mr. W. G. Fay, produced a series of Irish plays. Close on twelve months ago the National Theatre Company paid its first visit to London and made its first effort on this side of the water at Irish drama. The visit was very successful, and the small hall in South Kensington engaged on that occasion was hardly adequate to accommodate all those who sought admission. The management acted wisely in procuring a much more commodious theatre for the present engagement. It is a pity to take as evident evidence of the spirit which the National Theatre has awakened that not only was the Royalty crowded in every part, but that the audience included many distinguished men and women both in literature and in art. Conspicuous among the large and representative attendance were to be seen Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Mr. George Wyndham, M.P.; Mr. Thomas Shaw, M.P.; Mr. Leonard Courtney, ex-M.P.; Lady Gregory, Hon. Ed. Blais, M.E.; Mr. W. E. Yeats, Mr. Denis O'Sullivan, Mr. Hugh Law, M.P., and many others. The audience also included many well-known London dramatic critics.

The plays produced as the two performances were—"The King's Threshold," and "A Pet of Broth," by W. B. Yeats; "Riders to the Sea," by J. M. Synge; and "Broken Sil," by Padraic Colum. The cast included—Messrs. F. J. Fay, P. J. Kelly, Gen. Roberts, Seumas O'Sullivan, Sheridan Neil, T. Keeler, Mrs. Fay, Mr. Wright, P. Mac Shuibhéal, the Messrs. Maria Nic Shuibhéal, Mrs. Lavinia Nic Shuibhéal, Sara Wood, Henry Lawrence, Emma Vernon, Dorcas Gunning, &c.

It is not our intention to offer any detailed criticism on the plays produced nor to enter upon the stories told by them, as they are familiar to the Irish public, and, as they have secured the public approval in Dublin both for their literary style and dramatic effect, what is of much moment and interest in connection with the productions in London is how far the plays were successfully produced and how far the productions on their merits attracted the public interest and to public notice. These questions may be answered in a word or two. From start to finish the productions were an unqualified success, and the acting on the whole was beyond all previous praise. These questions may be answered in a word or two. From start to finish the productions were an unqualified success, and the acting on the whole was beyond all previous praise. These questions may be answered in a word or two. From start to finish the productions were an unqualified success, and the acting on the whole was beyond all previous praise.

It is a very sad tale, the story of a man who was once a fisherman, and who, after being driven from his home by the famine, came to London and died in a workhouse. It was produced with wonderful effect, and although it is hardly fair to single out any one from the excellent company who took

part in the series of productions, yet Miss Sara Allgood, in the piece, was so near to perfection that it is impossible to resist the impulse to say so. We might add, however, that Miss Honor Lavelle and Miss Emma Vernon were also in the piece exceedingly good, while Mr. W. G. Fay did remarkably well. It should, of course, be mentioned that Mr. F. J. Fay displayed conspicuous ability in the part of Seamus in "The King's Threshold."

After the performance of "The King's Threshold" in the evening there were repeated calls for the author, and Mr. Yeats, who was very cordially received, addressed a few words to the audience in which he congratulated himself after having his play produced by so talented a company as that of the Irish National Dramatic Society.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE

A TRIPLE BILL IN LONDON.

Indefinite March 28

(From Our Correspondent.)

London, Sunday Night.

Under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society a series of Irish plays were produced in London on Saturday afternoon and evening by the members of the National Theatre Society. This time last year the members of the society were contented to present their plays at a West-End hall, but on Saturday evening they occupied the boards of the Royalty Theatre, St. John's. The performance met with a large measure of patronage, not only from the Irish element in this city, but also from many English folk who are interested in the drama. As the matinee the theatre was well filled, but not crowded. President amongst the occupants of the stalls was the Chief Secretary for Ireland, with a party of friends. Nobody followed with keener attention the progress of the play than Mr. Wyndham, who was frequently moved to applause, and sometimes to laughter. Other distinguished people in the audience included the leader of the Opposition, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman; Lord Aberdeen, the ex-Governor-General for Scotland, Mr. Thomas Shaw, K.T., M.P.; Mr. Leonard Courtney; and several other Irish notables present were Mr. Blake and Mr. Law, while Mr. W. E. Yeats, president of the Irish National Theatre Society, put back from his lecturing tour in America, and Denis O'Sullivan was also to the fore. The programme for the afternoon was a triple bill, and none of the plays call for detailed notice, as they have already been mentioned in Dublin. It is due to the ladies and gentlemen who participated in the performance to acknowledge at the outset that their remarks on their own parts are unimpeachable and respectively good ideas in the minds of the playwrights, and in many instances displayed ability of an uncommon order. The greatest of these was "The King's Threshold." The part of the Poet was filled by Mr. F. J. Fay with that homely shillings which has won for him a high place in the ranks of the actors of the new Irish drama. Miss Maria Nic Shuibhéal as Fíneola played with very nice sensibility the role of the poet's sweetheart. Miss Sara Allgood as the Princess Bannerman, Honor Lavelle and Miss Emma Vernon as ladies of the court, and Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan, as the pupils of Seamus, acquitted themselves with credit. The stage settings of the piece, except for the elaborate entrance, were but minimal. The absence of adequate action almost throughout, which the halting gait of the poet, in to persuade the poet, rendered the progress of the piece rather wearisome. To tell the truth, the comic parts of the play followed by Mr. J. M. Synge secured more of the credit of the audience. The first of these was "Riders to the Sea." The third piece, also by Mr. Synge, and the last of the series

was "The King's Threshold," and Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan, Miss Maria Nic Shuibhéal, Mr. F. J. Kelly, and Mr. W. G. Fay were all of the parts, which were not assigned to them. At the fall of the curtain in each instance the audience were recalled and heartily applauded. There was a triple bill for the evening performance of Mr. Fay's capable company, and the Royalty Theatre was well filled in all parts. "The King's Threshold" was again performed, and as it close scene was full of interest, which could not be denied. Mr. W. B. Yeats got a very enthusiastic reception, and in the course of his remarks mentioned that he had having done his work so admirably presented by the company. The next item was a new play—"The Broken Sil," by Mr. P. Colum. It was in three short acts. The first act was the best of the three, but the writing in it parts very good indeed. Such story as there is concerned an old father and his daughter, who settled down to life on a farm, until the wandering spirit, called the daughter again to be "on the road." There is a young farmer who professes intense love for the father's daughter, but his love-making was of an unromantic type as was never witnessed on or off the stage. The end of it was that the father and his handsome daughter went "on the road" again, taking with them only the love which he loved. The second apparently was that a daughter should stay with her father rather than take a husband. Mr. F. J. Fay as the old father was capital, and turned out the best of the little humor at his disposal. Miss Maria Nic Shuibhéal, as the father's daughter, gave a clever and sympathetic presentation of the part, while Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan as the most of a character given a little less without the necessity backing up in action. The performance closed with "The Pet of Broth," one of the most of the series, and the best of the piece, Mr. W. G. Fay in the leading part again winning and receiving warm applause.

Irish Times March 28

The Irish National Theatre Society yesterday occupied the Royalty Theatre and gave two Irish plays, the first of the series of the Irish Literary Society. In the afternoon three plays were performed, "The King's Threshold," a one-act drama in verse by Mr. W. B. Yeats. This is a delightful little sketch of the life as the court of the King, and the Irish King, in which the central figure is Seamus O'Sullivan, a young man of Ireland, ably acted by Mr. F. J. Fay. Mr. P. J. Kelly made an excellent King Guine, and the King, Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan as the Chamberlain, Mr. Seamus Allgood as the Princess Bannerman, Miss Maria Nic Shuibhéal as Seamus's sweetheart, and Miss Honor Lavelle and Miss Emma Vernon as ladies of the court. Others in the cast were—Messrs. T. Keeler, and Ryan, W. G. Fay, P. Wright, T. Davis, P. Mac Shuibhéal, and G. Roberts. Miss Dorcas Gunning, and Miss Maria Nic Shuibhéal, all of whom entered into the character of their parts most spiritedly. The second play, "Riders to the Sea," by Mr. J. M. Synge, is a tragic picture of life and death among the fisher-folk on the Aran Islands. The closing play of the afternoon was "In the Shadow of the Glen," by Mr. J. M. Synge, in which a lighter story is sketched, the story being one of a "living wake." The plays were most cordially received by the large audience, which was for the most part Irish. At the evening the "King's Threshold" was repeated, while the other two were "Broken Sil," by Mr. Padraic Colum, a drama, in three acts, of Irish peasant life; and a little farce by Mr. Yeats, "The Pet of Broth." The cast was precisely the same in each play. The performance was a complete success, and both actors and spectators were so captivated on the manner in which they carried out their work.

56 *Express* March 28

Under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society of London, the Irish National Theatre Society, of which Mr. W. B. Yeats is President, yesterday performed five plays on the Royalty stage. The President's own play, "The King's Threshold," was the opening piece in the afternoon. It goes back to days when the harp was in Ireland almost as much a symbol of power as the Cross. Next came Mr. J. M. Synge's "Riders to the Sea," a sombre picture of life and death among fisherfolk on an island off the West coast of Ireland, and the central character, that of Maurya, whom the sea robs of husband and sons, was played by Miss Honor Lavelle with feeling and insight. A lighter note was struck in the same author's play, "In the Shadow of the Glen," a peep into the home of an old Wicklow farmer, who feigns death the better to watch his young, unfaithful wife. There is a "live hawk," but the note of it is not the rickshaw kind found in Irish melodrama. Mr. Geo. Roberts as the Farmer, Maire Ní Shínbhlaigh as the Wife, Mr. P. J. Kelly as a Gallant, and Mr. W. G. Fay as a Tramp sustained the humour of the piece. In the evening "The King's Threshold" was repeated, with the addition of Mr. Yeats' "The Pot o' Broth," and Mr. Padraic Colum's "Broken Seal."

Heeman March 29

It is not to judge from the notices which appear in the *Express* that the members of the Irish National Dramatic Society have undeniably made a big hit by their performance at the Royalty Theatre on Saturday. For the first time Mr. Yeats and his fellow-workers in the movement seem to have made a genuine London dramatic success. The world, all the leading critics, with the single exception of the "Times," devoting considerable space to their notices of the performance. Furthermore, they are all, without distinction, highly eulogistic of the plays themselves and of the manner in which they are presented, and more than one of them goes so far as to assert that the advent of the new Irish Theatre marks a new era in the dramatic art of these countries. "The Morning Post," for instance, says:—While we are talking about a national contemporary drama, which does not exist, and a repertoire theatre that has no viable source of subsistence, there are swiftly accumulating in Ireland a drama that is intensely National and a company of amateur actors capable of interpreting it whatever the shape it happens to assume. Ireland has what we have not—a drama which lays the ground. It is put in its infancy; it is only equal to a fold or two at a stretch. But its steps are steady; it never seems to stumble or to take a wrong direction, and its distance will grow with its years. Much may be learned of Ireland and the Irish from the five plays acted at the Royalty on Saturday that can be learnt of England and the English from a single one of our London theatres. Mr. E. A. Douglass in the "Daily News," says "So much is being written and spoken about the amelioration of the drama that it is pleasant to record the fact that at least one of the plays produced at the Royalty Theatre on Saturday afternoon proved to be a work of uncommon aim and achievement." This, according to Mr.

Douglass, is "The Riders to the Sea" of Mr. J. M. Synge, an opinion which seems to be shared by most of the critics. The same is shown in "The Shadow of the Glen" is also warmly praised, while some writers seem to prefer Mr. Yeats' "Broken Seal." Writing of this piece, the "Daily Telegraph" critic remarks, "the writer, it is true, lacks the experience, and the stage knowledge required to give clear and definite expression to his ideas, his work, notwithstanding, is of genuine and unimpeachable value. The piece possesses that quality only too rarely met with either on the stage or in the pages of a romance, the quality of the unusual, while in the development of his theme Mr. Yeats reveals a reticence and a strenuous simplicity admirably fitted to preface in the spectators' mind a profound impression of the truth and fidelity of the picture presented." The verdict generally passed upon Mr. Yeats' play, "The King's Threshold," is that, while reaching a high level of poetry, it is a wandering in dramatic action. "The Pot o' Broth" has been produced in London before, and the critics on the present occasion continue to disagree on repeating the favourable opinion they passed on it, one of them suggesting that it would be a good stroke for a London manager to put it on as a curtain raiser. Viewing the plays as a whole, the "Westminster Gazette" says of them that "taken as a group, whilst not perhaps showing anything peculiarly Irish even subject, they exhibit a simplicity and directness that might almost be called primitive, and they well be indicative of something in the efforts of the Messrs. Fay and the Messrs. Allgood, Mac Sharrillagh, Lavelle, Emma Vernon, and Maie Ní Shínbhlaigh being especially entitled. Mr. W. G. Fay the "Morning Post" describes as "a comedian of whom we have no like, unless it be Mr. Weir." But perhaps the nearest comparison of all comes from the "Pall Mall Gazette"—"To think," it says, "that all these surprising comedians, by the time their lines are said, are back again at their work in and about Dublin!"

News by the Mail 27/2

LAST NIGHT'S THEATRES.

SUCCESSFUL IRISH PLAYS AT THE ROYALTY.

If evidence were necessary of the awakening of Irish sentiment among the nation, here it was pleasantly forthcoming yesterday at the Royalty Theatre, where afternoon and evening "hugs and merriment" were given to the world by the performance of the Irish National Theatre Society. Both at the matinee and in the evening a bright and cheering crowd of the whole of the players, having come from Dublin, it being the first occasion for the Society to appear in London theatre, presented a performance having been given previously. In the afternoon was presented "The King's Threshold," by Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. M. Synge, two pieces. "In the Shadow of the Glen" and "Riders to the Sea." The first was accompanied with a recitation of "The King's Threshold," and a one-act farce, also by Mr. W. B. Yeats, the remaining work being "Broken Seal," a three-act play by Mr. Padraic MacCormac Colum. When it is said that the members of the company are all engaged in lectures, their work must be appreciated highly creditable. In "The King's Threshold," Mr. P. J. Kelly as Rosachan, a poet, gave Mr. Yeats' words lines with considerable point, and Mr. P. J. Kelly made an imposing King Guaire. The author was

March 26
Morning Leader

Mr. W. B. Yeats is having no less than three of his plays performed today. These are "The King's Threshold" and "The Pot o' Broth"—his last given by the Irish National Theatre Society—while at Hampstead the boys and girls of the King Alfred Society's school perform "The Land of Heart's Desire," which was mounted at the Avenue Theatre some years ago.

In this way, as the "Sphere" points out, Mr. Yeats runs Mr. J. M. Barrie very close in the number of plays which he has simultaneously performed—only this difference, however, that the run of Mr. Yeats' plays are generally for one night, so that he stands less risk than his rival of dying a millionaire.

Sphere 26/2

Mr. W. B. Yeats, who returned to London from America the other day, runs Mr. J. M. Barrie very close in the number of plays that he has good fortune to have performed at one time. He differs, however, from Mr. Barrie in that his "runs" instead of being for hundreds of nights are generally for one night only, and consequently he does not suffer from the same risk of dying a millionaire. Mr. Yeats on Saturday next will be having no fewer than three plays performed in one day; these are *The King's Threshold* and *The Pot o' Broth*, which are to be given by the Irish National Theatre Society on behalf of the Irish Literary Society of London, while on the same day in Hampstead the boys and girls of the King Alfred Society's school will

perform *The Land of Heart's Desire*, a pretty play which some of us had the good fortune to see at the Avenue Theatre a great many years ago.

Whitehall Review March 24

ON Saturday next, as I duly informed you, the Irish Literary Society—I beg pardon, the Irish National Theatre Society—will appear at the Royalty Theatre in a triple bill redolent of the soil. I am told that the plays performed last year by the Society are masterpieces or classics—or may become so—and, while I have no wish to dissipate so pretty a love's young dream, yet I may be permitted, I hope, to say that I found Mr. W. B. Yeats' *Pot o' Broth*, when I tasted it last season, less satisfying than I anticipated; but then, perhaps, not having been brought up on Parnassus, I could not so readily appreciate Celtic humour. Again, with Padraic Colum's *Broken Seal*, I thought the tragedy too much in the spirit of the *Agamemnon*, and too little like the perverted utterances of the old descendants of the Basque peasantry. These were very interesting, and we shall be pleased to welcome them again, especially as we are also to have *The King's Threshold*, a new work, I believe, by Mr. Yeats, and, as I informed you, Mr. J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*—or to the sea, I am not sure which—and *In the Shadow of the Glen*—the latter being a comedy and the former a tragedy.

THE DRAMA.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

(By E. A. Baughan.)

So much is being written and spoken about the amelioration of the drama that it is pleasant to record the fact that at least one of the plays produced at the Royalty Theatre on Saturday afternoon proved to be a work of uncommon aim and achievement. The stage is a most uncompromising medium for the expression of ideas. It has a disconcerting way

tion showing the poems in a context; of emphasising surrealism, and of distinguishing between literary fancy and real imagination. Mr. W. B. Yeats is a poet of deification. If "The King's Threshold" is really an ode to the power of poetry cast in dramatic form. Sean-achie, the chief poet of Ireland, considers his craft has been inspired by the King, who has taken him to the poet's dine at the high table. That poet of honour has been reserved for the "men who ruled the world and not the men who sang it." The poet (with some loss of dignity, I think) asks, and refuses to let a morsel of food pass his lips. The King himself, his courtiers, and even Feolain, the poet's lover, plead in vain. The poet is above such low rank and natural desires. He is a deity. When the King at last offers his crown on bended knee, the poet declines. The poet is satisfied.

There is but one dramatic moment in the little play, and except for that moment the scene might have been better expressed in an ode. The moment is, luckily enough, the climax. There is certainly a thrill when the king makes obeisance to the art of poetry which has given glory to their crowns in the past. A blank verse ode is one of a very sustained grandeur, and the actors, especially Mr. F. J. Jay as the poet, charmed it with a monotony of cadence and rhythm that became very wearisome in the end. I daresay Mr. Yeats himself is in love with that chant, but it is really an attempt to give the verse a sound-value beyond that which its metre and rhythm have intrinsically. The result is a flat form of some

Mr. Yeats's play is only Irish in its decorations—the main idea is not particularly national. A delightful ball was given by one of the characters. Speaking to the fasting poet he said: "If you would eat something you would join us." You have these thoughts because you are hungry." Mr. Yeats obviously has more sense of humor than is generally ascribed to poets, but occasionally his modernism is red. For instance, "You have no luck, old man," and "Come out of that!" struck a curiously inappropriate note.

To my mind there is more real poetry in Mr. Synge's "Riders to the Sea." It is just a piece of national life transferred to the stage, and the author has the dramatic gift of being able to create the right atmosphere. His peasants are alive and have the feeling of the land. They feel the horror that befell Maurya, an old peasant woman whose six sons have waged the eternal fight of man against the forces of their implacable foe. All but one, Bartley, have fallen in the fight—"some of them were killed, and some were drowned." But the fifth son, is missing, and the devoted mother refuses to be comforted by the thought that he has probably found a "clean grave in the North." She means over the fate that has taken all her sons from her, and attempts to prevent Bartley from taking another boat to market. But he is a man of his art without a blind word from her, but her two sons have died, and the mother is falling. The

The vein of humour in the second of Mr. Synge's plays, "In the Shadow of the Glen," is peculiarly rich of the soil. From first to last it is a fantasy on national characteristics. There an elderly husband ^{and} ~~sitting~~^{settling} a trap for his young wife by pretending to be dead, and have discussed the pressure of overbearing his successor with her before she has even been introduced as character and the place for their future life; there he is, of course, the dénouement of his coming to life (with a thick stick) at the crucial moment. But when Dan Burke orders his wife out of the cottage and sends a tramp with her because he has had too much to say for himself (although this is the only scene where the tramps appear), and the woman, in the absence of the woman, who had gone out to find Michael Dara, a young herd willing to take the husband's place, we have something new in the way of grim humour. And this is accentuated by the unexpected end of the play.

In the third play, "The Riders to Sea," based upon his domestic life, Dara's mood changes with racial quickness, and he and the herd sit down to make a night of it. It says much for the author's certain touch that he saw the grim fun of the situation. It was also very Irish of him to see that the women, losing their heads solemnly of bearing and voice, they made this strange ending to the play seem possible.

Both these plays were extremely well acted by Miss Eleanor Lavelle (Maurya), Mr. W. G. Fay (Bartley), Miss Allgood and Miss Emma Vernon (the daughters), Mr. George Roberts (Dan Barker), Miss Maure vic Shublingish (Nora), Mr. P. J. Kelly (Michael Darn), and Mr. W. G. Fay (the Tramp). It was indeed refreshing to witness performances so free from artificial tricks of the stage. Also in Mr. Smyke I think we have a dramaticist who has something new to say.

Judging by the moult of Mr. W. B. Yeats's play, "The King's Threshold," which was produced at the Royalty Theatre on Saturday, ancient Ireland must have been a Free Trade country. The loaf of bread which was offered to tempt the starving poet to eat was an exact reproduction in size, shape, and quality of the Free Trade loaf exhibited some time ago in the window of our office in Fleet-street—the most admired loaf, we are proud to think, that London has ever seen.

Another thing that Mr. Yeats's little play taught us was that they had Mayors in ancient Ireland long before his lordship of London had a predecessor. A Mayor of Kinnara figures as a character in the play, so that we now know that Mayors originally came from the County

IRISH NATION.

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the footlights. "The King's Threshold," doubt
could make even a beginning. For there is much that
is poetic and attractive alike in subject and
treatment, but its dramatic qualities—and after all
these are the chief desiderata at the theatre—are
scarcely discernible. Nor were its chances improv
ed by the slow, dull, monotonous manner adopted
by the performers of delivering the lines extracted

The interest attached to the remaining plays, four in number, is of a very distinct and assured order, inasmuch as each deals after its own peculiar fashion with a decisive phase of national life or national character. All are, in a greater or less degree, realistic in the old sense, when they spring, as they do, from the life of the nation. The author has here made a close and sympathetic study of Irish peasantry, their humors, their strange customs, their occasional legends—immature though these may frequently be—less æsthetic, their pathos. Here, then, we have a series of pictures of a certain type of Irish life, as it is, and as it has been. And although in each instance the background is of the humblest and least romantic character, its grey and sombre tones are softened and illuminated from time to time by various flashes of fantastic power, which serve occasionally to attract the attention of the Celtic imagination. Perhaps the most striking of these is the picture of the Irish playboys, in "Broken Dolls." The writer, it is true, lacks the experience and the stage knowledge required to give clear and definite expression to his ideas; his work, notwithstanding, is of genuine and unimpaired vital power. At the root of the idea is the thought which inspired Jack Kipling when he produced "The Chemist," the recognition of that irresistible force which dominates outer nature, compelling them at a given moment to abandon home, friends, loved ones, everything in order to answer the summons of this vital call. The impulse is not a doubtless, a legacy from our savage forefathers—it will be remembered with what modesty Mr. Jack London handled it in the case of the manne born of his clever sister, "The Call of the Wild." In Mr. Colin's play, the appeal comes to a young man of the Irish race, and the appeal is to a more direct and more forcible end, to take his father upon the picture of Maude Houshion and his father, upon to rescue them

immense life, turning their backs upon their contemporaries and its "bit of land," on Maire's brook-scented meadows, and upon her cherished forest, Bright MacConnell. The piece possesses that quality, only too rarely met with, either on the stage or in the pages of a romance, the quality of the unusual, while in the development of his theme Mr. Colm reveals a refinement and a strenuous simplicity admirably fitted to produce in the spectator's mind a profound impression of the truth and fidelity of the picture presented.

Mr. Yeats's farce, "A Pot of Broth," has already been seen in London, and there is, consequently, no need to discuss its merits again. But "Riders to the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen" are new. Both are signed by Mr. J. M. Synge, and, although of unequal value, both are descriptive of the Irish. The first is a tragedy, the second embodies a comic idea.

In "Riders to the Sea" the author has already been anticipated by the Dutch playwright, Heyermeier; the circumstance, nevertheless, is of no great importance, a woman, mother of five stalwart sons, has seen each in succession go down to the sea, never to return. While one remains to her she has known no peace, no rest; in his absence she is obsessed with the belief that he too will share his brothers' fate. Then comes the news that Bartley also has perished. To the astonishment of her friends, Maurya has no tear, utter no complaint. "Now I shall be able to sleep at night, untroubled by any thought of loss or disaster," that is all she has to say. The note struck by the writer is intensely pathetic, and, in a sense, supremely human. "In the Shadow of the Glen" is little more than a humorous episode set in tragic surroundings. It is a vignette of the life of the curious blending of the farcical and the serious genius that is discovered in the Celtic disposition. And it is to be noted that precisely in proportion as the writers for the Irish National Theatre are successful, so, also, are the performers. In "The Threshold of the King" the impetuous and technical disfigurement of these actors was only too apparent. But the actors they found themselves called upon to handle work of a different kind, work for which, racially and temperamentally, nature had suited them, well-nigh all traces of amateurism or awkwardness disappeared. Nor could anything more delightful be conceived than the script of the refined Irish legend, the musical accompaniment was only too apparent. But the actors they found themselves called upon to handle work of a different kind, work for which, racially and temperamentally, nature had suited them, well-nigh all traces of amateurism or awkwardness disappeared. Nor could anything more delightful be conceived than the script of the refined Irish legend, the musical accompaniment was only too apparent.

William Charles Gaudin
March 28

IRISH LAYS IN LONDON.

It was some time ago, perhaps that the actors of the Irish National Theatre were in London last year. They were only there, like May Day, for one day to May, but people who saw them, and who know what is what, said then that at least there are no actors better at leaving undone the things that ought not to be done. They came again on Saturday, and now some others of us can say so too. Plenty of actors who have acted in London and done less but not for the Irishmen are amateurs—can do with it as far as these have got the actor's art they have got it without its malady. No one in the whole company booms or trumpets, or frisks about when he is better quiet, or puts on intense looks for nothing. They leave off their damnable poses for nothing—"which is really the right way to go about it, as people began to suspect the other day when they saw 'Everyman.' Roughly speaking, the way Mr. F. J. 'Everyman' acted 'Everyman' is the way the Irish National Theatre Company

There was another memorable thing in Saturday's performances at the Royal Theatre. Five performances acted altogether—there were perhaps, Mr. F. M. Synge's "Riders to the Sea," a little tragedy of great beauty and power. Its subject is the drowning of the last and the last but one of the six sons of an Aran Island widow. As one heard it one was constantly struck and moved, as one is when witnessing actual tragic calamity, by its quietude where tragedy in books is normal. Take, for instance, the scene where the widow's two daughters have just identified some clothes taken from the body of their brother Michael, who has been drowned three days before and carried northward by the tide to Donegal.

Cushman: Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keep him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

Nora: And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher but a bit of an old shirt and a pluin stocking!

An author with no tragic genius would not have been content to write that. He would have feared it was not doing justice to the emotion of the situation. Nor would any minor author have ventured on the perfectly managed discord introduced just before the final tragic cadence. It is when the body of the last son, Bartley, who has just been drowned, is brought to the neighbours into the cottage, where the boards the widow has bought for him to make a coffin for his brother Michael are leaning against the wall—

Cushman to one of the men: Maybe, yourself and Kannon would make a coffin when the sun rises. I have fine white boards, I should be right, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

The men (looking at the boards): Are there nails with them?

Cushman: There are not, Colm; we didn't think of the nails.

Another Man: It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffin she's seen used already.

Cushman: It's getting odd she is, and broken.

Without ever for a moment getting upon the literary high horse, Mr. Synge has written a play steeped in the august and quiet sadness of Greek tragedy. To do this in the space is a wonderfully tight piece of dramatic packing, simply as a matter of technique, and the note Mr. Synge's stitching is looked into the more curiously close and cunning does it look. The technical use made of the coffin boards, the rope, the "young priest" (who only exists "off"), and a dozen other carefully picked details is quite early Sardouian or middle Thackerian in its acute neatness. There was a good deal of neatness and of diverting observation and humour in the same author's comedy "In the Shadow of the Glen," but nothing of such exceptional quality as he shows in "Riders to the Sea," and the comedy has a queer, clipped end that makes you think the curtain must have slipped by accident.

It was on Mr. Padraic Colm that his three-act play "Broken Bolt" should have been played a few hours after "Riders to the Sea." The first-act tragedy took the colour out of the second-rate one dreadfully. Mr. Colm's dialogue has good things in it, and there is one good character, Con Hourican, but there is no taste of the mouth about speeches like Bright's "You were made to burn clear and bright, but you were made to smoulder and smoulder." And, so on with a metaphor thrown out into its furthest recesses, like one of Mr. Pizzaro's or the burlesque one about the "quick current of a patriot heart" in "The Critic." The old fiddle's speech to his daughter, "Ah, child, child, you could not get one speech out of her [his fiddle], but it is lucky—have what tamer you like out of me," is ludicrous; the virtually you will find it in "Hamlet," the speech of living emotion does not pan to facile flourish like "My country is my heart, and

that's black and bitter enough," or "There is no wind will make a storm in your blood," or in least consecutive braces of antitheses as in "You've many sons of power, Maire—the power to soften and to make hard, to madden and to make quiet." Passion does not see the end of her sentences like that when she begins them. We must own, too, that there is a yucking in the initial thumbs when characters said so much about there being "some good in me" and a man being a man and not running away from his battles, and so forth. We have no Gaelic, and so we do not know if these turns of phrase come out of it, but if they do there is more of the idiom of the Gael in smouldering English phrase than we know. Mr. Colm would altogether like one who has only half succeeded as yet in working the current theatrical convention out of his system, a cleavage which Mr. Synge has made complete, except so far as it may be said that the best of the French and Scandinavian "tips" in the mechanics of dramatic construction are current in Ireland or here.

The other two plays given on Saturday were Mr. W. B. Yeats's extremely amusing "Pot of Broth," which was noticed here last year, and his verse play "The King's Threshold." Mr. Yeats was the founder and is the stay of the Irish National Theatre, and it finds the severest test of its members' intellectual quality in the delivery of his fine verse. On Saturday he was "King's Threshold," a piece of symbolism charged with all kinds of delicate and obscure values and intentions, was wonderfully unmarred as a whole, and Mr. F. J. Fay delivered the hero's particularly difficult lines with remarkable fire and fervour, and with a kind of austere romanticism sometimes recalling Mr. F. R. Benson's delivery of great verse. Of Mr. Yeats's work we say less here than of that of his colleagues, because his reputation is already assured with all good judges, and it is enough to say generally that his latest work betrays it. The event of Saturday for English playgoers was the revelation of the full power of Mr. Synge.

The acting of the company is best spoken of as a whole. It has two exceptionally capable actors in Mr. W. G. Fay and Mr. F. J. Fay, and an actress with a great natural endowment in the lady who acts under the name of Maire Nic Shuibhlaigh. But the chief achievement is common to the whole company. They have seized and acted upon the truth that the way is to do big things in art, as it is the way to get into all the other subdivisions of the kingdom of Heaven, is to become as a little child, if you can do it without thinking all the time what an interesting child you are. Without any kind of self-conscious individualism, these Irish actors have contrived to reach back past most of the facilities that have grown upon the ordinary theatre of commerce and get a fresh, clear hold on their craft in its elements. They know how to let things alone; how to stand still when nothing is to be done in the way of enhanced artistic effect by moving; how to save up their energy and get rare and brief passages of real poetry; how to fade into the background when attention has to be concentrated on a single other character—the occasion on which the ordinary theatre has gradually forced itself into more and more grotesques and violent pranks with unnatural light. It is to be of keen interest, not to be seen only but to everyone who cares about the theatre, to see what more will be built on these good foundations.

Manhattan Guardian

28th

IRISH PLAYS IN LONDON.

It was to some purpose that the actors of the Irish National Theatre were in London last year. They were only there, like May flies, for one day in May, but people who saw them, and who know what is what, said then that at least there are no actors better at leaving London or things that ought not to be done. They came again on Saturday, and now some others of us can say so too. Plenty of actors who have acted longer and done less but act—for the Irishmen are amateurs—can do as well as things that the Irishmen do not try. But as far as these have got the actor's art they have got it without the tramp, or the Irish actor when he is better quiet, or puts on intense looks for nothing. They "leave off their damnable faces and begin"—which is really the right way to go about it, as people began to suspect the other day when they saw "Everyman." Roughly speaking, the way Mr. Peel's company acted "Everyman" is the way the Irish National Theatre Company acts always.

There was another memorable thing in Saturday's performances at the Royal Theatre. Five short plays were acted altogether—there were performances afternoon and evening—and one of them, Mr. J. M. Synge's "Riders to the Sea," was a little tragedy of great beauty and power. Its subject is the drowning of the last and the last but one of the six sons of an Aryan Island widow. As one heard it one was constantly struck and moved, as in one witnessing actual tragic calamity, by its quietude where tragedy in books is noisier. Take for instance, the scene where the widow's two daughters have just identified some clothes taken from the body of their brother Michael, who has been drowned nine days before and carried northward by the tide—No Donaghai!

Cathleen: Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and not one to see him but the black bags that he's lying on the sea?

Nora: And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great power and might but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking!

An author with no tragic genius would not have been content to write that. He would have feared it was not doing justice to the emotion of the situation. Nor would any minor author have ventured on the perfectly managed disquiet introduced just before the final tragic catastrophe. It is where the body of the last son, Michael, who has just been drowned, is brought by neighbors into the cottage, where the boards the widow has bought for him to make a coffin for his brother Michael are leaning against the wall—

Cathleen (to one of the men): Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun goes. We've fine white linen here for yourself. You're thinking Michael has himself brought, and I'll give you a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

Michael (looking at the boards): Are there nails with that?

Cathleen: There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

Michael: "Mae!" Is a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

Cathleen: It's getting old she is, and broken.

Without ever for a moment getting upon the literary high horse, Mr. Synge has written a play steeped in the austere and quiet sadness of Greek tragedy.

To do this in the space is a wonderfully tight piece of dramatic packing, simply as a matter of technique, and the more Mr. Synge's stitching is looked into the more curiously close and cunning does it look. The technical way made of the coffin boards, the rope, the "young priest" (who only exists "off" and is not a drawn other priest) (who only exists "off" and is not a drawn other priest) carefully picked details in quite early Scandinavian or middle Thematic in its style neatness. There

was a good deal of neatness and of diverting observation and humour in the same actor's comedy "In the Shadow of the Glen," but nothing of such exceptional quality as he shows in "Riders to the Sea," and the comedy has a queer, clipped end that makes you think the curtain must have slipped by accident.

It was hard on Mr. Padraic Colum that his three-act play "Broken Sella" should have been played a few hours after "Riders to the Sea." The first rate tragedy took the colour out of the second rate one dreadfully. Mr. Colum's dialogue has good things in it, and there is one good character, Con Hourican, but there is no taste of the mouth about speeches like Bridget's "You were made to burn clear and bright, but we MacConnells smoulder and smoulder," &c., and so on with a metaphor followed out into its furthest recesses, like that of Mr. Finen's or the burlesque one about the "quick current of a patriot heart" in "The Critic." The old fiddler's speech to his daughter, "Ah, child, child, you could not get one speech out of her [his fiddle], but you can have what tunes you like out of me," is literary—virtually you will find it in "Hamlet"; the speech of living emotion does not run to facile figurative like "My country is my heart, and that's black and bitter enough," or "There is to wind will make a storm in your blood," or to meet consecutive phrases of antitheses as in "You've many sorts of power, Mairn—the power to act and to make hard, to madden and to make quiet." Passion does not see the end of her sentences like that when she begins them. We must own, too, there was a pricking in critical thumbs when characters said so much about there being some good in men, as in a man being a man and not running away from his battles, and so forth. We have up Gaelic, and so we do not know if these turns of phrase come out of it, but if they do there is more of the idiom of the Gael in middling English plays than we know. Mr. Colum writes altogether like one who has only half succeeded as yet in working the current theatrical convention out in a new and clear sense which Mr. Synge has made complete, except so far as he may be said that the best of the French and Scandinavian "tips" in the mechanics of dramatic construction are current in Ireland or here.

The other two plays given on Saturday were Mr. W. B. Yeats's extremely amusing "Pot of Broth," which was noticed here last year, and his verse play "The King's Threshold." Mr. Yeats was the founder and is the star of the Irish National Theatre, and it finds the severest test of its members' intellectual quality in the delivery of his fine verse. On Saturday his "King's Threshold," a piece of symbolism charged with all kinds of delicate and elusive values and intentions, was wonderfully unmarred as a whole, and Mr. F. J. Fay delivered the hero's particularly difficult lines with remarkable ease and fervour, and the younger kind of austere romanticism something of the kind of Mr. E. Benson's delivery of great verse. Of Mr. Yeats's work we may say less than that of his colleagues, because his reputation is already assured with all good judges, and it is enough to say generally that his latest work betrays it. The event of Saturday for English playgoers was the revelation of the full power of Mr. Synge.

The acting of the company is best spoken of as a whole. It has two exceptionally capable actors in Mr. G. G. Fay and Mr. F. J. Fay, and an actress with a great natural endowment in the lady who acts under the name of Maire Neill (Shakhsblagh). But the chief achievement is common to the whole company. They have seized and acted upon the truth that the way to do big things in art, as it is to be the kingdom of all the other subdivisions of the kingdom of Heaven, is to be one as a little child, if you can

do it without thinking all the time what an interesting child you are. Without any kind of self-conscious infanticism, these Irish actors have contrasted to each back past most of the facilities that have grown upon the ordinary theatre of commerce and get a fresh, clear hold on their craft in its elements. They know how to let things stand still when nothing is to be done in the way of enhanced artistic effect by moving; how to save up voice and gesture for one or two great passages; how to let their faces fade into the background when attention has to be concentrated on a single other character—the occasion on which the actor's face there has gradually faded itself into more and more grotesque and violent pranks with unnatural light. It will be of keen interest, not to Irishmen only but to every actor, to see how these artists to see what more will be built on these good foundation.

Morning Leader 28

IRISH NATIONAL DRAMA.

SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTIONS BY THE THEATRE SOCIETY.

The Irish National Theatre Society introduced itself to London on Saturday, giving an afternoon and an evening performance at the Royal Theatre. As many as five plays were produced, and the success of the venture should do much to encourage the society in its efforts both in Ireland and here. In the afternoon the program commenced with "The King's Threshold," Mr. W. B. Yeats's poetic play in one act. "The King's Threshold" is, one may say at once, more suited for the study than the stage.

The story of Beathan, the chief poet of Ireland, who refuses to act until King Gualaire shall have restored him to the honored place at the royal table, loses its greatest interest in translation. So limited an action is it that the heavy poetry of Yeats's speeches cannot warm the interest of an audience, even when they are stirred with the passion that Mr. F. J. Fay displayed. What most thrills the reader of the printed page lost, strangely enough, the power in poetry to stir the feelings.

The other items at the matinee were from the pen of Mr. J. M. Synge. "Riders to the Sea" is a stern and pitiless study of the pains of cottage life in the West of Ireland, and Maurya, the old bent center of the household, has yielded them up to turn to the cruel jaws of the sea—all but Bartley, the younger Michael, has found a clean grave in the wild north waves. There are the white planks ready in the cottage to make a coffin, but the corpse of the dead shall be found. And then, last of all, Bartley is brought in, a mangled corpse, and old Michael has given all his care to the sea. The end is unnecessarily protracted, but Miss Honor Lavelle as Maurya acted so well that the audience, who appeared strained. Admirable, too, was the acting of Miss Kara Allgood and Miss Emma Verna as the daughters.

"In the Shadow of the Glen" proved to be a dramatic play of Irish humor told with a restrained whimsicality and a bubbling sense of fun. The picture of old Dan Ryan, the old man who has been supposed to have died, to face his young wife already making love to a youthful maid, provoked a few murmurs.

The conclusion, moreover, was a staggering and surprising surprise. It would surely be a good stroke for a London manager to put on this play. It is a play of a certain rather-proved he could obtain the same delicate interpretation as the Irish playgoers get on Saturday. Those who attend the play under the name of "Irish," as it is spoken on our stage, would give a warm welcome. It is a play to be put on the stage, a rhythmic and a play of these plays from Ireland.

THE FIVE-LEAVED SHAMROCK.

While England is busy discussing the desirability of establishing a National Theatre, which means and can mean in present conditions a theatre that is national only in that the State stands the racket, Ireland is getting on very well with hers, and that without subsidy, schools of acting, or, indeed, the aid of the profession. The Irish National Theatre Society is made up of writers whose sole wish is to have their say about their country in the theatre, and actors whose sole qualification is a quick and sure, because native, insight into Irish life and character. The result of their combined efforts is rather disconcerting to those who have been taught to hold that the dramatic spark can only be kindled by striking a Duke briskly against the Seventh Commandment. The chief characters of the five little Irish pieces presented on Saturday afternoon and evening at the Royalty were a maker of ballads, dying of starvation on a doerstep; an old covey robbed of her six sons one by one by the sea; an elderly rustic who, suspecting his young wife, shams death in a truckle-bed to see what happens; an old itinerant fiddler with a thirst for applause and potheen; and a tramp who babbles a cotager's wife out of a meal by pretending that a stoupe he carries has only to be boiled in water to make the best of broth. Phew! what a crew!

And yet when one comes to think of it, was there not more of human nature, human first and Irish afterwards, in Saturday's proceedings than is to be found in all the plays at present on our stage put together? The audiences seemed to think well of the plays, and Mr. Leonard Courtney, Ireland, the leader of the Opposition, Lord St. Alderbrook, Mr. J. M. Barrie, and a host of other persons not remarkable for their devotion to trash remained to the end. There was nothing to keep them there but that touch of nature. There was no scenery worth looking at, no costumes worth describing, no titles in the cast. Stay, we are wrong. There was a king, King Guire. The piece was "The King's Threshold," and it was given at both performances. But as it was on both occasions given first they cannot have stayed on for that. Moreover, the King was not a real king, but an abstraction signifying material power just as the poet, starving on his doorstep, signified spiritual power. The King had denied the poet the right of dining at his table. And the poet held his mission too high to dine with meaneer men. After all, a king is very much what is said and sung about him, and Seanchan is implored by all sorts of persons to take his seat with the nobles. He refuses. Finally, the King hits on the expedient of bringing before him his disciples with ropes round their necks, and leaving them to bring him round. But they and he are hanged. They disappoint the King, and surrenders his crown dear. The King, overwhelmed, surrenders and surrenders his crown dear. The poet replaces it on the King's head. This is poetry, not subduery; they can hardly have stayed on for this. Another piece by Mr. Yeats was given, "A Pot of Broth." Called a farce, it is really a comedy of humble life, racy of the soil. Its tenor has been already sufficiently indicated. But what are we, self-satisfied Englishmen with a wealth of sixpenny illustrated devoted to our theatres, to make of a playwright cannot be far means come to us by so much as a crust? It seems very wrong of anybody writing for the stage to be so unexpected. Yet really it only means that Mr. Yeats is a poet with a keen sense of Irish character and Irish life. He is a humourist, too, but then, all line recorders of action, as distinguished from thought, are. A mighty mystery is made of this same poetry. To the general it has come to mean nonsense spoken with a long face, just as humour has come to mean nonsense commended with a grimace. The "Crucifixion," Craig, and his verses, and because death is sad and flowers are beautiful his readers are sympathetically impressed by the statement that a certain cricketer bled as a flower of the field, whereas, in fact, he committed suicide, and took two shots to do it. And any patron of musical comedy knows that an actor has only to make sufficiently meaningless remark at the same moment as he takes off his waistcoat for the whole house to be convulsed. Mr. Yeats' success, for one of these things he says and does, and tells the "honest all" of it, whether the matter of his thought be grave or gay. The other pieces were of low life, and we soon to take much notice of them. But Mr. Padraic MacFinnian Colm has drawn a notable character or two in "Broken Soil;" and Mr. J. M. Synge has shown a sense of the oppression and the worth of things in "The Riders to the Sea" (in which an aged mother welcomes the news that her last surviving son is drowned with the rest), since it means no more sleepless nights to anxiety and in "The Shadow of the Glen" which the elderly husband "shams Abraham" so that the young wife ultimately elopes with the tramp). The

receptions were enthusiastic. Probably Mr. Yeats is the only man who has had to come forward and make a speech after the iron curtain has gone through its drill. The acting was capital all through. It was of the simplest, but always light, always effective. The best performances were perhaps those of Mr. W. G. Fay as the tramp in "A Pot of Broth," and Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh as the handsome and intensely sympathetic daughter of the old fiddler in "Broken Soil." Mr. F. J. Fay was also extremely good as the fiddler. To think that all these surprising comedians by the time these lines are read are back again at their work in and about Dublin!

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THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

The performances of the Irish National Theatre Society, which promise to become an annual event, were given on Saturday afternoon and evening at the Royalty Theatre, under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society, and proved to be exceedingly interesting. Taken as a group, whilst not perhaps showing anything peculiarly Irish save subject, they exhibit a simplicity and directness that might almost be called primitive, and may well be indicative of something like a new development of drama. Of the three plays performed in the afternoon, two—"Riders to the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen"—are studies in prose of the Irish peasant by Mr. J. M. Synge, and the third—"The King's Threshold"—is Mr. Yeats's on the place of poetry in the State. Mr. Synge is a poet too, though not so defiantly and self-consciously, and his poetry in prose carries better across the footlights; but I will take Mr. Yeats first. "The King's Threshold" is a simple parable built up on the same lines as "The Hour Glass," which was played last year. Seanchan, the Chief Poet of Ireland, finds, like another of more modern date, a growing distaste for the higher kinds of poetry, which has resulted in his deposition from the place of honour at the King's table; so he vows that he will starve to death upon the royal threshold. The Mayor of his native town, his pupils, the Chamberlain, the ladies of the Court, the Princesses, his own sweetheart, even the King himself, all try to persuade him to eat; but he is firm, and nothing but the admission of Poetry's rights will move him. Finally the King orders the death of his pupils if he will not yield. They declare themselves ready for the sacrifice; whereupon the King surrenders and hands his crown to the Poet, who graciously restores it as the trumpets blow a blast of triumph. Mr. F. J. Fay and Miss Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh did something like justice to Mr. Yeats's verse, but the play demands rather less amateurish acting than it received from the rest of the company. Far more effective from the purely theatrical point of view was "Riders to the Sea," a singularly beautiful and pathetic piece of hopeless fatalism. "In this place it's the young men be leavin' things after them for them that be old," says the old woman whose seven sons have been taken by the sea; and as the eighth is brought in on a stretcher she kneels crooning by his side and feels that a great rest has come and she need fear the storm no more. She had pined with the last one in anger, refusing to consent to his going; her daughter had been harsh and sent her hobbling after him to give him her blessing and a piece of bread; she had seen the spirit of the one who died last riding behind him, the one whose clothes have been brought in for identification, and had returned in fear; and now the neighbours are chanting a monotonous dirge over the body as she mourns by its side. And to show how commonplace it all is among those whose lives are spent in fighting nature, a kindly neighbour reproaches her with having bought the wood for the coffin and forgotten the nails. It is all very simple, very human, and very fascinating, and Miss Honor Lavelle played it with admirable feeling. Mr. Synge's other effort is humorous, but his humour is grim and cannot get away from death and the tyranny of nature. Dan Burke pretends to be dead, and hears his young wife Nora making arrangements with Michael for a second marriage. He leaps out of bed and drives her from his house, and she goes off defiant with a passing tramp, leaving Dan and Michael drinking each other's health. I should not be surprised to learn that there is here some symbolic meaning, for the tramp is a poet too, and sings of the wind crying out in the broken trees. Is he saving Ireland from the corsair?

in the evening "The King's Threshold" was given a second and received so enthusiastically that Mr. Yeats, the author, called a short speech, chiefly concerning that play, which, when it might be had, accomplished their tasks admirably by giving of his verse, and he called the minimum of acting during the century of his difficulty. Afterward, a question as to style, of some importance, and MacCormac Coon was given, entitled "Jocelyn Bell," telling the tale of a peasant-girl who scores an o'er of love and honor in order to accompany her father who has been taken down to a sort of home life, and it was the girl who drove him down to a sort of home life. I suspect that the play has some interest in this understanding career, more Englishman who is unable to maintain his understanding by a sympathetic with the ideas and ideals of the present, and still less it has a curious, interesting melodrama, a dramatic story, and great charm, and, since the author is quite young, a promising, and as very promising. The performance was possible, and in the all name "A lot of Broth," as the fiddler, remarkably good. Let us say Mr. Yeats, which has been presented before. In it Mr. W. G. Fay acted with a good deal of comic power.

The Dublin March 29

THE THEATRE.

Irish Plays at the Revue.

In the middle of the afternoon and only for the author at the end of *The King's Threshold* on Saturday evening, someone was inspired to leave the deep proof curtain. It was a happy thing, but, alas! the deep proof curtain was not proof-proof. Mr. Yeats managed to get in front of it, and spoke the only inartistic words that were uttered on the stage that day. "It is always 'easy to know,' he said, 'when we have our own people in the theatre—' a sentiment which did equal injustice to the audience and to himself. Whether as a matter of fact, the Irish dramatist preponderated in the house, I cannot tell; but for my certain knowledge there was a very large English element, and I am convinced, both by observation and by inquiry, that it was no less enthusiastic than the Celtic contingent. Why should Mr. Yeats be in such a hurry to diminish his great poetic success into a party demonstration? It was nothing of the sort. We can all distinguish the note of partisan applause, when one section of an audience tries to make up for noisy inattention for the sympathy of a noble and not so apathy. The whole audience had been moved by a noble and individual work of art, and the whole audience expressed its emotion. Most one were Irish to thrill to those Irish themes, on which the curtain fell!

"O dear tragedian, be you filled up

And cry to the great noise, that is to come
Long-throated woe among the waves of time
Singing loudly for beyond the walls of the world
It waits and it may lose and come to us."

If Mr. Yeats seizes to partly party triumph, he must come to write such verses as these; and if he is one of the tenants of his party that the English language is often, they had better put him to silence altogether. Whether *The King's Threshold* is to the fall as impressive as *The House of the Dead*, which we saw last year, I cannot quite make up my mind. It belongs to the same order of poetry, being a piece of pure symbolism transmuted by an art which Mr. Yeats has revived and perfected after four centuries of decay, into real and poignant drama. The rhythm of the thing, the subtle interplay of the humours and the irony, could not possibly be bettered. There is a sort of splendour about it—a perfect stilling of the intellect. A noble vindication of the supremacy of thought, even in the world of action, it would be hard to find. Though, I say, though in the world in the poetry; for poetry, in the heroic age, included all the functions of the spirit. "Nothing is but thinking makes it so," said

that eminent Robt. William Shakespeare; and that is, in effect, the condition for which the poet Shanon is prepared to die on the King's Threshold.

"Sweet beauty wait!"
"Piercing beauty wait!"

I must not about this exposition of a poem which, indeed, conveys its own message and needs no exposition. It is printed in the third volume of Mr. Yeats's *Plays for Irish Theatres*, and may be read by those players. But need we go to the printed page for it? I have no London stage with tongue and originally enough to make up a bill in which this story poem and moving drama should find a fitting place!

One great charm of the Irish performance lay in the judgment with which the two programmes were composed. What could be more delightful than a "triple bill" of the sort?—a majestic speaking to exalt the imagination; a pathetic request, to touch the heart; a comic finale to relieve the serious tension, and send the audience away refreshed and exhilarated. Both performances began with *The King's Threshold*. Then came, in the afternoon, *Failures to the Sea*, by Mr. J. M. Synge—a weirdly tragic fragment of father life on the Atlantic coast, recorded, rather than dramatized, with a most moving directness and simplicity. In the evening the second place was occupied by *Jocelyn Bell*, a play in three very short acts by Mr. Padraic Colum. This is perhaps the most ambitious production the Irish company has as yet shown us. It is a peasant idyll, in which a process of sentiment is portrayed, too minutely to the very strong hold upon us, but with a great deal of delivery of touch, and with an instinctive technique that is altogether admirable. In the afternoon the third place was filled by Mr. J. M. Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*, and in the evening by Mr. W. B. Yeats's *A Pot of Broth*, which we saw last year. These are two very similar plays, of almost neutral actionless, but richly humorous, and with no trace of the vulgarity of the ordinary farce. Every one of these plays was intended to suit previous acts, and were beautifully applicable. A more frank and authentic success, the Irish company could not have desired.

When, then, to judge by the evidence before us, does the Irish drama actually stand? It possesses a true soul—why should one ask the world?—a great poet in Mr. Yeats; and it can show several other writers of that poetic feeling, and genuine, unimpaired dramatic instinct. But do not let us forget the proportions of things. A writer of genuine dramatic instinct is still but half way—if as much—towards being a true dramatist. As yet the Irish drama has given us only dramatic sketches—no thoughtless pictures, with emotion and depth in it. (Of course I do not include Mr. Yeats's *Cathleen Cowleen* in this survey. It furnished the movement, but was not one of its products.) The Irish playwrights sit down at the piano and pick out charming little melodies with their first notes; but as for constructing a great and complex dramatic harmony, the art of which, as yet they dream not, Mr. Synge's *Failures to the Sea* is, for now typical, a tragic model, not a drama. Its scene, indeed, is far more typical of the technique. Mr. Colum's *Jocelyn Bell* tries to be a drama, but it is not a drama. There are several processes of emotion and developments of character in it, but all indicated with a feeble lightness of touch which is charming in its way, and suggestive of truth, but leaves far too much to be filled in by the spectator's divination. The poet is intuitively in three acts, and there is in it, indeed, the matter for a three-act play; but it conceals no more than the name of one act. The sketchiness appears to the audience to be more than that at the psychological conception. We see the patterns of the McCormac household—the brother and sister by want a picture—before we can see that clearly enough to understand their own tragedy—before we can see that clearly enough to understand the interaction between their actions and that of Maria Hennessy. The two dolls, again, belong to a preliminary order of art. They are *fabliaux* dialogues, not to the middle-class idiom. Every first scene consists, if not only brothers, and those simple themes are treated with true humor and true refinement; but constructed dramas they are not.

In the primitive (though quite appropriate) construction and stage-management of *The King's Threshold* one may see a symbol of the Irish drama in its present phase of development. The characters stand on one plane, as it were, on the shallow stage, always in a more or less irregular row, never in an oblique group. The incidents succeed one another in careful and logical gradation, but have no complexity of interrelation. They form a series, not a system. They exist in two dimensions, not in three; and this may be said of the whole literature as yet evoked by the Irish theatre. It lacks perspective, it lacks solidity. It succeeds by applying the simplest of methods, with fine artistic instinct, to novel and attractive material; but it eludes, or rather it does not approach, the higher problems and difficulties of the dramatist's art.

What, now, of the acting! In its merits and its limitations it is of a piece with the drama. It is quite delightful—on that point let there be no mistake. Our warmest admiration and respect are justly due to the enthusiasm which animates these young artists, and the dignity and sincerity of all their work. They have none of the vices of the professional actor—those vices which the ordinary amateur always does his best to repress. There is something beautiful and almost touching in the simplicity with which they go about their labour of love. If, as I cannot but hope, *The King's Threshold* were one day placed on the ordinary stage, it would be essential that this simplicity should, up to a certain point, be emulated; but it is possible to combine simplicity with accomplishment, and I do not observe in the Irish company any progress towards that consummation. If their ideal excludes it, their ideal is in so far defective. Mr. Yeats, in the speech above alluded to, stated the principle he had tried to instil into them—namely, that “if they had the self-abnegation simply to speak beautifully, they would find that they had acted admirably.” Now, I am all for beautiful speaking, and would even wish that Mr. Yeats had facilitated their quest of the beautiful by somewhat smoothing his measures, especially in the opening speech of King Guire. But there is no radical inconsistency between beautiful speaking and dramatic expression; nor does one see why Mr. F. J. Fay, who played Shanahan on the whole admirably, should have made no distinction between the poet's manner in his own utterances and in the delirium of exaltation. There is all the difference in the world between avoiding pitfalls and ignoring difficulties; and one cannot help feeling that the Irish players sometimes confound the two things. They are, as a rule, weak in facial expression; the exception to the rule is, of course, that born comedian, Mr. W. G. Fay. Even in speaking prose, they sing phrase after phrase to the same slow tune; the vivacity and volubility which are surely not wanting in the Irish character are unrepresented in the Irish theatre. The actors have no freedom of movement, no firmness of attack, no elasticity. They are apt to slip about the stage like people in a sick room. And as all the practice of a year (I believe they practise assiduously) has produced little or no difference in these respects, it would seem that they despise accomplishment and make no effort to attain it. This is a pity. Simplification of method is good; but you cannot simplify a problem by carefully letting it alone.

I must not, however, take leave of these most interesting players in a tone of reproach. To do so would be ungrateful and essentially unjust. There is real talent as well as single-minded earnestness in the company. The brothers Fay are excellent comedians both; Mr. George Roberts follows close in their footsteps; and Mr. P. J. Kelly shows himself a most useful actor, in a great variety of parts. As for the ladies, there are five at least who stand alone on a level of merit. In point of distinction, Miss Maire Nic Shuibhneigh may perhaps rank first, in point of dramatic expressiveness Miss Sara Allgood; but Miss Honor Lavelle, Miss Emma Vernon, and Miss Maire Ni Gharbhagh all of admirable work and deserve a full share in the honours of the occasion.

At the Garrick Theatre last Wednesday afternoon Mr. Arthur Boucher and Miss Violet Vanburgh appeared in a comedietta by Mr. Alfred Sater, entitled *A Marriage has been Arranged*. The idea is ingenious and the dialogue bright and telling. The little play makes a welcome addition to our scanty stock of well-written front-pieces.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

Whitehall Review
March 31

IRISH PLAYS AT THE ROYALTY THEATRE.

“Shure, an’ it’s a great day intirely for the Old Country,” was the exclamation of an old woman as I came out of the Royalty Theatre on Saturday evening, after witnessing the afternoon and evening performances of three plays which are claimed as being quite typical of the “National” Theatre. Personally I was unaware that Ireland had any theatrical stage in her history, though it must be admitted that all stages of her history are more or less theatrical. As a general supporter, however, of a general race—that is when you do not differ from them—I thoroughly entered into the spirit of the remark. It was a great day certainly, and one which was equally great for actors, authors, and public.

In the first place, there is such an institution as the Irish National Theatre, it seems, and it was this company which presented the plays. Whereat St. Patrick himself must rejoice. The first of these was Mr. W. B. Yeats's *The King's Threshold*. This was the chief item at both afternoon and evening performances, and proved to be the greatest dish, in spite of the fact that the whole plot was taken up with the refusal of the hero to eat. Poetic and imaginative it may be for a poet to vindicate a slight by a Succi-like attempt to starve himself to death, but how it shows that the power of music or song is higher than that of kings, remains to be explained. Still, it is a fine and conscientious piece of work upon which Mr. Yeats and the Irish people and the National Theatre may be congratulated.

Two other plays were from the pen of Mr. J. N. Synge, one of which was *Riders of the Sea*, and the other, *In the Shadow of the Glen*. Of these I prefer the former, which is simply of plain seafaring folk, whose best and bravest have gone down the ravenous maw of the ever hungry ocean. We can all understand and feel for the lonely women whose gallant sons have paid the penalty of the daily-bread struggle in the raging waters. Full of fine feeling and imagination, I should like to see this little gem played again. Alone, the sublimity of her maternal instincts raises the simple story to the higher heights of dramatic pathos.

In the Shadow of the Glen is of another type, and merely exploits a pretty familiar view of Irish humour from a purely Irish point of view. All these plays were well staged and acted. As several of the actors and actresses have elected to their names being printed in such singular localisms as Maire Nic Shuibhneigh, and, as in this guise, I do not feel quite safe in dealing with them further.

Gordon Post March 28

Yesterday the Irish National Theatre Society, of which Mr. W. B. Yeats is president, had a bold day. Under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society of London it presented no fewer than five plays on the stage of the Royalty Theatre, the performances taking place both morning and afternoon. First of all there was “*The King's Threshold*,” a one-act play by Mr. Yeats; then Mr. J. M. Synge's “*Riders to the Sea*” and “*In the Shadow of the Glen*”; and finally “*The Pot of Brath*” and “*Broken Sails*,” the one by Mr. Yeats and the other by Mr. C. M. Colm. In these plays the whole range of Celtic emotion was appealed to, laughter and tears being characteristically combined, and from an artistic point of view the experiment was thoroughly successful—so much so that the two societies concerned may be encouraged to repeat it at an early date.

IRISH NATIONAL DRAMA

SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTIONS BY THE
THEATRE SOCIETY.

The Irish National Theatre Society introduced itself to London on Saturday, giving an afternoon and an evening performance at the Royal Theatre. As many as five plays were produced, and the success of the venture should do much to encourage the society in its efforts both in Ireland and here. In the afternoon the programme commenced with "The King's Threshold." Mr. W. R. Yeats's poetic play in one act, "The King's Threshold," in one may say at once, more suited for the study than the stage.

The story of Seashoan, the chief poet of Ireland, who refuses to eat until King Guinne shaves him, is restored to him in the honored place at the royal table, loses its greatest charm by translation. So limited in action is it that the fiery poetry of Seashoan's speeches cannot warm the interest of an audience, even when they are shared with the passion that Mr. F. J. Fay displayed. What most thrills the reader of the printed page has, strangely enough, its power in passing away from the footlights.

[illegible]

"In the Shadow of the Glen" proved to be a delicious piece of Irish humor told with a restrained whimsicality and a bubbling sense of fun. The picture of old Dan Burke rising from his bed, where he is supposed to have died, to face his young wife already straining toward a painful and unending struggle of matrimony.

...the same message, however, that a staggering something, however. It would surely be a good idea for London to have to put on the capital some way of a surface on - provided he knows the same delicate interpretation as the trial officers gave on Saturday. Those who worked under the bastard "trial," as it is known on our stage, would give a warm welcome to any subtle parody, to the musical, short-term distance of these players from Ireland.

Teenison March 29

If one is to judge from the notices which appear in the London papers, the members of the Irish National Dramatic Society have undoubtedly made a big hit by their performance at the Gaiety Theatre on Saturday. For the first time Mr. Yeats and his fellow-workers in the movement seem to have made a good impression on the London dramatic world, all the leading critics, with the single exception of the "Times," devoting considerable space to their notices of the performance. Furthermore, they are all, without distinction, highly eulogistic of the plays themselves and of the manner in which they are presented, and more than one of them goes so far as to assert that the advent of the new Irish Theatre marks a new era in the dramatic art of these countries. The "Morning Post," for instance,

Manchester City News

FIVE IRISH NATIONAL PLAYS IN LONDON.

A. NEUTRALIZATION EXPERIMENT.

The need of a national theatre for this country has been forcibly brought to the minds of London folk by the production at the Royalty Theatre, last Saturday afternoon and evening, of a series of remarkable plays by members of the Irish National Theatre Society. Actors and actresses alike were all Irish, and amateurs who follow other occupations for their means of livelihood; and the plays all represented some phase of the

W. H. Yeats has for long been known in this country as a poet and writer of some distinction, and his drama, *The King's Threshold*, was the leading feature of the performances. It is really an ode, in dramatic form, to the power of poetry. Sean-
chan, the chief poet of Ireland, considers his craft has been invaded by the King, who has refused to allow the poet to dine at the high table. This poet of honour is then referred for the "mem-
ber" of the world and not the men who sang it." The poet refuses to let a morsel of food pass his lips. The King himself, his courtiers, and even Feidelm, the poet's lover, plead in vain. The poet is above worldly rank and personal affections. If he perishes, the King's name in the world will perish with him. Finally, the King sends before him his disciples with ropes round their chests, but without gain they get round the death-
tangle, overcoiled, and the King, relenting, offers them, the poet. The poet replaces it on the King's hand.

There is real poetry, too, and more dramatic instinct, in Mr. J. M. Spence's *Sisters to the Sea*. It is a vivid reproduction of the melancholy and pathos in which the life of the Cornish peasant seems cast. It pictures a household from which the hand of death is not absent long. The old woman has lost her husband and five sons by the sea. The two daughters weep quietly over some bits of clothing which belonged to their brother Michael, whose body is floating to the far North. By the fire the mother weeps a solitary tear for all the dead, and scarcely hears the solemn tale to be told, her who goes out of her cottage without her blessing, to take some of her horses to market by boat. When she finds him gone she follows him with a piece of bread, but is horror-struck by seeing the wealth of Michael riding on one of Bartley's horses. Then comes the wailing of peasant women, and soon the body of Maurya's last son is borne in by fishermen, for he has been thrown from his horse and drowned. The women, enshrouded in black shawls, mourn a low dirge, which rises and falls as one old mother covers under this last lash of fate. The sisters and the men and women from the village, and, at the last, even the mother, accept the blow with the calm of those who have lived their daily life face to face with death. They discuss the necessary arrangements for the funeral, and one of the daughters apologizes for her mother having, in her distress of mind, forgotten to call for the home-made coffin which was always have been fashioned for Michael. "It's a great rest I'd have now," is the poor old peasant's way of accepting the blow which has fallen on her.

Of the other productions, comprising Mr. Byrge's *In the Shadow of the Glen*, Mr. Yeats's *Put a Death*, and Mr. Cohn's *Broken Soil*, the last named proved the most impressive. This also is a story of the extreme west of Ireland, and tells how young Maire Hourigan rescues her old father from drunkenness, at the cost of leaving a comfortable home and the man who has just won her heart. But each one of the plays has some special merit of its own, and the company, as a whole, being presented by a corporation which perfectly realized the beauty in them, and had the taste and ability to display them naturally and simply to the audiences.

Times Apr 1-

THE DRAMA.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

The chief danger to be apprehended for the Irish National Theatre Society is premature success. If, while still in their green unknown youth, they become "the fashion," and a glance at the Royalty audience last Saturday showed that they are in the fair way of it, if they allow the tender plant of their art to be "forced" for the London market, it will be a real misfortune. Already they seem to have lost something of their sincerity, something of their first fine careless rapture. This or that actress, so short last year, so wholly absorbed in her part, so timid under the public gaze, has this year a side-long glance for the audience. The brogue of this or that actor, so natural then, seems now a dead-end calculation. It is a mischievous thing, we know, to implore people to be on their guard against self-consciousness; that is the very way to make them self-conscious. But we can at any rate safely counsel these players to be on their guard against indolgent friends. The applause on Saturday occasionally had the air of a parti-pris, of a "demonstration." Mr. Yeats, in his speech, said it was easy to know when "our people" were in the house. Well, that is a pity. Mr. Yeats could not resist the opportunity of airing a theory of acting which may be right or wrong (we happen to think it right), but which was certainly out of place. And he was altogether too cock-a-hoop. We much preferred Mr. W. G. Fay's modest and stammered thanks.

It is far from our desire to throw cold water on this enterprise. The plays and the spirit in which they are played give us the most exquisite pleasure. The whole thing is a choice morsel for an epicure; but the epicure knows what pains and precautions are needed to preserve for his delicacies their perfect freshness and fragrance. One of our chief delights is the English pronunciation of these Irishmen. "I ordered," says Mr. P. J. Kelly as King Guineo,

I ordered Beanches to good company,
But to a lower table; and when he plucked
The poet's right, established when the vernal
Wad first established.

But we only burlesque it in printing it so. In reality it is the most musical English known to us. And for that reason alone these Irish players must not be persuaded to come too often to London; they will lose the purity and charm of their Irish accent. They are the depositaries of romantic English. For, as Pater said, romance is strangeness with beauty. We cannot conceive this strangely beautiful English which the Irish players speak degraded to prosaic uses, the higgling of the market, the common task, the daily round. But the pronunciation is the least part of the romantic charm; what is that to the quaint "troubling" melody? King Guineo speaks of those who understand

... how to mingle words and notes together
So artfully, that all the art is but speech
Delighted with its own music.

The passage fitly describes these Irish players. To analyse the charm of Mr. Yeats's verse is "another pair of gloves." Right on the surface there is the charm of

repetition—ekphrasis is, we believe, the horrid pathological term.

I cannot give way
Because I am King, because if I give way
For I will give plough-land and grazing-land
They are so gracious,
The dear little peasants are so gracious
O, you have fair white hands, for it is certain
There is no common whiteness in these hands.
(There are also "hands" in 11 lines.)

This is Maeterlinck, early Maeterlinck, in English. Then

there are pictures, motifs for a Rossetti or a Burne-Jones; pictures of "high angels that drive the horse of time," of "long-throated swans among the waves of time," of a leper "with his white hand thrust out of the blue air." One sees these things set in flamboyant Florentine frames. Or you light upon this:—

The stars had come to near me that I sought
Their singing.

whereupon you stop analysing, and salute the poet. Which, in effect, is what Guineo does in *The King's Threshold*. The poem is a vindication of the poet's majesty. Prompted by jealous considerers, men of action, the King has dismissed the Poet from his table, and the Poet lies on the King's threshold, refusing bite and sup. No compromise. This is not only a protest, but an act of revenge.

If a man is wronged,
Or thinks that he is wronged, and will lie down
Upon another's threshold till he dies,
The common people for all time to come
Will raise a heavy cry against that threshold,
Even though it be the King's.

The play is really a procession of supplicants. Typical personages follow one after another beseeching the poet to eat and drink. His eldest pupil, Senias, addresses him in the richest possible brogue; his youngest entertains him with tears. The Mayor makes him a speech, from notes cut on an oghra stick. Peasants bring him the country food that he used to love. The chamberlain, a soldier, and a monk expostulate with him. The young Princesses offer him the cup and the dish with their "long soft fingers and pale finger-tips." His sweetheart Fedelm implores him to dip a crust in wine that he may have strength to go away with her. At last the King himself offers him food. But he holds out. Even when his pupils are brought in with halters on their necks he holds out; and they hid him hold out (*ekphrasis* is catching), being willing to die that their master may assert a principle. Then the King admits that the Poet has conquered, and hands over his crown, which the Poet returns. The poet is Mr. P. J. Fay, with a voice that is a prolonged wail. Fedelm is the beautiful Maize Nio Shiebhagh. The King of Mr. P. J. Kelly is rather a *roi fainéant*. Mr. W. G. Fay is a quaint Mayor. He has a better chance as the humorous, resourceful tramp in Mr. Yeats's farce *A Pot of Broth*, a permanent feature of this company's repertory and a delightful piece of rustic simplicity and fun.

But we greatly prefer the sadness of the company to their drollery. *Broken Soil*, by Mr. Padraic MacCormac Cohn, is delightfully sad. Everybody is sick and sorry. It is an atmosphere absolutely devoid of the *joie de vivre*, with no harshness in it, but always a vague melancholy. The women have wax faces and wild eyes. The men are spiritless, and love without hope. Passion, hot blood—normally the life-stuff of drama—seem absent altogether. A little asinine, perhaps; it would be gratifying after seeing *Broken Soil* to go out and contemplate some gross, jolly, blundering beauty of Ireland. There is something asinine in the art of these Irish playwrights and players; they show us frustrated lives, humanity in distress, odd unhappy far-off things. Maize Housheen has love and a home offered her by Brian MacConnell, and she is grateful, but cannot accept them, for she must go out with her father, the soldier, "on the road." Homes and homes are not for her father, for when domestic comfort means drink; the girl feels that "the road" is their only safety. And Brian's plots to detain them only make things worse. He is an awkward, inarticulate lover, not at all the man to rescue a girl from her brooding and fatalism. The truth is they are all fatalists and they all brood. Yet in them all is a suppressed tenderness and a certain dignity in the quiet renunciation of love. They all move softly and speak low—as characters in a dream-play. In the end you are possessed by a suave and rather agreeable melancholy. You check a sob, sigh gently, and at last smile pensively with glistering eyes. . . . We chanced to come to this Irish performance straight from the big, brutal, stuporous French theatre—from *Le Meunier* and *La Boute*, from the Coppelemaires of Coppola, and from *Réjane* more *Réjane* than ever. What a contrast! After the brass band, the rustling of the wind among the reeds,

Academy ap 2

Dramatic Notes

MR. W. B. YEATS' plays, "The King's Threshold," "On Baile's Strand," "The Hour Glass," "Cathleen Ni Houlihan," and "The Pot of Broth," have just been issued in two volumes by Mr. A. H. Bullen (3s. 6d. net each), and The Irish National Theatre Society gave two performances at the Royalty Theatre on last Saturday afternoon and evening. What do these events portend? What of promise for the future is there in them? To what end do these plays and performances tend? There is interest in them without a doubt and I will endeavour to find what of good there is. This is not the place to discuss Mr. Yeats as a poet, here we have to do with him as a playwright who sets out, so I take it, to place upon the stage plays which shall express the inner side of Irish life.

Of the plays before us we may at once put aside "The Pot of Broth," a capital farce, and "The Hour Glass," a Morality, the moral teaching of which is universal and not particular to Ireland. The tone of the other three plays is partly mystical, partly mythical and to my mind will do nothing at all to aid the

cause of the revival of Irish literature. Mr. Yeats, in his plays, apparently, counts human hearts as of little worth and ignores human emotion. In "The King's Threshold" the motive of the play is the banishing

of the poets from the upper table in King Gaius's hall, of Seanchán in particular, who refuses to eat or drink until his privilege is restored. Of such material a drama cannot be made, a poem may be. "On Baile's Strand" deals with an event in the life of Cuchullain, King of Muirtheimne, who, having unwittingly slain his son, plunges into the waves of the sea; here, perhaps, is tragedy, but not as Mr. Yeats has handled the matter, the characters do not live, they talk but do not convince, they act but we care not what they do. "Cathleen Ni Houlihan" is sheer mysticism. These plays have been written for "an Irish Theatre"; there is much good work in them, much good poetry, but no drama and no characterisation; they will not do anything in my opinion to help the Irish stage. "The Pot of Broth," farce though it be, is Mr. Yeats' nearest approach to what is needed to achieve his purpose.

WHAT is needed? Simply living, human dramas and comedies of Irish life of to-day. It is scarcely too much to say that no dramatist has ever written a fine acting play which was not imbued with the spirit of his own times. Shakespeare wrote of Troy, Rome, Egypt, but his works breathed throughout of Elizabethan England; their setting was a detail, their essence was Elizabethan. If Mr. Yeats and his fellow workers desire to found a living Irish drama they must look to the life of to-day, not of yesterday, and must take for their characters human beings, not abstractions. Carleton should be their example; he wrote with power and pathos of the lives of the peasantry amid whom he lived; let our Irish dramatists go out into the country and write plays dealing with the tragedies and comedies that lie so thickly strewn over the hills and valleys of Irish life; living hearts, not dead bones—however poetic—those are what are needed, and if they be not given the Irish drama cannot live. I have every sympathy with these endeavours, and would have them succeed; but exotics will not "do," we want hardy plants.

The two little plays by Mr. J. M. Synge and a longer piece by Mr. Padraic MacCormac Colin, given at the Royalty on Saturday, prove that these two writers are born dramatists as well as poets, although these particular works are written in prose. Both go to their knowledge of peasant life for their inspiration, and, while realistic in the good sense of that word, never lose sight of the twilight mysticism which enshrouds the Irish peasant's life. In "Riders to the Sea" Mr. Synge has given us an episode from fisher life in the West of Ireland, simple, pathetic, true, and in "The Shadow of the Glen" provides us with a charming bit of comedy, very original, restrained and faithful to life. Mr. Colin is more ambitious but equally successful; "Broken Soil" is in three short acts or scenes; it is a play of souls rather than of action, intensely interesting and quietly emotional. All three plays point out the road which must be followed by those who would restore the theatre to its literary dignity—the subject matter is men and women, their hopes, fears, struggles, defeats, victories; their manner is clear, clear, nervous English, without a trace of staginess or sham. We hope both writers will soon publish their plays in volume form, they must not reserve for Ireland what is meant for mankind.

As for the actors, amateurs all, of the Irish National Theatre Society, they are in earnest, busy over the progress of their play, natural in gestures, motions and tones of voice. As I sat at the Royalty on Saturday afternoon and evening I could not but compare, greatly to their advantage, the quietly effective methods of these amateurs with the noisily ineffective ways of many of our professional players; perhaps the secret of it all is that the members of the Irish National Theatre Society are enthusiasts; all good things on or off the stage are the outcome of enthusiasm. Special mention may be made of Honor Lavelle, who acted with fine emotion as the heart-stricken mother in "Riders to the Sea"; of Emma Vernon, who in the same piece proved that pathos lay in her command—indeed there were many wet eyes at the close of this piece; of Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh; of P. J. Kelly in "Broken Soil," who played an extremely difficult part with dignity and truth, and of Mr. W. G. Fay, a born comedian, who cleverly differentiated two similar characters, being admirably amusing as the beggarman in Mr. Yeats' "A Pot of Broth." Good luck to them all and may they visit us again and frequently.

Sheffield Telegraph 28th

Many people interested in "the Celtic revival" went to the Royalty Theatre yesterday afternoon and evening to see a series of one-act plays produced under the direction of the Irish National Theatre Society, of which Mr. W. B. Yeats is president. Two of these poets' plays, "The King's Threshold" and "The Pot of Broth," were included in the series, the others being "Broken Soil," by Mr. Padraic Colin, and two pieces by Mr. J. M. Synge illustrative of life among Irish fishermen and peasants. All the five plays have considerable artistic merit, and in the main the actors and actresses (all Irish) did justice to them, particularly Mr. F. J. Fay, Miss Honor Lavelle, and a lady who was described on the bill as "Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh."

The Sporting & Dramatic
Apr 2

ROYALTY THEATRE

The representatives of the Irish Literary Society of London, under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society of London, took possession at the little house in Dean-street on Saturday last, and during the afternoon and evening of large and appreciative audiences presented to fewer than five plays, the programme commencing with *The King's Threshold*, a little piece from the pen of the President, Mr. W. B. Yeats. There is something exceedingly fanciful in the story which tells of the firm resolve of Seanchán, the principal of Ireland's poets, in the ancient days, to refrain from looting until the King has given back to the poets their former rights and privileges. Neither threat nor persuasion prevails, and the poet in the end comes through triumphant.

Before to the *Sea*, which followed, was a terrible tale of the fate of some fisher folk set forth with much superabundance by Mr. J. H. Synge, who was responsible also for *In the Shadow of the Glen*, which came next. In this a lighter note was struck, and the audience found considerable amusement in the artful device of an old Wicklow farmer, who had taken into himself a young wife, and was not too sure about her fidelity. The farmer feigned death, and Nora Burke, leaving a tramp to watch the supposed corpse, went off in search of her more youthful lover, for when the "cool man" prepared a lively reception on his return. In the evening, *The King's Threshold* was repeated, and was followed by Mr. Yeats' piece, *The Pot of Broth*, which was seen last year, and *Broken Soil*, an interesting story of peasant life, by Mr. Padraic Colum. Among those most distinguishing themselves by their acting were Mr. W. G. Fay, who was excellent as the tramp of *In the Shadow of the Glen*, a young lad described as Maire Nea Shillbhaigh, as the wife, Mr. P. J. Kelly as King Ginnure, in the piece first named, Miss Honor Lavell as Maurya in *Riders to the Sea*, and the Misses Sarah Algood and Emma Vernon.

The latest batch of Irish plays, presented at the Royal Theatre on March 26th, proved immensely interesting to an audience which included Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. George Wyndham (Chief Secretary), and the Rev. Stopford Brooke. Mr. Hugh Law, the member for West Donegal, was also present, as was a band of Irishmen who have made London their home, including Mr. George Bernard Shaw, and many others who have distinguished themselves in literature and the art of the drama. Lady Gregory, up from Galway, gave a reception at the Criterion between the performances. Mr. W. B. Yeats was looking very well after his recent trip. Five plays were produced at the two performances, as follows: Mr. W. B. Yeats' new drama, in verse, *The King's Threshold* (just out in book form), two plays of exceptional merit by Mr. J. M. Synge, called *Riders to the Sea* and *In the Shadow of the Glen*, *Broken Soil* (by Mr. Padraic Colum), and *A Pot of Broth*, a bright little farce, by Mr. Yeats, which was given on the occasion of the last visit of the Irish players to London. *The King's Threshold*, though exceedingly beautiful in its lines, was a little lacking in dramatic quality. It afforded fine scope, however, for Mr. F. J. Fay, who, as the starving hard, Seanchán, gave a remarkably clever study. *Riders to the Sea* was an infinitely tragic and touching idyll of fisher folk in the Aran Islands. In it we introduced the was a gently impressive study of the dead, which mother who had lost all her sons at sea—the Reeling was for the last victim of the sea—played with great feeling. In *the Shadow of the Glen* was a comedy, in which an elderly husband feigns death. Meanwhile his young wife entertains a beggar and a charmer of the loveliest girl. While the latter is paying court to her, the husband arises from his bed and becomes tractable. In the end the girl (the Irish equivalent of whose real name was Maire Nic Shillbhaigh) resolves to link her fortunes with the man of the road, with whom she departs. The other two plays I was unfortunately unable to see.

Yet in this "light of the World" this very exaggeration is demanded in view of the artistically false emphasis laid on in trifles, and it is this which gives dominance to the motive of his picture.

As for the rest, let the crowds of the faithful and the penitent attest.

A. C. R. C.

Outlook SOME IRISH PLAYS

In the old days the poets of Ireland were proud in the possession of ancient rights. I am not quite certain in my mind as to the precise nature of these, but Mr. W. B. Yeats has a good deal to say on the subject in his blank-verse play, "The King's Threshold," which was seen on Saturday at the Royal Theatre. It seems that once upon a time there lived a very wicked King, who wanted to take away the poor poets' rights. The poets naturally objected, and by way of retaliation the chief bard sat himself down upon the monarch's front door steps and waxed exceedingly abusive over the rights of kings. Moreover, he refused to touch food or drink until the ancient rights were restored. If he had refused to speak as well it would scarcely have been amiss, for, truth to tell, he was unduly long-winded for a man dying of starvation. However, there he was on the steps, and the puzzle was what to do with him. The King sent his chamberlains, his Court ladies, and his daughters to persuade the poet to eat, but without avail. The poet's sweetheart had little better success. Not even when the King himself came and offered him a household loaf and something in a large jug would the obstinate singer yield. Then the Ruler, as a last resource, collected the poet's disciples and had them all brought in with ropes around their necks, saying that unless their master took food they should die. Whereupon they decided to die with him, that forego the ancient rights, a proceeding which so overcame the King that he immediately knelt down and handed his crown to the poet, who, not to be outdone in politeness, handed it back again. So the question of the ancient rights of the poets was settled for all time. What use they have since made of them is evidenced by the poetical works of Mr. Yeats and others; but the former gentleman's play is more entertaining to read than to see acted. Mr. F. J. Fay was good as the persistent poet, but few of the rest in the cast had opportunities.

Of the four other plays presented, the most dramatic was a little one-act sketch by J. M. Synge, entitled "Riders to the Sea." It is a grim and sordid story that Mr. Synge has to tell, but he tells it with considerable sense of the stage, and he is not long-winded. The sea takes as toll the lives of all the sons of an aged Irish peasant-woman, until at last she is left with only her two daughters and the newly-drowned body of her last-born, while the black-hooded mourners make a keen for the departed soul. It is a powerful little play, and was well acted, Miss Honor Lavell particularly distinguishing herself as the old mother.

Mr. Synge's second piece has strong promise of comedy, but here the author does not appear to show his advantage. The story is that of a young wife, who, believing her elderly husband to be dead, begins to pay attentions to another. But the supposed corpse suddenly leaps out of bed and chases the two with a stick, to the great delight of a tramp, who has been let into the secret. The finish, however, is unsatisfactory, for the wife is turned out-of-doors, and the curtain falls upon husband and lover drinking together in most amicable fashion. This, also, was excellently played, the best of the humour being provided by Mr. W. G. Fay as the tramp.

"Broken Soil" I did not care for. It seemed a

Hearth & Home
Apr 7

THE IRISH PLAYS.

"WE always know when we are among our own people," said Mr. Yeats in his short speech, after the performance of *The King's Threshold* last Saturday evening, and some critics who were present found the saying harsh and egotistical. "We admit we are but creeping Saxons," they said in effect, "but are we therefore incapable of appreciating great literature? Or is the perception of beauty the exclusive possession of the Celt?" I think they entirely misunderstand the poet's meaning. To me the saying, far from being egotistical, was singularly modest, and I took it to mean that it is an easy thing for an Irish poet to please his own people, just as success among strong personal friends is not hard to win. Mr. Yeats probably only intended to imply that the applause of the house may have been more kindly than deserved. That was his polite and modest way of putting it.

Yet in the other sense the saying would have been entirely just. It was easy to know that these Irish plays were given before an Irish audience—an audience, Irish in

the main by birth, and sympathy. This does not at all imply that the English people present were incapable of admiring the plays themselves as pieces of drama and literature. The interest was true enough and general enough to appeal to common humanity. But with how much deeper an emotion it appealed to those who had themselves sprung from the land where the scenes lay and who, in their blood and bone, felt their kinship with the figures that passed before them on the stage! That is the meaning of nationality. Study Greek literature as we may, admire it beyond all limits of admiration as we may, how shall we ever feel in us the stir, the pride of possession, and the passionate affection, with which some Athenian witnessed a masterpiece from his city as he sat in an alien theatre across the sea? The professors of Germany may elucidate Shakespeare for ever; they will never know him like the men who were bred in Shakespeare's fields. Art is, after all, a national thing. Unless it draws its life from a deep and native soil, it is thin and bloodless. Nor can even the greatest artist ever hope to reveal the full beauty of his conception to any but his own people.

So with Mr. Yeats's play of *The King's Threshold*, that was given both afternoon and evening. A stranger could admire the simplicity of the whole conception, and the rigorous self-restraint of the acting. He could understand the obvious symbolism that beauty is the vitalising principle of life, and that the State is rotten where poets are not at least on an equality with kings. He could glory in a poet's proud resolve rather to starve to death upon a poet's proud resolve than yield one jot of a poet's ancient right. He could appreciate the splendour of the lines upon the marriage of the stars and earth, and the noble voice and dignity with which Mr. F. J. Fay, as the poet Seanchan, recited the final verses bidding the trumpets cry to the great race that is to come. But to the Irish people present the play stood far more than this. It was full of strange lights and half-unconscious significance that they alone of all the audience had the right to feel or the power of perceiving. These kings and princesses and poets, these simple men from a hamlet by the seashore, were of their own blood. They were the people who once had lived in that land which has always been the object of such passionate sorrow and desire. After all, as some old hero said, no other land ever looks quite the same as one's country, and no other gear is like one's mother's. Or again, to take even the most obvious of the underlying interpretations of the symbolism, to an Irishman the proud starvation of the poet inevitably suggests the proud refusal of Ireland to be satisfied with anything but her own highest claim, and the King, who protects his love, and is only frightened about "the Crown" and its rights, he is inevitably the hesitating, the trimmer, the "Unionist" and half-hearted friend, who wants to keep on calling himself a Liberal, but is driven bit by bit to coercion and the hingenman's rope.

"I have been patient though I am a king,
And have the means to force you—but that's ended,
And I am not a king and you a subject.
Nobles and courtiers, bring the poets hither
For you can have your way: I that was man
With a man's heart am now all thing again."

Anyone may see the parallel to the chilly Liberal who, under the excuse of "union," less the Tories loose to their old coercion game. But to the Irish people such words come home with a poignancy of truth that no one of another race can suffer.

It was the same with the other plays. Perhaps, indeed, the intensity of national appeal was even more powerful in them. For they all dealt with scenes of actual peasant life, such as may still be witnessed in any of the really Irish parts of the country. All were remarkable, and, in spite of the exact similarity of the setting—so exact that the same scenery did for the four—the themes of all were so different that it is unnecessary to compare them or to put one above another. In *Riders to the Sea*, Mr. Synge has produced, not exactly a drama, but just a

picture of a common crisis in the fisher life upon the west coast. One after another, the father and five sons have been drowned. The sixth goes out, his mother sees the omen of his death, his body is borne in upon a dory, the women raise the lamentation, the mother has nothing now left to hope for or to fear, the coffin is to be made of ancient white boards that were kept ready, though unhappily the nails had been forgotten. That is all. But in that brief and common scene, it is a miracle how much of the sadness and unnoted pathos of Irish life the poet has gathered up, and how much of its unnoticed beauty, too. The quiet "keening" of the two women who enter with the body, almost like ghosts, and keep up their monotonous lament throughout the rest of the dialogue, reaches the effect and dignity of an ancient chorus, so that the scene is transfigured into the world where mortal things are revealed under the usage of eternity, and yet, all the time, the winds are howling around the walls of a poor Irish cabin, and the spray of the sea that swallows men is driving over the roof.

Brother Saul, that took the place of *Riders to the Sea* in the evening performance, is by Padraic Colum, the latest and youngest of the Irish poets who are now leading the only intellectual movement in these islands that counts. The theatrical critic would see much to find fault with in it. The construction is amateurish, the passing to and fro through the same door becomes wearisome, the action, such as there is, seldom "comes to anything," and does not easily explain itself. But its motives turn on some of the most powerful influence in the Irish nature—the love of a bit of land, the love of the open road, and the glory in skillful music. It is the story of a daughter's devotion to her father's highest welfare—his artistic, or, if you will, his spiritual welfare—and it is told in delicate half-tones of humour and deep penetration into the nature of man. The quiet confusion, when the four chief actors go out upon the road in pairs that will never return or meet again, and the friend sits down in absolute silence and gazes upon the deserted beach, is one of the most impressive scenes in modern drama. But here, again, it is only Irish people to whom the real appeal is made, and to present such a play to an ordinary audience in a London theatre would have been little short of profanation.

Of the two farces, one of which cheerfully concluded the performance on each occasion, Mr. Yeats's *Pot of Gold* has been seen in London before, and is a most charming and natural piece of laughter over an irresistible rogue's cleverness. Mr. Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* has, perhaps, too serious a background for farce, and just touches the "problem" play, though the solution is absolutely right. But one cannot leave these farces without noticing the great skill with which Mr. W. G. Fay, in the chief comic parts, succeeded in avoiding even the shadow of resemblance to the vulgar clown who has so long been received as the typical Irishman upon the English stage. The acting of Miss Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh and Miss Maire Ni Gharbhaigh also was excellent throughout, and in parts very remarkable.

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

The Bystander, April 6, 1904



Gossip About Books and Their Makers

A Prophet of "Ould Ireland"

Mr. W. B. Yeats returned three weeks ago from his sentimental embassy to America, and two more of his "Plays for an Irish theatre" have since been published by Mr. Bollen. It would seem that Mr. Yeats had a very warm welcome among his compatriots in the United States, and believes that Irish America may be as thoroughly aroused to interest in the Celtic Revival as it was to practical support of the political movement in Parnell's great days. Mr. Yeats seems to have given himself to this new crusade with much the same devotion that Mr. Israel Zangwill has shown in the cause of Zion. The new force that is to quicken the national patriotism of the Irish is the revival of the race spirit in literature and religion. Well, we shall see! It is all too dreamily romantic for the British Philistine, but the picturesque side of it most appeal strongly to even the least imaginative Englishman. Mr. Yeats is perhaps the most picturesque personality associated with the movement, and although he has not been so thorough as Mr. George Moore in his contempt for all things British, he leaves the unromantic neighbourhood of Euston Road every year for a spell of real Irish air, thus regularly refreshing his tender muse. His is, indeed, a perplexing character, and I do not profess to understand it; for all my preconceived ideas of him were sent away by his Dorian drama *Where there is Nothing*, which seemed to me quite as unsuited to an Irish as for an English theatre. It is difficult to believe that seventeen years have slipped away since Mr. Yeats published his first collection of short lyric plays and poems, and that he will be thirty-nine years old next June.

An Author's Nationality

Although Mr. Yeats has been a resident of London for something like twelve years, we know that he is Irish of the Irish; but the system adopted by Mr. J. H. Miller in his "Literary History of Scotland" might

have donationalised him if Mr. Douglas Hyde had applied it in the case of his "Literary History of Ireland." Mr. Miller dismisses Thomas Campbell in a footnote, because the poet removed early in his literary career to London; but he is forced to make an exception of Smollett, who was a mere lad in his teens when he left Glasgow and had written nothing of any value in his native land.

ing to certain specific ideas, by no means peculiarly Irish. Moreover, a somewhat strained effort to be primitive and to avoid devices of modern dramatists is visible, which leads rather to lack of art than absence of artificiality. This, for instance, applies strongly to "The King's Threshold," by Mr. Yeats, who, I believe, is the guiding spirit of the Society.



Photo by

Mr. W. B. Yeats

(Russell)

Who is the leader of the attempt to revive the race spirit which animates the national literature of Ireland

OUR Irish friends are making a valuable effort to create a national drama, which, seeing their manifest earnestness, ought to have some valuable result, and it may be noted that they are not asking for a subsidy. In considering the two performances on Saturday week, one is disposed to fancy that their efforts are being made accor-

He, in a short speech, thanked the players for rendering the piece according to his idea, which apparently consisted in devoting nearly all their efforts to speaking his verse beautifully, without regard to gesture, movement, or facial play. The result was

ably, the players made desperate efforts to eliminate all trace of brogue, with the result that they became utterly unnatural. Some moaned their verse, one chanted like a wild curate and was almost unintelligible, and Mr. F. J. Fay, in the chief part, suggested a burlesque of Mr. F. R. Benson; but for his work in another piece, one could not have guessed that he is a remarkably clever actor. This other performance showed that the players gave an idea of a performance by Noah's Ark figures containing gramophones. It sounds rude to say this, but it is important to point out that these earnest artists in some respects are treading the wrong road. Almost throughout the performances of the serious plays the actors and actresses exhibited an obviously self-conscious restraint.

Two new dramatists appeared, Mr. J. M. Synge and Mr. Padraic MacCormac Collu, and both are of considerable ability. The former was represented by two one-act pieces, the first tragic, the second comic, or, perhaps, tragic-comic. Each belonged more to the class of stage anecdote than normal drama. The pathetic tale of the old fisherman able to sleep in peace because the last of her eight sons has been claimed by the sea was handled with considerable dignity and some real poetry. It is founded, perhaps, on a story connected with King David, and contains a suggestion of "The Good Hope." The part of the old woman was ably rendered by Miss Honor Lovell. The comic play, called "In the Shadow of the Glen," was grimly humorous in its story of the old peasant who pretended to be dead, in order, like a famous English statesman, to know what people would say of him. Dan Burke was anxious to know the opinion of

his young wife, and learnt more than he bargained for when he found her, even before the wake, making arrangements for a second marriage. Evidently Mrs. Nora Burke had not heard Mr. Fuller Golden's complaint that, whereas a German when he is dead keeps dead, one has to sit up a whole week with an Irish corpse to prevent its coming back to life. However, when he discovered her marching off after he has driven her out of the house, with a tramp, he probably felt well rid of the baggage. Mr. W. G. Fay's acting was very clever.

Sketch BY E. F. S. ("Monica") 6p 6
THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

Count Circular 4/2

"Broken Soil," by Mr. Padraic MacCormac Cohn—I fancy that Padraic is really a well-known Christian name in an un-Christian form—is the only work in more than a single Act, though it proved to be no longer than many a one-Act piece. Indeed, it may be said that the system involved in it, of telling a tale essentially short yet lasting over a substantial space of time by lowering the curtain twice, for a minute or two, is very convenient. The work is puzzling but full of interest, and seemed to me curiously rich in character. No doubt, there were thoughts that suggested Ibsen, and turns of phrase that reminded one of Maeterlinck; and the author lacks the amazing stagecraft of one and strange command of language possessed by the other. I imagine that the whole piece is symbolic, but fail to find the key. Perhaps some reader may from the story. There was an old, famous fiddler named Con Hourican, whose daughter, Maire—presumably Mary—had induced him to give up wandering on the road and settle down in a house with a bit of land; but he was restless and grew tired of a steady life, and spent his nights at Flynn's, playing to the men. Flynn's, I imagine, was a public-house. His neighbor, Brian MacConnell, one of the "black MacConnells," a hard, fierce young man, loved Maire, and, in a beautiful little speech, told his love. She showed no signs of responding, and told him she was going to look after her father, who had made her a promise never to go to Flynn's again—I presume that the trouble about Flynn's concerned the drink—and she informed him she meant to take her father on the road again. Brian got the idea that, if the father were to break his promise, the girl would remain, so he induced the old man to go to Flynn's. Brigid, Brian's sister, was so annoyed with her brother that she determined to go to America, and tried to induce Maire to accompany her. She pretended that she had money left to her by her mother; really, it was stolen from her brother. Maire bade her pray before going, and the result was that Brigid's heart suddenly warmed to a love for her brother, to whom she had always been quite uninterested. Maire definitely decided to take her father on the road. Brian endeavored to persuade her to marry him; she almost consented, but remained firm, apparently because Brian made so little of an effort to move her; at least, this was the stage-effect of the scene. At dawn, the girl, or rather, young woman, marched off "on the road," where, I should have thought, the fiddler would have been peculiarly exposed to temptation, and they did not take even the traditional red-handkerchief-full of luggage with them.

I presume that the phrase "on the road" had some deep meaning. Everything about Maire pointed away from the idea that she had a Bohemian and vagabondish tendency. I imagine there was some specific idea involved in the intense reticence of the characters and in their strange brevity; their conversations are so condensed as to be startlingly abrupt—one has little more than, as it were, sign-posts to the scenes—yet the play exhibits the rare power of suggesting individual persons, even if their conduct seems hardly consistent with their individuality; and there are fine vivid short phrases in it. Over the whole is a melancholy poetic note of fatalism, enhanced by sobriety of acting, that makes the players seem mere puppets of destiny, of the destiny against which they make no strife. Here one may note a perilous disease of drama. The mood of moody peasants, who accept everything hostile without contention, moody peasants, who accept and dead wills, may be profoundly true, yet I must observe that the audience, chiefly, no doubt, of compatriots, laughed at tragic-comic passages that seemed to me painfully sad. In their strangely quiet fashion, all the players acted very well, and there was a humour in the old fiddler which showed that Mr. F. J. Fay could be a rich low-comedian. Certainly the ordinary playgoer would see something of the erudite and amateurish in the work of the players, and yet it suited the play, perhaps because that was crude and amateurish, and yet, again, one recognizes the spirit of a real dramatist. It is earnestly to be hoped that all these sincere workers—playwrights and players—will not devote themselves too much to the idea of creating a tradition by breaking with traditions, and will remember that accepted rules cannot safely be expressly defied without a full knowledge of their origin and degree of necessity.

IRELAND AT PLAY-

The Irish Festival at the Royalty.

On Saturday last the aspiring young bloods of the Irish National Theatre Society hired the Royalty Theatre and gave a couple of performances on what Dick Hobbler styled their "own brazen brook." They gave a show in the afternoon and another in the evening; they presented only Irish plays dealing with Irish subjects and enacted by Irish players, but happily the despised Anglo-Saxon tongue was throughout employed, and the attendants accepted English sixpences in purchase of the programmes. Apperძო's excellent food-stuffs and Scottish whisky was procurable at the bars, so the balance of Anglo-Scottish-German equality was maintained, but the Irish accent—"so soft that you could cut it with a shovel"—was heard on all sides, and the cheering was so sincere and exultant that Mr. W. B. Yeats was moved to admit that he had no difficulty in recognising that he was in the presence of an audience of his own countrymen. I really do think that race-prejudice entered not a little into the reception that was accorded to the several productions. The Hibernian element in the theatre recognised that the old country was asserting itself in the midst of Saxon surroundings, and they did themselves proud accordingly. To the English playgoer this festival was a curious, pleasant and interesting function, but to the Celt it was an occasion of general congratulation and rejoicing. The executive of the Irish Theatre Society might reasonably have anticipated a stronger numerical backing, but in point of enthusiasm they certainly had nothing to complain of.

I was assured that by absenting myself from the afternoon performance I had missed two plays by Mr. J. N. Synge, which, in point of pathos, dignity, and unstrained sentiment, combined with natural humor, were equal to, if not more dramatically valuable than anything else on the two programmes. I am sorry that I did not have an opportunity of seeing "Riders from the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen," as Mr. Synge's works were entitled. I think they would have given me a better opinion of Irish dramaturgy than I derived from "The Broken Soil," which formed the centre piece of the evening's triple bill. This play, by Mr. Padraic MacCormac Cohn, which had been described as an "exceedingly powerful and well written" drama of Irish peasant life, proved a dull, slow moving, and confusing piece of work. For the life of me I could not grasp what the author was driving at. The character of Con Hourican, the old fiddler, was a well observed and excellently well portrayed character, but the rest were not so easy to place. There was Con's daughter, Maire, whose object in life was to make a man of her father, and wear him from the influence of convivial society. There was Brian MacConnell, who was in love with Maire, who, as far as I could judge, was not indifferent to the big, leader-witted peasant. There was Brigid MacConnell, who had grown weary of her brother, her lot in life, and her surroundings; and there was Anne Kilbride, who was just Anne Kilbride—a name on a programme.

When the story opens, Maire wants to be off and to take her father with her; Brian is anxious for a change of scene because Maire rejects his addresses, and Brigid sighs for America as being as far away from her brother as she is likely to get. But the pure influence of Maire works wonders in this

See this 4/20/04

Mr. W. B. Yeats has written as follows to the Press:—I am an announcement in your issue that my play, Cathleen Ni Houlihan, is to be acted at St. Louis by a company of Irish players who are going there. As the National Theatre Society, of which I am President, has decided not to go to America at present, I have not given leave for any play of mine to be taken there by any other company.

INDEPENDENT

JUNE 18, 1904

The Stage

Irishman.

In the Gaelic edition of the "Irish World" an indignant protest is entered against the style of entertainment which is being served up to the visitors in the Irish Section of the St. Louis Exhibition.

A correspondent who is on a run to St. Louis writes that the Irish village there is not only a sham, but a laughing and a disgrace. "The players, musicians, and singers from Dublin, with their Irish music and Gaelic drama, have been actually turned out, many of them discharged, and the stage Irishman installed in their place." Better complaint is made of the conduct of Myron J. Murphy, of New York, the director of amusements for the company which erected the Irish Exhibit, for permitting a man named Tuckey to travesty the Irish character. Messrs. Dudley Digges and Gerald Ewing made strong representations to the management about the character of the performances which were being given, but they got no satisfaction. An appeal was made to Mr. Thomas F. Bailey, the president, and Mr. James A. Keogh, who induced the Irish players to go out to St. Louis, but these gentlemen said that the wrong must deal with Mr. Murphy. The latter evidently wants the show of entertainment which the Dublin players object to. The Gaelic editor of the "Irish World" declares that a great blunder was committed when Murphy was placed in charge of the theatre in the Irish Section. But every decent and intelligent Irishman and woman in America will demand of President Bailey and Commissioner Keogh that this outrage be stopped, and at once. When it is stopped we shall be prepared to enter to their explanation of how it was allowed to occur. They are responsible, and will be so hold-out Murphy, with whom no Irish Irishman wants any exchange. The National Convention of the Ancient Order of Hibernians meets in St. Louis next month, and we trust and believe it will deal vigorously with this national disgrace and disgrace. The Order is pledged to war upon the stage Irishman. There is the story." For the credit of the Irish name in America, it is to be hoped that this energetic protest will have effect. In any event, the action of the Dublin players will command the warm approval of all well-respecting Irishmen.

poor community, and when the third act is reached Con is a reformed character, Brian has shown himself worthy of Mairé's regard, and the brother and sister are living in a state of uninterrupted amity. Why, in this improved environment, should all these good people persist in their determination to leave the little village and escape from a condition of things that has ceased to exist? I give it up! The author may know, and he may also claim that he has truthfully portrayed the national temperament in his characters. If he has, his analysis cannot be termed flattering, for a more depressed and depressing, plaintive and discontented set of people it would be difficult to imagine. They move listlessly; they speak in complaining tones; they bear themselves like people living under a spell. They take it in turns to sit on a low stool like impatience on a monument and read ill-fortune in the peat fire. One readily concedes that Mr. Cobh has some subtle meaning in his play, and only regrets that it has eluded one's endeavors to locate it.

In "A Pot of Broth," a farce in one Act, Mr. Yeats has dramatized, with considerable humor, what is evidently a legend of Irish resourcefulness and ready wit. Mr. W. G. Fay played a beggarman with real farcical ability, and richly deserved the special "call" that rewarded his impersonation. As a stage play Mr. Yeats's farce is more satisfactory than his poetical play, "The King's Threshold," which was given at both performances. After all, the highest mission of the poet is not to enact poetry by claiming official recognition for the craft. Seanachán, the chief poet of Ireland, supposed that he was violating the sacred rights of the poets by resolving to die of starvation rather than sit below the salt at the King's table, but the brutal Anglo-Saxon is more inclined to regard his heroism as an exhibition of egotism and childish temper. The King objects, naturally enough, to having poets dying on his front steps, and he exports his courtiers, his chamberlain, even his own daughters to induce the recalcitrant bard to break his fast. But their efforts are suitably repulsed; the offer of bread at the King's hands is declined and the sovereign is finally defeated by the action of the poet's pupils, who show themselves willing to die with the master rather than his high purpose of upholding the rights of the poets shall be frustrated. The idea, though far-fetched, appealed directly to an audience of poets who cheered the play, cheered the author, and cheered the author's contention that actors who speak verse beautifully find that they have been acting beautifully (even though they and the audience may have been unconscious of it). But if earnestness is akin to beauty, and sincerity is a substitute for histrionic genius, Messrs. F. J. Fay, P. J. Kelly, Neumas

O'Sullivan, P. MacSinnhaigh, and Misses Mairé Ní Shíobhlaigh and Mairé Ní Gharbhagh may be congratulated upon their several interpretations of the author's intentions.

Athenaeum ap 2

DRAMA

THE IRISH THEATRE.

THE conditions under which the representations of the Irish National Theatre were given at the Royalty Theatre on Saturday last demanded on the part of the supporters of the institution an amount of self-relieving that of other Wagnerite worshipers at Bayreuth or contemplation of a single piece the whole of a summer day seems. But an insignificant rack loads that of visiting twice in the course of a day of what might

well have been regarded as mid-winter's festivities producing no fewer than four novelties. Ordinarily, in such circumstances becomes all but impossible, the spectator finding himself baffled in the attempt to disentangle so many separate threads of interest. Most important is naturally "The King's Threshold" of Mr. W. B. Yeats, which was given both in the afternoon and evening. This shows the dramatist, of Leamshan, the chief bard of Ireland, in vindicating the rights of the poets withdrawn by King Gúaire. While these are withheld he condemns himself to starvation. Vainly do the ladies of the Court, the princesses of half-blood royal, and his own mistress seek to induce him to forego a rigid, persistence in which means inevitable death. The king then swears that his demise shall be followed by the hanging of his pupils. Instead of praying him, as was hoped, to surrender, and so save their lives, these youths urge their master to persist in his pious and patriotic resolution, whereupon the monarch relents and restores the ancient and immemorial privileges.

"Rivers from the Sea," by Mr. J. M. Synge, gives a pathetic picture of the mourning of a widow, the loss of whose sons is swallowed up by the inexorable sea which has already furnished "wandering" graves for his five brothers and their father.

"In the Shadow of the Glen," by the same author, shows the rather indelicate trick played on his wife by an Irish farmer, who tests her fidelity by shamming death. The unastir-

factory result of the experiment recalls the immortal Widow of Ephesus.

Mr. Yeats's Irish farce, "The Pot of Broth," had been previously seen. Last come "Becken Sól," a picture of peasant life, by Mr. Padraic Colum.

Era ap 2

IRISH PLAYS.

TWO performances were given on Saturday by the Irish National Theatre Society at the Royalty Theatre. In the afternoon three different plays were produced, the most important of these being a play in one act and in verse, by W. B. Yeats, entitled

"THE KING'S THRESHOLD."

King Gúaire.....	Mr. F. J. Kay
Chamberlain of King.....	Mr. Neumas O'Sullivan
Isabelle.....	Miss T. Keogh
A Monk.....	Mr. Farn Ross
Mayor of Kilmacra.....	Mr. J. M. Synge
A Clerk.....	Mr. U. Wogan
Assistant Uppish.....	Mr. J. M. Synge
Alison.....	Miss Mairé Ní Gharbhagh
Una.....	Miss Kate Francis
Princess Maon.....	Miss Kate Francis
Princess Fionnuala.....	Miss Fionnuala O'Sullivan
Fadhma.....	Miss Kate Francis
Una.....	Miss F. J. Kay
Isabelle.....	Miss F. J. Kay
Alison.....	Miss Mairé Ní Gharbhagh
Una.....	Miss Kate Francis

The story upon which Mr. Yeats bases his poetic play is a very simple one. Seanachán, the Chief Poet of Ireland, has the right to sit at the King's table; but the monarch, at the instigation of certain leading members of his Court who despise poetry, puts a slight upon him by deserting him. He shall take his seat at a lower table. Thereupon Seanachán binds himself to the steps before the palace of King Gúaire, and refuses to eat. He prefers death to degradation, and the appeals made to him have no effect. All in vain is the pleading of the Chamberlain and his charming princesses, who come from the King, and even his sweetheart, Fionnuala, can make no impression. The monarch is soothed that the indignant poet shall eat of the absolute starvation, exclaiming, "As he perishes my name in the world is perishing also." The King proceeds to adopt more alarming measures. By his orders the poet's pupils have halberds placed around their couch and are told that if they fail to induce to part to break his fast they will perish with him. But they are faithful to their master, and do not fear death. Then the King brings women, and offers his eyes to the poet. Seanachán replies that he who made oaths what they are has a right to know them where he will, and he refuses it on the King's hand. Mr. F. J. Kay is the role of Seanachán dominated him into enormous style which was impressive; Mr. P. J. Kelly was a dignified King Gúaire; and Miss Mairé Ní Gharbhagh faithfully portrayed Fionnuala, the poet's sweetheart.

The Princess had pleasing representatives in Sara Aligned and Doreen O'Sullivan. Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan was efficient as the Chamberlain, and other minor parts were entrusted to Meena T. Kohler, and Egan, W. G. Fay, U. Wright, E. Davis, George Roberts, and others.

"RIDERS TO THE SEA."

A Play, in One Act, by J. M. Synge.
 Maurya Miss Honor LITTLE
 Bartley Mr. W. G. Fay
 Michael Miss Sara ALIGNED
 Nora Miss Eileen VANDER
 This play proved to be a gloomy but graphic picture of Irish life, the scene being a cottage situated on an island off the west coast of Ireland. Here an Irish Maurya, an old woman, her son, Bartley, and her two daughters, Michael and Nora. She has lost her husband and five sons, and Maurya foretells the time when Bartley too, will fall a victim to the cruel, greedy sea. The scene is set out to the North, and the two girls come from their mother's room, pieces of clothing which have been found, and which they identify as belonging to Michael. Maurya makes a hopeless protest against Bartley going down to the sea, and he, and her mother and induces her to intercept Bartley on his way and give him his blessing and a loaf of bread to take him to the shore with a good wind, declaring that she has seen the wrath of Michael riding after his brother to the sea. Then other two women in mourning who give utterance to a low wailing melody, whilst the dead body of Bartley is brought into the cottage. The benevolent mother has become so accustomed to the death of her dear ones that this fresh blow seems to have little effect. She is even able to find some consolation in the fact that she will not be so alone as she has been, and is comforted by any thought of loss or disaster. Miss Honor Little was extremely good as Maurya, and the Misses Aligned and Eileen Vander acted very naturally as the daughters. Mr. W. G. Fay as Bartley also did well.

"IN THE MEADOW OF THE GLEN."

A Play, in One Act, by J. M. Synge.
 Dan Burke Mr. Seamus ROBERTS
 Nora Burke Miss Sara ALIGNED
 Michael Burke Mr. F. J. VANDER
 A Drump Mr. W. G. Fay

The vein of humour which runs through this play was welcome after the very sad little piece which preceded it. Dan Burke, an elderly farmer, introducing episodes concerning the faithfulness of his wife, shams death, and overhears a conversation between his wife and the young man who has entered the cottage to take his place. A drump who has entered the cottage is called upon during the temporary absence of the faithful wife to hand the "garage" a thick blackstone. When the living couple returns the supposed dead man makes shams very lively, and ultimately turns his wife out of the house, leaving with the drump, who is to do with his rival, the young man, Mr. George Roberts. The scene ended as the farmer, and Maurya who had been seated as the young wife. Mr. W. G. Fay displayed much humour as the drump.

In the evening Mr. W. B. Yeats' one-act farce of *Pilot of Brink*, which was produced last year, was successfully repeated; and it was followed by a new play, in three acts, by Patrick J. O'Sullivan, entitled *Broken Soil*. The plot is briefly as follows:—A female fiddler, who was accustomed to travel the country with the drump, has been a home and settled down. She, however, still cherishes a passion for the road, especially as her father's habit for episode takes him to France, and she, as O'Sullivan, an admirer, to keep her within reach, leaves her father by availing his maternal vanity, espies to Patrick. Maurya refuses to do with her father on the road till he has kept straight for a month. This he does, and the two drumps go to the Glen, Maurya Maurya's feelings have changed towards O'Sullivan, as have also the feelings of his sister, who lives with him. Mr. E. J. V. as the young student of the old fiddler, and Maurya Maurya played charmingly as the daughter. The perfect manner, afternoon and evening, was received with much favour, and Mr. Yeats and Mr. W. G. Fay, who stage-managed, had to make short speeches. Among these was that of Mr. Seamus Roberts, who he both won the chief £5000 for Ireland, Lord and Lady Aberdeen, Mr. Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Sir Frederick Pollack, the Rev. Stungford Brooker, Mr. Maurice Hewlett, Mr. Henry James, and Mr. J. M. Barrie.

JOSEPH ENTANGLED, comedy, at the Haymarket; His Excellency the Governor and The Duke of Kidderminster, farcical comedies, at the Duke of York's and the Criterion, respectively, represent almost the sum of National Drama at present flourishing or even languishing in London. If we regard the suburban theatres as provincial, after the manner of the profession, Mr. Alexander, it is true, promises a home-made article for his next venture, after having relied on imports from Germany to keep the doors of the St. James's open for some time past. But even that is an affair of the future. Mr. Tree would hardly feel it insulting to hint that spectacle contributes more to the success of *The Duke of the Gods* than brilliance of dialogue or splendour of diction, more even than moving incident or finished action, while the play itself, whatever its merit, is, or I am much mistaken, of American manufacture. At the Court Theatre Mr. J. H. Leigh struggles bravely to keep the lamp of Shakespeare from total extinction. And what else? Well, the pilgrim in search of plays will find adaptations from the French at the Garrick, the New and the Imperial. For the rest the London theatres are wholly given over to musical comedies to which the public crowd for distraction and edification. It is not for me, in the unavoidable absence of "W. H. H.," to moralise upon the time, but it is small wonder if, when these facts are realised to the consternation of some and the surprise of all, a cry should be raised for the establishment of a subsidised theatre. Indeed, a possible one must be pardoned if he foretold the day when only under the auspices of that admirable body the Stage Society would it be possible to see a play at all. Anyhow, the work of this and similar societies must have increasing attraction for a public that does exist, though it seems well nigh submerged in the multitude that cares only for that type of entertainment whose prophet is Mr. George Edwardes.

Therefore a peculiar interest attached to the flying visit paid by the Irish National Theatre to the Royalty last week. This enterprise is part of a movement which the majority in this country cannot altogether view with favour, but since most readers of THE PILOT are fully awake to the evils that infect and oppress social life today, their sympathies cannot fail to be excited by any effort wherever it may originate to foster noble ideals and cherish the love of things that are of good report. Nor must we quarrel with the fact that for the present the undertaking is a little over-determined by the personality of one man, and we find a determination to let poetry make her appeal with no adventitious aid from gorgeous scenery, wordless effects of lighting or marvellously managed stage pictures, or are called upon to be sufficiently engrossed with the humour and pathos of simple incidents in peasant life, not to care for the absence of stage-craft as we are accustomed to it, or for sophisticated art in the play itself. *The King's Threshold*, the first piece given on Saturday evening, is a simple story enough, devoid of action or of any character drawing in the usual sense. For Seanchan, the poet, is but a type of the man who stands for the things which are not seen and chooses hunger and even death, necessary, rather than abate the intensity of his love for the interest, therefore, lies in what he says and in what language he says it. And if Mr. Yeats has written the part in lines of great beauty and delicately varied harmony he has found in Mr. F. J. Fay an interpreter as quick to perceive his intention and as well equipped for communicating it as he could have expected. He said his lines in poetry primarily, using in the more impassioned parts a sort of chant of deliberately chosen notes and intervals, a performance which it was most grateful to hear. *The King's Threshold* was followed by a piece in three short acts, but little more complicated than the first, called *Broken Soil*. It is a story merely of a daughter's devotion to a father whose weakness she knows and tries to save him from even at the sacrifice of her own hopes and wishes. The little play is crude enough in some ways, but the character of the old fiddler, really an artist, occasioned something of a scandal, is very ably conceived, and after appreciating Mr. F. J. Fay's delivery of blank verse, it was surprising to find that he was no less at home as an actor of character. His restraint or the absence of any inclination to over-act which might have been expected and pardoned betwined a real artist. His get-up was altogether admirable. The quaint little figure was exactly what, in spite of abundant care, accomplished professional



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actors too often fail to realise. In the last piece, *A Pot of Broth*, again by Mr. Yeats, the other Mr. Fay—Mr. W. G. Fay—had an opportunity of showing what he could do in farce. Unlike what had gone before, the *Pot of Broth* would have been sure of success anywhere. Here there was occasion for much more business than in either of the previous pieces, and Mr. Fay showed himself fully equal to it. A beggarman on the look-out for a meal, knowing the couple at whose expense he proposes to get it, accomplishes his design by balancing their credulity and cupidity against their formidable stinginess. They give that they may get, and the curtain falls on the greedy pair who expect his reverence to dinner, watching the pot from which they anticipate a magic broth, about to feast on shadows, while the tramp disappears with the substance of their ham and their chicken. Except when these two gentlemen gave as there was practically nothing that could seriously be called acting, but on the other hand there did not seem to be any debasement about themselves on the part of any of the performers, and that fact was all in their favour.

E. H.

Leader Up 9

A PHILISTINE AT THE IRISH PLAYS.

A VENDOR of French newspapers must have discerned something subtly un-English about the small crowd that waited outside the New Royalty Theatre on the night of the Irish plays. He hung around for awhile shouting *Le Journal* and *Le Matin* for a few minutes, but sheered off disappointedly at last with his papers unsold. To me the crowd was strangely un-Irish. I mentally contrasted it with the crowd outside the Queen's Hall on the night of a Gaelic League Concert, and with National League crowds outside halls in which meetings were to take place in the palmy days of politics. In those crowds I was at home, even though I had no personal acquaintance with a soul in them. Not so in this. Whatever nationality preponderated when the theatre was full, I think these waiters on the threshold were mainly English seekers after the curious, the strange, the exotic. They were the sort of people one sees at the Stage Society's performances of Browning's unactable plays and the like. One young man in front of me was explaining to a fair companion that one of his grand-parents was Irish. He lamented that though he was one fourth Irish, he knew no more of Gaelic than the words for "Give me a kiss." The lady said she always understood that the Irish took kisses without asking. The young man laughed apologetically, whether in exenation of his three-fourths English blood, or because the presence of others made it impossible to take the broad hint, I do not know. These two were frivolous, but most of the others were not. Speaking generally, they looked soulful, suburban dwellers of the lower middle class, with whom, perhaps, Mr. Yeats' name was the great draw.

I had for long been anxious to see the Irish players, and some at least of the plays with which their names are associated. I waited with eagerness for the curtain to go up on Mr. Yeats' "The King's Threshold," but oh! what a disappointment was in store for me. I think "Chance!" has told the story already in the *Lantern*. I hope so, at any rate, for I could not tell it very clearly, though I listened with all my ears, and tried hard to understand. Let me say at once that I heard every word. The players' enunciation was wonderfully good, and a grateful contrast to inarticulate mumbling of so many English actors. But I could make little of it all. Of course, I guessed that Mr. Yeats was allegorising something, but nothing was clear to me. Against a setting of uniform grey-green a number of picturesque dressed persons stood in rigid attitudes and chanted speeches at one another. There was hardly a gesture, and no more movement than sufficed to bring them on the stage and take them off again. A poet suffering from "swelled head" had aggravated a king, who thereupon resolved to take him down a peg or two. He did

so, and the poet was so hurt that he lay on the king's steps and refused his meals. Then all sorts of persons came and begged him to take a bite and a sup. But no, not he. To their chanting entreaties he chanted refusals, and so it went on until the king knelt under. I hardly know how to express the effect of it all. I was, as Tennyson says, "breathing like one that hath a weary dream." When the curtain fell and the lights went up I heard a sigh of relief. These soulful things are awful to a poor Philistine.

An enthusiast came to me afterwards and asked how I liked it. I answered diffidently, saying its strangeness had left me bored and indifferent. He looked disappointed, but said that another whom he questioned had also expressed himself so. I said the thing seemed a sort of nightmare, with disembodied spirits moving vaguely through it. He frowned at "nightmare," but at "disembodied spirits" his eyes lit up, and he said I had caught the idea. The characters were abstractions, so to speak. I do not know if he speaks with authority, but if so I do not think it makes matters much better. The stage does not seem to be the right place for disembodied spirits who do nothing, but stand stiffly and chant blank verse. However, the audience, as a whole, expressed loud approval, and Mr. Yeats came on and made a graceful little speech in which he thanked the applause to the players.

In Mr. Colm's "Broken Soil" we came back to humanity again, very much to my relief. The characters are sometimes exasperating in that they are always wanting to do one thing, and then doing something different, but at least they are creatures of flesh and blood. Maire Hourican wants to go the road first of all, then she feels that she should "fight her battle" where she is, and finally, if I understood aright, she takes the road with

her father. Brighid MacConnell hastily decides on emigration, but after five minutes in Maire's bedroom she announces her resolve to stay at home. I was a little dazed at the finish; everyone seemed to want to go away and stay at home at the same time. I wondered if Mr. Colm was allegorising something, but perhaps that was because Mr. Yeats' play left me with allegory on the brain. With all its crudities, "Broken Soil" was a more real play than "The King's Threshold," and left one far more hopeful for the future of Irish Drama.

"A Pot of Broth" was a distinctly humorous trifle, and the hearty laughs it gave us were a relief after the gloom of the preceding plays. Mr. W. G. Fay was a joy for an hour or so, if not for ever. Mr. Yeats should go on writing farces.

I have spoken of the players' clear enunciation. Mr. Yeats called it "speaking beautifully." It certainly was that. But the chanting cadences should be kept for the mystic plays. As Maire Hourican in "Broken Soil," Maire, Ne Shuibhlaigh chanted her part in a way that made me wonder what an every-day Longford girl would think of it. The men, however, had the good sense to keep plain song out of the mouths of Longford penants.

Altogether I liked the players greatly. They were all earnest and intelligent, and some had talent of real distinction. But the plays! Well, I am a Philistine. I hope much from Padraic McCormack Colm, and I enjoy Mr. Yeats as a writer of farce.

Frag. Crit.

MR. W. B. YEATS' "CATHEEN NI BOULIHAN."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL.

April 6th.

Sir—I see an announcement in your columns that my play, "Catheen Ni Boulahan," is to be acted at St. Louis by a company of Irish players who are going there. As the National Linen Society, of which I am president, has decided not to go to America at present, I have not given leave for any play of mine to be taken there by any other company.—Yours, sincerely,

W. B. YEATS.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE COMPANY.

Last year the Irish National Theatre Company gave us, exiles, a day of real unexpected enjoyment. But this year, however real our enjoyment, it could scarcely be unexpected, since we had been looking forward to it for months. And now it is over—just over. After last year's performance we sat and dreamt; now we sit and think. For to us last year's performance was something unique—something that we could not judge by any given standard—something that we could only feel right, that we could only feel wrong. But this year we can take the standard of last year and ask ourselves is that standard maintained. We can say at once and heartily that the acting has immeasurably improved: the general level quite wonderfully so, for though the chief parts last year were all well acted, a few at least of the minor parts were, obviously, ill-acted, but this, perhaps, was most noticeable in Mr. Ryan's "Laying of the Foundations," and then, perhaps, it was not so much the fault of the actors as the fault of the choice of actors. But this year all that is changed. As Mr. Yeats pointed out in his short speech to the audience, the playwrights may congratulate themselves on their interpreters, and, above all, I think, Mr. Yeats may congratulate himself, for certainly Mr. F. J. Fay's acting in the part of Seanchán was a revelation. All the more a revelation since we had not seen this gifted actor last year. His brother had delighted us, but it is he, I think, who has held us.

Comparisons are odious, and we have compared last year's and this year's acting. Dare we set ourselves to compare the plays? No; but may we say that we missed "The Countess Kathleen" and "The Hour Glass," we missed something which for all Mr. F. J. Fay's acting, "The King's Threshold" did not give us. It is beautiful poetry, but we are always so sure of the beauty of Mr. Yeats' poetry that it is for the other things—the lesser things if you will—that we look. But, apart from the lesser things, is not the effect of the beautiful poetry marred by that speech to the Princess beginning with the reiteration which has by now grown so wearisome? For myself I can say that at both performances I listened in sheer pleasure to beautiful words, beautifully spoken, till that speech. But we are all, perhaps, more than a little impatient when our sheer pleasure is marred and a little inclined to overlook the lost pleasure and dwell too much on the marrying.

Mr. Synge is a new playwright; his plays have been already played in Ireland and awakened some considerable comment there, but not before, I think, outside Ireland. "Riders to the Sea" is a tragedy, and where it has been spoken of has, I think, been spoken of with praise. Mr. Yeats in *Somerville* suggests rather than speaks praise of it, and tells us that Mr. Synge lives some months of each year in Arran. Doubtless; yet "Riders to the Sea" is false—quite false. It is not so much that no girl ever acted and spoke in Ireland quite as the dead man's sister act and speak, for that might be maintained and the play still ring true. It is not that the old woman is not correct: she is quite correct—there is the exact mingling of sorrow for the dead, and pride in the white boards that are to hide the dead—there is the mingled sentiment and pride which in like circumstances any Irish mother would be likely to exhibit. It is what any observer might see any day, when the wind blew foul and the sea was hungry, and yet—there is something wanting—something from within which is of the soul of literature. It is as a sympathetic observer would see it—but it is as one who might one day be an actor in a like

tragedy would see it? Intrinsically "Riders to the Sea" is, to my mind, wrong; intrinsically, however anomalous it may sound, "The Shadow of the Glen" is right. The tragedy rings false; the comedy rings true. Is it that comedy is of the surface of life and tragedy of its essence? Is it that to portray a scene even from life—a scene in which the great deeps are stirred, it is not enough that you have gone among the people whose life you portray—it is not enough that you have lived among them—it is that you must be as one of them? Of course, when one comes to think of it, the comedy is quite evidently false—it is not a typical picture of Irish life, the tragedy is, but the point I wish to emphasize is here: one has to think of it before one realises it. It does not obtrude itself. Played anywhere, and not as a study of Irish life, it must needs be a success; for though the old man's wife is not Irish, she is human, and the play is right—artistically right. There is not one false note struck, and when the wife and tramp have gone over the doorway, and the husband and lover sit to pledge one another in friendship, the sustained note has reached its inevitable climax. It is good comedy. We would all grant it if it had not made the initial mistake of representing itself as typically Irish. All of which goes to show that Mr. Synge can write drama, but that he would do well to choose other than Irish subjects.

I have left myself little space in which to speak of Mr. Colm's play, "Broken Soil." We had all heard of Mr. Colm; we had read his poetry, and we looked forward eagerly to see his play. A criticism of him I once heard has kept saying itself over and over in my mind since last night, for he was once called in my hearing "The poet of the dawn," and he could not have been more appropriately called, for his play is youth—incarnate youth. It has faults, of course—quite obvious faults. One misses the finish of Mr. Yeats and Mr. Synge, but—dare we say it?—one is glad to miss it, for had the play achieved the finish, it had lost in the process much of what is best in it. I do not remember one line of the play, though I know beautiful words gave form to much beautiful thought, for with me high above the words was always the sense of high youth, and the joy in it, and the fear—the fear for the so swift, so frail thing.

Mr. Colm will do greater things in drama—God willing; but I think "Broken Soil" will always keep its own place, for he will never again do anything with altogether the same charm. Many a will, of course, one day return to the lover who awaits her, for there is nothing irrevocable in the poetic Mr. Colm paints; she will return not to loss a

high life, but, vital, to a life in which the old high things of youth will seem not only not possible, but no longer desirable.

D. O'B.

freeman
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a few days ago to the London Times, on the Irish play at the Royal Theatre I mentioned that the "Times" was the only morning journal in which no notice of the performances appeared. Last year the "Times" critic was very enthusiastic in his praise of the Irish National Theatre Company and their work. The omission of any reference to the return visit on the present occasion was the subject of some comment which, however, is no longer justified, in view of the very exhaustive and very laudatory notice of the plays given yesterday in the literary supplement of the paper. To give an idea of the impression which the plays

made upon the "Times" critic, who is, admittedly, one of the most competent judges of the modern drama, it will suffice here to quote the concluding sentences. "We chanced," he says, "to come to this Irish performance straight from the big, brutal, stuporous French theatre—from La Mairie and La Boule, from the Cagueliers of Coquelin, and from Rojane more before than ever. What a contrast! After the brass band, the rustling of the wind among the reeds." The Irish players will appreciate this characteristic tribute to the charm and originality of their work.

Dramatic Notes

Review C. C.

DURING the past three or four months I have had the good luck to witness various performances of old and new plays which go far to prove that there is life in the theatre still and that all that is wanted for the revival of the drama is a leader who can gather together and focus the creative energies at work. "The Stage Society," "The Mermaid Society," "The Irish National Theatre Society" are all doing good work, which will not, however, prove so effective as it would were their performances given—for example—in one particular theatre, a theatre to which playgoers in due season grow into a habit of going with fair security of witnessing good work. Such a theatre is to be provided, it is understood, by Mr. J. H. Leigh at the Court, which house is to be re-decorated and provided with a sufficient stock of scenery.

T.P.'s WEEKLY.

April 8, 1904.

THE POET'S RIGHT.

For a good many years people have been talking and writing more or less vehemently about a Celtic revival in literature, and more particularly about the establishment of a national theatre in Ireland. Lady Gregory and Mr. W. B. Yeats, at the head of a small group of Irish writers, have made us familiar with the ancient source of inspiration, with the glamour of Celtic legends, with the far-off loves and sorrows of Celtic romance. But to many of us these things, so far as the actual drama of to-day is concerned, remained legendary and remote, mere haunting whispers from the land of eternal twilight. On Saturday, March 20, however, it was possible to witness an interpretation of this national purpose on the boards of the Royalty Theatre in a performance under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society, Hanover Square, and I can imagine no greater apology for this strange revival of the past than Mr. Yeats's one-act drama in verse, "The King's Threshold."

At first glance the ordinary playgoer, accustomed to the conventionalities of the French and English drama, is at once bewildered and disappointed. He sees, at a time when actor-managers vie with one another in scenic magnificence, the naked simplicity of a morality play. He learns that, in the opinion of this new school, the actor's art is to enunciate beautifully a poet's verses

instead of to interpret with every fibre of his being the life that is in the poet's thought. For these people, like the Athenians of old, in this one thing, play to the ear rather than to the eye. Again, when the craving for a new stimulus, as emotion, a life, a speaker, has become a habit of thought, when complexity has become almost an aim itself, one is almost ashamed before the naive sincerity of this appeal. Every preconceived notion is unseated. One looks for passion and movement and triumph, the pomp and prestige of external action—remember that with the Greeks suffering was included in the conception of action—and one finds merely fidelity to the inner drama. And yet it does not seem to me that this drama is at all the drama of the inner life. As Maurice Maeterlinck has

conceived it. Such as it is, it is clear and articulate in its utterance of what the Celt craves for.

In a three-act play, "Broken Soil," by Padraic MacCormac Celm, one gets a glimpse of this reactionary view in its immediate relations with reality. Con Hourcan is a fiddler whose passion it is to bring music into the tavern. He has a house now and a piece of land, but in the old days he and his daughter Maire used to take the road, without home or shelter, except such as the fiddle won for them. Maire, missing on the old days, wishes that again they might take to the open and abandon the safety of house and land, for the instinct of the peasant is in her blood. Brian MacConnell loves her, and determines to hold her in this place by fair means or foul. She has drawn from her father a promise to give up the tavern, but Brian tempts her again with a challenge from a rival fiddler from Sligo. The next day he is sorry, and the work of reconstruction and redemption recommences in this peasant cabin. In the end Maire reclaims her father, and they decide to take to the road together. In the meantime Maire has grown to love Brian, and the old court between them and duty presents itself, and with it the apparently incongruous notion of leading the old man away from his home in the grey morning.

You shrug your shoulders disdainfully at the whimsical broodings of these peasants. It seems to you trivial and futile that sacrifice should be accepted as an aim in itself. The cry for happiness is so universal that this medieval return to its denial, to renunciation, seems strangely repellent and grotesque. But if that is the central truth, if it is this that admits that the foundation of this art is a reality, and that, in their simplicity, these peasant idealists have abandoned side-issues for what appears to them to be the central truth, if we wish them as with the creations of the Russian novelists, more particularly with those of Dostoevsky. Impractical, wrong-headed, inert, they none the less speak persistently to the sense of the larger righteousness which somehow or other survives in the midst of practical judgments upon practical issues. Above all, this drama has its origin in the hearts of the people, and, like all else that is vital in a race's literature, is associated with that legendary past in

which romance was inseparably interwoven with fact.

But in "The King's Threshold" Mr. Yeats has given us the despair of these alien and impractical desires. Seanchan, the chief poet of Ireland, has been thrust forth from the king's table. He lies down on the steps of the king's palace and refuses food until the poet's right to sit at the king's table is restored. They come to him, one after another, with entreaties, but he will not yield. His pupils implore him not to die, and one of them threatens to abandon his art because of his sorrow. The answer comes like a flash:

What was it that the poets promised you
If it was not their sorrow?

The woman he loves comes to him, but he refuses to save himself for the sake of love. The king entreats him to yield if only for the safety of the State.

Again there rings out the awful message of the inner truth:

When did the poets promise safety, King?

That is the attitude, rebellion against the acceptable compromise, rejection of comfort and safety. Mr. Yeats shows us a poet dying before the palace of a king at a period when it was possible to exclaim:

And I would have all know that when all falls
In vain poetry calls out in joy,
Being the scattering head, the bursting flame,
The victim's joy among the holy flames,
God's laughter at the shattering of the world.
And now that joy laughs out and weeps and burns
On these bare steps.

Well, the poet's claim is far enough away from us to-day, but there is still something significant in this lonely figure starving in the midst of proffered food. There is still something symbolic in this wayward allegiance to the barren dream, this willful acceptance of the shadow in preference to the real. Like an echo of an echo it comes to us as from a younger world, the call to the things of the spirit, the inheritance of those who have forgotten wealth. At all events "The King's Threshold" elaborates one simple and profound truth: You cannot make people happy by the accumulation of gifts. In our own period, the apostrophe of pig-iron and pork-packing, the voice of industrialism is becoming more and more insistent. More and more aggressive rings out that formula of commerce, "Find labour or perish." Find labour, moreover, under certain conditions as rigid as the laws of mechanics, and as merciless. Seanchan refuses; a trivial thing, you say, in the hustle of the world's progress, a futile, childish comment upon the shaping of the world's growth. But in the words of Cyrano de Bergerac, "Quel geste!" After all, too, it is less tedious than the reiteration of exploited emotions cunningly fashioned to fit in with a sincere greed. If there be any redemption possible for the modern drama it must be on the lines of sincerity and conviction, and no other. It must be not through the makeshift of the clever dramatist, but through the conviction of the poet's right.

L. L. L.

IRELAND AND THE PLAY.

THERE is no room I like better in the Art Gallery in Dublin than that in which hang the portraits of Irishmen and Irishwomen who did something or nothing for their country a hundred and more years ago. And among the portraits my favourites are the grish, small heads of the lambent-eyed actresses who lived under the Georges. The Duchess of This and the Marchioness of That—so the legend runs underneath a goodly stretch of them. And after the grand titles you will read the suggestive note: *née Jennie Dush or née Fanny Blank—Actress*. I can never grow weary as I make the circle of these daring-eyed, brave-lipped women. For I think they represent Irish leanings well. The union, indeed, between the stage and the Irish mind is no accidental matter. Such lovers of good talk as are the Irish—lovers, too, of the ring of voices and of the light and shadow on neighbourly faces—cannot but have a comfortable regard for the theatre. They have above the mass of peoples the inclination to find in life itself a play which may be enacted with a certain fine refresh. It is no wonder then that the three greatest comic writers for the stage who have lived in this country during the past two centuries—Goldsmith and Wilde and Brinsley Sheridan—had all an Irish rearing.

In late years, however, the better sort of Irishmen have been filled with fears by the ominous success on the English stage and in English letters of so many of their countrymen. It seemed a queer thing and a sad thing that the fruit of all this genius should go to the inhabitants of Mayfair and Belgrave, while Irish men and women dwelt at home, starved of delight, and with no interpreter to declare their ideals and their dreams. The divine poet, it was remembered, may utter truths that are universal, but he utters them to and through his own people. National art, moreover, was wisely regarded as the one eternal fastening for the bundle of national ideals. In the light of this new-old knowledge Irish writers began to look with wide eyes at their neighbours' little lives. They hastened to reach the heart of their own race as Burns had reached the heart of the Scots, or, say, Whitman the heart of America. This spirit of national self-consciousness has already borne an influence in Ireland on all branches of Art. Perhaps it has declared its presence in the theatre most promisingly of all places.

I confess I had the most pleasant sensations at the Royalty Theatre, where a number of plays were produced the other day under the aegis of the Irish National Theatre Society. The play in London, as a rule, savours little of place or of nation: it is an artificial affair of the boards or of the limelight, designed not to represent life, but to relieve the tedium of it. At the Royalty, however, one felt as though the peat were smouldering under one's nose, and the soft country terms of speech falling on one's ears with a sweet flavour. Not even the presence of Mr. Wynham or Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman or Mr. Max Beerbohm himself could wholly make one that one's surroundings were English. I reached one from the stage, borne here on a soul Southern tongues, and spoken there in the accents of the North. The bare hovels of the West were laid before our eyes, and a tramp's rags and brogues, and the lavish costumes of old

barons and kings. For we had both kings and fisher-folk at the Royalty—chamberlains and beggars, son-wives and king's daughters. An Ireland that was almost pagan—Columcille's Ireland, "where the great men are so noble to look at and the women so fair to wed"—stood shoulder to shoulder with that patched and pinch-bellied Ireland whose laughter these days is almost more pathetic than its dreary sorrow.

Many cunning fellows have apparently found the vaguest of meanings in Mr. Yeats's little play, "The King's Threshold." The story, however, of how Seanchan, the Chief Poet of Ireland, staved off rather than abjure the poet's privilege to sit on the King's table, is simple enough. Statuesque in its beauty, and fragrant with poetic images that are of the twilight, it might have gained something as a drama had Mr. Yeats permitted the actors a greater liberty of gesture and play of feature. If a soldier is to be allowed to draw a sword at all, for instance, as a soldier here affects to draw one upon Seanchan, he ought to pretend, at least, to be a little interested in the operation, and to finger his weapon with as determined an air as he would show in handling an umbrella or a toupess. Mr. Yeats in his reaction against the "hippy" style of acting appears to me to have gone too far. That an actor, indeed, should confine his aims to reciting beautifully the beautiful lines of a poet requires that he should first of all cease to be an actor. Happily, Mr. F. J. Fay, in the part of Seanchan, rose to very noble heights of acting without lessening the bardic dignity. Were Mr. Fay in this country, he would be an actor-manager in less than no time. He has passion and poetry and wonderful eyes and a voice of music. In "The King's Threshold" some of the others had wonderful eyes: they had all voices of music.

It was not this poetical play of Mr. Yeats's, however, nor yet his fine and merry farce, "The Pot of Broth" (which came in the evening), that impressed me most fully with the conviction that the Irish stage will grow one day into a flower of European splendour. It may be boastful to make large prophecies on the strength of two brief pieces by Mr. J. M. Synge, but I assuredly believe that the production of "Riders to the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen" marks the dawning of a new day in the story of the Irish drama. In the former of these plays, the misty tragedy of the fisher-folk of Arran, where the shadow of death rides behind the sailor down to the shore, lives and burns as only a considerable artist could make it do. The visionary, humped old dame, whose good man and sons have gone down to the depths of the deep waters, abides in the mind, a gloomy, Rembrandtesque figure. Miss Honor Lavell proved the strong acting powers she possesses in her impersonation of that tragically simple rôle. Never, moreover, has the Irish tongue been more aptly caught than in this play. The dialogue reeks as surely of Ireland as do the turf-fires in the thatched cottages. "In the Shadow of the Glen," if it gives us nothing so tragical, is as decisively Irish. It is a funny piece, a tragicomic, in a Celtic dreamfulness, suggestive of that roaming sorrow and love of the Irish wanderers on which have made so many of the Irish wanderers on the face of the earth. Here Mr. W. G. Fay filled the part of a philosophic tramp with comic genius. I should like, indeed, to have spoken more fully of the acting in these pieces. In all but Mr. Yeats's poetical piece, it was as significantly fresh, as largely illuminating, as the plays themselves. Than which one could pay it no higher compliment.

R. W. L.

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The Rise of the Drama in Ireland.

By JOHN CAMPBELL, M.P.

THAT the English drama is in a parlous condition none will be hardy enough to deny. The Poet-Laureate, speaking lately at the Royal Institution, said :

"If we turn to the stage, which used to be thought the proper domain of the higher, indeed of the highest, poetry, what do we see? Audiences determined, let authors, managers, and actors strive as they will, not to have literature, and poetic literature most of all, inflicted on them, but, in its place, sumptuous scenery, choregraphic sensuousness, and the lightest of music."

At the time of writing there are only a couple of theatres in London which present legitimate plays by English authors. All the others are given over to adaptations from the French or unspeakable musical comedies. No wonder a long and imposing array of people—bishops, actors, editors, playwrights, lawyers, novelists, artists, and poets—cry aloud in the pages of the *Fortnightly* that something must be done.

Two remedies are suggested—a school of acting or a subsidised theatre. Very excellent things these would be, but neither of them is at all likely to be attained to-day, or yet to-morrow. Meanwhile, I would suggest that the leading managers in London should meet at some convenient tabernacle, and come to an agreement not to spend more than a certain sum, say a couple of hundred pounds, on the production of any play. This would abolish the necessity for the long run, the head and front of all the evils which afflict the theatre to-day, and might eventually wean the public from that concupiscence of the eye which prevents them from appreciating serious work. But my proposal has, I fear, as little likelihood of being adopted as the Tsar's humane idea of the voluntary disarmament of the nations of Europe.

From the state of things which prevails in England it is pleasant to turn to Ireland. There one finds a drama which is eminently national, and which has given abundant proofs of vigour and vitality. The flower of dramatic art has blossomed late in Ireland. It is a remarkable phenomenon that Irish literature

went on developing for over a thousand years without producing anything in the nature of a drama. The nearest approach to the dramatic form is found in the Ossianic poems, which are cast in the shape of a dialogue between the hero, Ossian, and St. Patrick. It is not that the Irish genius is averse from drama. On the contrary, an ordinary peasant, reciting any of the above poems or a prose legend, instantly becomes an actor, or, rather, a whole troupe of actors.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the development of literature in Ireland has proceeded in the reverse order from that which obtained in England. In England, the evolution has been from drama to romance, the novel in these present days being the Aaron's rod which seems bent on swallowing up all other forms of literature. In Ireland, on the contrary, the *dream*, or romance, held undisputed sway from the seventh till the seventeenth century, and it is only some six or seven years ago that the foundations of the Irish theatre were laid.

It was to a woman that the first inspiration was conceded. Lady Gregory has in her books, *Cathleen of Maurland* and *Gods and Fighting Men* given shape for all time to the old Irish legends. In this regard she has done what Malory did in her *Morte D'Arthur* and what Lady Charlotte Guest did in her *Maiden*. But her idea of an Irish national theatre was probably something better even than her books. Among the first assentors to the scheme were Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Edward Martyn, and Mr. George Moore. The project was soon set on foot, and received the support of nobilities of all sects and parties. Thus, on the first list of guarantors, about fifty in number, may be read, in strange and unwonted juxtaposition, the names of Lord Ardilaun and John O'Leary, Lady Ardilaun and Miss Maud Gonne, Lord Chief Justice O'Brien and William O'Brien, Dr. Mahony and Miss Flora Shaw, T. M. Healy and John Dillon, John Redmond and Sir Frederic Burton. These good people seem to have forgotten that they were still in Ireland until they were reminded that what they proposed to do was illegal. For an Act of George III, forbade performances for money in any but the three patent theatres in Dublin: the Gaiety, the Theatre Royal, and the Queen's Royal Theatre. However, mainly through the good offices of Mr. Lecky, a clause was inserted in the Irish Local Government Act of 1898 which empowered the Lord Lieutenant to grant occasional licences for performances instituted for charitable or purely literary pur-

poses. The ground was thus cleared, and the first performances of the Irish Literary Theatre were announced for May 1899, under the auspices of the National Literary Society of Dublin.

As was to be expected, the founders of the new Theatre had aims and methods very diverse from the lines on which the common or commercial theatre is run. These were explained by the persons most intimately concerned in the enterprise in speeches, lectures, and articles—not infrequently pupationally controversial articles—in the press, but chiefly in the pages of *Melanie* and *Sanku*, the official organs of the movement, which were respectively called according as they appeared in spring or autumn. And some exposition of the purpose with which the creators of the Theatre set out is absolutely necessary in order properly to appreciate the results achieved. Mr. Yeats may fairly be regarded as the most authoritative interpreter of the mind at work behind the project.

"We must make a theatre," he writes, "for ourselves and our friends, and for a few simple people who understand from their simplicity what we understand from scholarship and thought."

Eisenstein, dealing with Matthew Arnold's description of poetry as being "a criticism of life," he says:

"It was only with the modern poets, with Goethe and Wordsworth and Browning, that poetry gave up the right to consider all things in the world as a dictionary of types and symbols, and began to call itself a critic of life and an interpreter of things as they are."

And again:

"I believe that all men will more and more reject the opinion that poetry is a criticism of life, and be more and more convinced that it is a revelation of a hidden life, and that they may even come to think painting, poetry, and music 'the only means of conversing with eternity left to men on earth.'"

His idea seems to be that of the Mæcænicus Theatre, "where the characters have time to *live* precisely because they do not *act*."

All this must be remembered when it is objected to Mr. Yeats's poetic plays that they are too fantastic and symbolic, and that, while naming nothing, they suggest any thing or everything. In fact, the Irish Literary Theatre was to attempt to do in Dublin something of what had been done in Paris by the Théâtre Libre of M. Antoine, and in London by the Independent Theatre, to the patronage of which claims have been advanced on behalf of both Mr. Green and Mr. George Moore.

The performers were to essay to speak verse rather differently from the way one reads a newspaper. Mr. Yeats relates how he once asked William Morris whether he had never thought of writing a play, and Morris replied that he had, but would not write one because actors did not know how to speak poetry with the half-chant men spoke it with in old times. Mr. Yeats holds that "if we are to restore drama to the stage—poetic drama at any rate—our actors must become rhapsodists again, and keep the rhythm of the voice as the first of their endeavours. The music of a voice should seem more important than the expression of face or the movement of hands." But it would be a misapprehension to imagine that it was proposed that verses should be chanted. This is made clear by Mr. Yeats in another place: "I do not want dramatic blank verse to be chanted, but I do not want actors to speak as prose what I have taken much trouble to write as verse. Lyrical verse is another matter, and that I hope to hear spoken to musical notes in some theatre some day." Accordingly, the lyrics in *The Countess Cathleen* were "not sung, but spoken, or rather chanted, to music, as the old poems were probably chanted by bards and rhapsodists."

The plays were to be produced in the simplest manner. Scenery, dresses, and properties were to be cut down to the irreducible minimum. It was not proposed to revert to the sweet simplicity of the golden time when a wood or a castle was represented by a placard bearing the legend, "This is a Wood" or "This is a Castle," but something was to be left to the imaginative faculty in the auditorium. And, without going the length of Mr. George Moore, who asserted that nowadays the stage is stifled by scenery and that rehearsals only were enjoyable, one may feel inclined to agree with Ruskin, that "the modern stage is refined by its realisation of scenery which is contrary to all noble art. A picture, whether on canvas or on the stage, should give us an idea, not its realisation."

The first performances of the Infant Theatre were wrapped in a storm such as could have been raised only in Ireland. Two plays—*The Countess Cathleen*, by Mr. Yeats, and *The Heather Field*, by Mr. Marjory—were set down for production from May 8 to May 13. On April 1 they appeared in the *Fremantle's Journal*, a letter from Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell vehemently attacking *The Countess Cathleen*. Mr. O'Donnell followed this up by a second letter which the *Fremantle's Journal* refused to print. Then he published

both letters in the form of a pamphlet entitled *Souls for Gold, Pseudo-Celtic Drama in Dublin*, and mailed gratuitous copies of his pamphlet all over the kingdom. Briefly, the argument of *The Countess Cathleen* is as follows: "The time is the sixteenth century, and a famine prevails over the length and breadth of Ireland. Two demons, in the disguise of merchants, go about trafficking for souls. Men and women trade with them wholesale. The Countess, to save her people from starvation and damnation, sells her own soul for 500,000 crowns and the release of all the other souls already purchased, but because

"The Light of lights

Looks always on the motive, not the deed,"

she is caught up to heaven. Mr. O'Donnell took exception to the root idea of the play. The legend, he said, so far from being Irish, was a nightmare yarn dug out of the pages of some German magazine. As to the treatment of the theme, it was an outrage to represent one Irish peasant as kicking to pieces a shrine of the Virgin Mary, declaring the while that God and God's Mother nodded and slept, and others as backing to the demon-merchants in such crowds that in five-score baronies there was hardly a single soul of man or woman that was not bought and sold.

This pamphlet was not the only attack directed at the unhappy piece selected for the inaugural production of the Society. *The Countess Cathleen* was to be played on Monday, May 8, and on the previous Saturday the *Daily Nation* came out with a long leader in which it protested, "in the names of morality and religion and Irish nationality," against the performance as "a blasphemous perversion and a hideous caricature," and expressed the pious hope that there might be found in the Ancient Concert Rooms on Monday night such a number of right-minded people as would make the insult impossible. On that Saturday evening Mr. Yeats was lecturing on the new dramatic movement in the National Literary Society's rooms at Stephen's Green, and strove to ally the tempest raging round his devoted head. The obnoxious play, he said, had been censured by two eminent Catholic divines. One of these wrote:

"I read your *Countess Cathleen*. It is beautiful and touching. Do not listen to anybody's foolish talk. Obviously, from the literal point of view, theologians, Catholics or others, would object that no one is at liberty to sell his soul for the salvation of his brother's; but St. Paul has said, 'I wish to be anathema for my brethren,' which is simply another way of expressing what you put in your story."

The author attributed the outcry raised against his play, not to zeal for religion or patriotism, but simply to personal animosity.

The Countess Cathleen was duly performed on the Monday. On the playbill figured the text of St. Paul quoted above. Moreover, a concession was made to popular prejudice by cutting out the incident of the kicking of the shrine. The reception accorded to the piece was of a decidedly mixed character. There was cheering and hissing. The police were called in. But at the conclusion Mr. Yeats was summoned on the stage, where he shook congratulatory hands with his two leading ladies.

The contention over Mr. Yeats's unlucky play did not cease with the first outburst. A couple of days after its performance came out a protest, signed by over thirty Catholic students of the Royal University. And Cardinal Logue, writing to the *Daily Nation*, said:

"Judging by these extracts (in Mr. O'Donnell's pamphlet), I have no hesitation in saying that an Irish Catholic audience which could patiently sit out such a play must have sadly degenerated both in religion and patriotism. As to the opinions said to have been given by Catholic divines, no doubt the authors of these opinions will undertake to justify them; but I should not like the task were mine."

Mr. Yeats penned a reply to the Cardinal, in which he said that these attacks were welcome, "for there is no discussion so fruitful as the discussion of intellectual things, and no discussion so much needed in Ireland." His friends also stood by him. Mr. George Moore roundly declared that the verses of *The Countess Cathleen* were equal to the verses of Homer; that the works of Mr. Yeats might be less voluminous than those of Shakespeare or Victor Hugo, but were not less perfect; that in the art of writing a blank-verse play none except Shakespeare and Yeats had succeeded, and that, with the exception of Swinburne, Mr. Yeats was the one living poet. Mr. T. P. Gill, the editor of the *Daily Express*, gave a dinner at the Shelbourne Hotel on May 11, at which Mr. Yeats and Mr. Martyn were the chief guests. Mr. Yeats said his play, of course, was purely symbolical:

"The two demons were the world, and the gold was simply the pride of the eye, and the peasants were here in our hearts, and the Countess Cathleen was simply a soul or human spirit which perpetually made the sacrifice which she made, which perpetually gave itself into captivity for the service of all good causes, and in the end won peace because every high motive was in the substance peace."

Despite the tumult raised, both plays ran their allotted span.

It may be mentioned as part of the history of the enterprise that both *The Countess Cathleen* and *The Heather Field* were performed by an English company under the management of Miss Florence Farr, and that the costumes and wigs were by Nathan and Clarkson.

The only other occasion, as far as I can ascertain, on which *The Countess Cathleen* has been staged was in a series of *tableaux* got up by Lady Betty Balfour at the Chief Secretary's Lodge, when the Countess of Fingall assumed the title *role*.

In the following year, 1900, the performances passed off more smoothly. Three plays were given—*The Last Feast of the Fianna*, by Miss Alice Milligan; *The Bending of the Bough*, by the Martyn-Moore-Yeats Syndicate; and *Marve*, by Mr. Martyn. These were played at the Gaiety Theatre, but again the actors and accessories were English.

If these plays in themselves failed to arouse the acrimonious controversy of the preceding year, there were other elements at hand to embroil the situation. There was the visit of the late Queen to Ireland, anent which Messrs. Yeats, Martyn, and Moore deemed it incumbent on them to write letters to the Press. Mr. Martyn did more, for he resigned his appointments as J.P. and D.L., and, to make matters worse, assigned the study of Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* as the cause which rendered these resignations inevitable. Mr. Lecky, in consequence of all this correspondence, severed his connection with the Theatre, and other Unionists followed suit.

Fortunately, the movement did not collapse. In October 1901 a couple of new plays were brought out at the Gaiety. One was the *Diarmuid and Grania* of Messrs. Yeats and Moore, done by the Benson company. The other was an Irish play, by Dr. Douglas Hyde, entitled *Casadh an t-Singain*, which, being interpreted, means the "Twisting of the Rope," and which was performed by the author and the members of the Gaelic Amateur Dramatic Society.

After this year the Irish Literary Theatre ceased to exist. Its place was taken by the Irish National Theatre Society, which has for its objects "to endeavour to create an Irish National Theatre by producing plays in English and Irish, written by Irish writers or on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to educate and interest the public in the higher and more vital forms of dramatic art." Mr. W. B. Yeats is the president. The actors are all amateurs, who earn their livelihood

at other avocations and devote themselves to their dramatic work for love, and not at all for money. The manager, W. G. Fay, is perhaps the only member of the band who has had regular professional experience, he having toured for some years with a travelling company. In one respect at least he is a unique actor-manager—he always strives to efface himself.

The new Society gave its first performances in 1902, in St. Teresa's Hall, Dublin. The plays presented were *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, by W. B. Yeats, with Miss Maud Gonne in the name-part, and *Deirdre*, by A. E. (Mr. George Russell). Since this the company have performed at Dublin and London and various other places, and have produced about a dozen plays in English and one or two in Irish—by no means a contemptible record for folk who have to earn their daily bread and who have no syndicate of guarantors at their back.

Having gone thus far into the history and aims of the Theatre, it is now time to take some survey of its achievements.

Mr. W. B. Yeats is well to the front with some half-dozen plays. The story of *The Countess Kathleen* has already been told, at perhaps inordinate length. "The scene is laid in Ireland in the sixteenth century." So Mr. Yeats originally wrote; but he has since explained that he tried to suggest throughout the play that period, made out of many periods, in which the events in the folk-tales have happened. "The play is not historic, but symbolic, and has as little to do with any definite place and time as an *auto* by Calderon." Dr. Shaw, a distinguished Fellow of Trinity, however, publicly confessed he did not understand one word of all he had heard about the symbolism of Mr. Yeats's play.

From the one *Kathleen*, which enemies were clamorous in reviling, and which even friends found it difficult to justify, it is refreshing to turn to another *Kathleen* which everyone has conspired to praise. *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, like "Dark Rosaleen" and the "Shan Van Vocht," is one of the many names whereby Ireland is known to her lovers. It is an open secret that Lady Gregory had a considerable share in the workmanship of this little play—and of others too. Mr. Yeats himself acknowledges the fact when recounting the idea of the play in a preface addressed to the lady in question:

"One night I had a dream, almost as distinct as a vision, of a cottage where there was well-being and firelight and talk of a marriage, and into the midst of that cottage there came an old woman in a long cloak. She

was Ireland herself, that Kathleen ni Houlihan for whom so many songs have been sung, and about whom so many stories have been told, and for whose sake so many have gone to their death. We turned my dream into the little play, and when we gave it to the little theatre in Dublin, and found that the working people liked it, you helped me to put my other dramatic fables into speech."

The scene of *Kathleen ni Houlihan* is laid in the kitchen of a peasant's house near Killala, and the time is 1798. Michael Gillan, one of the sons, is to be married next morning, and the family are discussing the match, when sounds of cheering are heard from outside. Presently a woman enters. Michael has forebodings of evil, for he says, "I'd sooner a stranger not to come to the house the night before my wedding." The stranger has grey hair and ashen face, but her figure is stately. In response to kindly interrogatories she complains that she has been driven out to wander because there were too many strangers in her house, and that these strangers have taken her four beautiful green fields. She talks in secret with the bridegroom and lays her spell upon him. The old couple offer her food and money, but she refuses both. "If any man will help me he must give me himself." They inquire her name. "Some call me the Poor Old Woman, and some call me Kathleen ni Houlihan." She goes out chanting a dirge which sounds like a psalm of triumph. More shouting is heard outside. The bride, Delia Cahel, enters along with Michael's brother and the neighbours. They have great news. "There are ships in the bay; the French are landing at Killala." All gather round Michael and entreat him to remain. Delia puts her arms about him, and he is about to yield, when Kathleen's voice is heard singing and he rushes out. His mother inquires, "Did you see an old woman going down the path?" and the brother replies "I did not, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen."

The effect of all this on an Irish audience is electrical. One sees the eyes flashing and the chests heaving and the limbs straining, as if each man present burned to follow Michael and do his *dévoir* towards the reinstatement of Kathleen.

The Hour-Glass is a morality based on a story in Lady Wilde's *Legends*, and bearing a strong resemblance to *Everyman*. The Wise Man has turned the whole country to atheism. Since he arrived in the place no one from it has gone to heaven. The lintel of heaven is overgrown with grass and the door is rusty. Therefore

there is sent him an Angel, who turns down the hour-glass in his study and announces that he must die when the sands have run out. The doomed man behaves like neither a wise man nor an atheist. He begs for time, and expresses fears as to his future state. The Angel tells him he cannot enter either heaven or purgatory because he has denied the existence of these places. "But I have also denied the existence of hell!" The Angel gravely makes answer that hell is the place of those who deny. Only one hope of grace is held out. If he can discover a single individual who still believes he may be saved. The Angel departs, and the Wise Man summons in succession his pupils, his wife, and his two little children. Not one of them believes. There remains only the Fool. The Fool is a compound of zany and mystic, who goes about repeating his begging formula for pennies wherewith to buy bacon and nuts and strong drink against the season when the sun is cold, and who gets up early in the mornings to cut the black nets which evil people spread on the hilltops to entangle the feet of the angels. He believes in the three fires—the fire that punishes, the fire that purifies, and the fire that beatifies. So the Wise Man is saved. One would have imagined Mr. Yeats had had enough in his first foray into the realm of theology. How far the vicarious faith of the Fool might avail to the salvation of the Wise Man let eminent divines answer. But is hell, as the Angel is made to say, the place for those who deny? I rather think it is St. James who says, "The devils believe and tremble." However, Mephisto has also said, "Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint." To understand the character of the Fool reference must be made to *The Celtic Twilight*. There Mr. Yeats writes:

"I have heard it said that in every household in fairy there is a queen and a fool, and that the latter maybe is the wisest of all. The touch of either queen or fool is fatal. What else can death be but the beginning of wisdom and power and beauty? And foolishness may be a kind of death. The self, which is the foundation of our knowledge, is broken in pieces by foolishness, and is forgotten in the sudden emotions of women, and therefore fools may get, and women do get of a certainty, glimpses of much that sanctity finds at the end of its painful journey."

The mounting of this piece was a thing of sheer beauty. The Angel seemed to have stepped out of a Botticelli picture. The acting, too, was beyond all praise.

The King's Threshold, also by Mr. Yeats, seems to have been

a dramatic success. Seanchan, the chief poet of Ireland, being banished by King Guaire from the high seat at table to which the bards have been entitled from time immemorial, resolves to fast upon the monarch—an ancient Irish mode of revenge, which may be compared with the Hindoo *dharna*. The entire action takes place on the steps of the royal palace. The King gets everybody—the mayor, the chamberlain, soldiers, ladies of the Court, royal princesses, Fedelm, the poet's sweetheart—to go and entreat Seanchan to eat, but he remains obdurate. Guaire with his own hands brings him bread, but it is refused. Then the King cries, "He has the greater power," and places his crown in the poet's hands. Seanchan is conquered at last. He replaces the crown on the king's head, and a prolonged blast from the trumpets brings the play to an end.

The Land of Heart's Desire combines wonderful literary beauty with admirable acting qualities. The scene is laid in Sligo at the end of the eighteenth century. It is May Eve, a day on which the "good people" have great power, especially in the way of stealing new-married brides. And there is a young bride in the cottage of the Bruins, Maire, who reads in an old book

"How a Princess Edene,

A daughter of a king of Ireland, heard
A voice singing on a May Eve, like this,
And followed, half-awake and half-asleep,
Until she came into the land of faery,
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue."

A bitter tongue has Maire's mother-in-law, while her husband, and his father, and Father Hart make excuses for her seeming waywardness. Maire, in accordance with custom, strews primroses outside the door, but the wind cries and hurries them away. A little queer old woman in a green cloak knocks at the door and asks a porringer of milk. Maire gives it. Soon there is another knock. This time it is a little queer old man in a green coat. He asks a burning sod to light his pipe, and again Maire gives it. Then her mother-in-law presages dire things. For on May Eve the good people go about asking milk and fire, and woe on the house that gives; they will have power over that house for a year. As if she had not already done enough, Maire uses the unspeakable word "faeries," and invites them to come and carry her away.

She hears singing in the distance, and in alarm cries out to her husband:

"O, guard me close,
Because I have said wicked things to-night."

Again there is a knock. The door is opened, and a Child enters, clad in a green jacket and a red cap. She takes fright at the crucifix, and it has to be carried into an inner room. They all, even Father Hart, take to the pretty Child—all except Maire, who says, as she watches her dance:

"Just now when she came near I thought I heard
Other small steps beating upon the floor,
And a faint music blowing in the wind—
Invisible pipes giving her feet the time."

On the Child's declaring, "I am of the faery people," the others gather round Father Hart. The Child strews primroses around Maire, saying:

"No one whose heart is heavy with human tears
Can cross these little cressets of the wood,"

and summons Maire to go with her to the Land of Heart's Desire,

"Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,
But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song."

The others implore her not to go, but to cry to the angels and saints. Maire sinks into her husband's arms, sighing, "I think that I would stay if I could stay," but the Child calls out:

"White bird, white bird, come with me, little bird.
Come, little bird with crest of gold,
Come, little bird with silver feet."

Maire drops dead, and voices within and without fill the air with song.

In *The Shadowy Waters* Mr. Yeats has spun the elusive, ethereal texture of his fantasies to the veriest gossamer. All is shifty and unreal. The scene is the deck of a galley at sea. Everything is wrapped in a mist, through which filters with difficulty the wan light of the moon. Forgael, led on by the notes of his harp and by the souls of dead men, which hover overhead in the shape of grey birds, is sailing west, hoping to pierce through the gates of the sunset to the happy Otherworld. A Lochlann galley looms up, and is attacked and captured by Forgael's sailors, who slay the king and bring Dectora, his queen, to their master.

Dectora endeavours to bribe the sailors to play their leader false and carry her to her own country, when Forgael takes up his harp. The notes affect the listeners after various fashions. The sailors find themselves impelled to go aboard the Lochlann vessel for a carouse. Dectora, by degrees, stretches herself up to Forgael's own ideal, and realises that

"all mortal love
Is but brief longing and deceiving hope
And bodily tenderness."

She cuts the rope which lashes the two galleys together, and then takes up her husband's crown and places it on the head of Forgael, who clasps her to his breast. And so the two, all by themselves, go sailing out into the west to the Land of Heart's Desire.

To those who object that all this may be very pretty poetry, but is certainly not drama, Mr. Yeats would doubtless reply by giving his own ideas, as set out above, of what constitutes drama. And this play, which seems too attenuated for this workaday world, seems to have achieved a very considerable measure of success when performed in Dublin.

Socrates has said that the genius of comedy is the same as the genius of tragedy, and the writer of tragedy ought to be also the writer of comedy, so let no one be surprised to find Mr. Yeats writing what is really a farce. *A Pot of Broth*, founded on a legend which in one of its forms may be read in Griffin's *Collegians*, shows how a beggar, who is "a very gifted man," contrives, by the aid of a stone which he pretends is enchanted, to secure from a stingy *Vanithee* a good square meal and a bottle of whisky.

The Bending of the Bow is the joint work of Messrs. Martyn Moore, and Yeats. The report of the Financial Relations Commission would not seem a promising work in which to hunt for the germ of a drama, yet this report is the pivot of the play. It will be remembered that the publication of the report flung Ireland into a state of unexamined ferment. For once in a way all classes and creeds were united. Lord Castletown made a speech in which he warned England not to forget the tea which was jettisoned in Boston Harbour. But nothing came of it all. "The great enchantment" is the name which Standish O'Grady bestowed on the apathy and disunion which quickly sprang up. *The Bending*

of the *Bough* is a very thinly veiled allegory of the plight of Ireland. Northaven is Ireland and Southaven is England. If the latter refuses to pay her debt there is talk of setting up an independent line of steamers. Jasper Dean, a young man of Northaven, who has been educated at Oxford, has all the blisful men at his back, and carries the day on the first speech in the corporation. But he is engaged to Millicent Field, the niece of Hardman, who is mayor of Southaven, and she is jealous of Kirwan, who is Jasper's better genius:

"Kirwan," she says, "is a monomaniac; he takes women; he is a bachelor, and has no conception of private life, having spent his own life in books and public meetings. If you are prepared to do the same, you had better not marry. I recognise Kirwan as my enemy. His challenge was clear and distinct. Your love, much as I count it, is not sufficient. I want your life, Jasper. I want to share it. You must choose between me and Kirwan. I will share you no more with him than with another woman!"

Moreover, as Uncle Hardman reminds her, her money is invested in the threatened line of steamers, and if Jasper succeeds she will be hard hit. The engagement is broken off. But Jasper is false to the light. He cannot forego his love, and, instead of presiding at an important meeting, locks himself in his study, from which he emerges to accompany Millicent and Hardman to Southaven.

The satire of this play was so trenchant and so thoroughly understood that Mr. Moore had to make formal declaration that no individual was taken off in any of the characters. But the public knew better.

Mr. Martyn has published *The Tale of a Town*, of which the preceding play was an adaptation and, it must be conceded, an emendation. The original is a very crude piece of work, the satire of which is too savage to be effective. Jasper Dean is "very well to do, in the liquor trade," but since he has been to Oxford is eternally talking about "the higher tone, you know." No explanation is vouchsafed of the miracle whereby he, on the first day he takes his seat in the council chamber, imposes his stalwart policy on the other members of the corporation. The aldermen address each other endearingly as "You bruvv." Mr. Martyn would seem to be as hardened a misogynist as Euripides. His women are mostly fools. Millicent has a big fat Girton education and has "ideas about the higher mission of woman," yet she

signals her first entry by a loud knocking at the door and a violent ringing of the bell, wears ghastly gowns, and says "How dry do?" as if the fate of the world depended on it. And one of the male characters is made to say, on the topic of the refining influence of women, "Strange that their refinement should never have made them civilise themselves! Woman is the last wild animal that man will civilise." The author's attitude towards the common people is no less arrogant and contemptuous. The drunken charwoman, Mrs. Costigan, is spoken of as "this venerable type of the people." And again, "That useful elderly woman is an incarnation of the voice and majesty of the people."

Mr. Moore has made some slips in his edition of the play. Thus, he makes Millicent say that Caroline sent the telegram in Act 2 with her approval, though she had gone out walking with Jasper before the notion of a telegram cropped up. In the original work it is Millicent herself who sends the telegram on her own responsibility.

Again, Mr. Moore makes Lawrence suggest to Hardman that his niece might make-believe to flirt with Foley, the editor, in order to win him over—a suggestion which is incomprehensible until one reads in *The Tale of a Town* how Foley, the second time he meets Millicent, goes down on his knees and says, "I adore you. Will you accept my heart and hand?" And being reminded that she is engaged to Dean, he says, "Oh, that is only detail. You can change your mind."

On all this the only criticism is that people don't do such things.

The brutal satire of the piece is preserved consistently to the very end. On Jasper's defection the mob attack the patriotic aldermen. Hardman and his ally, Lawrence, show themselves at a window, while Mrs. Costigan waves a Union Jack on the end of her broom, and the English National Anthem is performed.

In *The Tale of a Town* Mr. Martyn has put his leading character to the test, and made him choose the worse, and not the better. In *Alaswee* he turns the tapestry right side out. The heroine, who typifies Ireland, prefers her own idealism to the commercial materialism of England.

The Hardier Field, by the same author, is the tragedy of an idealist. Carden Tyrrell is the victim of a fixed idea, the redemption of a heathen field. To effect this he mortgages and borrows and evicts. His wife, an unympathetic creature, tries in the interests

of herself and her little boy to get Tyrrell clapped in an asylum. The catastrophe comes in the spring, when the heather field, which he thought he had conquered, breaks out again into bloom. Tyrrell forgets the past ten years. His wife is Miss Desmond. His little son Kit becomes his younger brother, Miles. It is evening, but he fancies it is morning. "Is not this spring morning divine? It seems as if it would be always morning now for me." Joy is the genius of the morning, and that is always with him. He places a chaplet of the fatal heather blossoms on little Kit's brow, and leads him to the window to look where "the rain across a saffron sun trembles like gold harp-strings through the purple Irish spring."

The Heather Field was not thought good enough by Mr. Archer for production at the Independent Theatre. Mr. George Alexander, after nibbling awhile at the play, also declined it. Wherefore Mr. George Moore took up his shillelagh, and for a time the various parties involved were hard put to it. The success of the play, however, has been assured. It has been done in London, New York, and other cities of the States. It has also been translated into German.

The Last Feast of the Fianna, by Miss Alice Milligan, is founded on the Oisín-Phadrig dialogues, and relates how Oisín is wooed by the fairy Niamh, and carried away by her to Tir-nan-og.

A more ambitious play, dealing with the same characters, is *Diarmuid and Grania*, written in collaboration by Messrs. Yeats and Moore. The authors have taken unwarrantable liberties with the characters of the legend, but they seem to have produced a good acting play. Very effective was the scene in which the two rivals, Fionn and Diarmuid, enact the blood bond. They prick their hands with their swords, and let some drops of blood fall into a cup, from which they pledge each other, calling on the six deathless things—earth, sea, fire, stars, air, and dew—to bear witness.

For the performance of this play incidental music had been written by Dr. Elgar; but the audience seem to have preferred various Irish airs, such as "Paistin Fionn," "Fainne Gael an Lae," and "A Nation Once Again," which were volunteered by the gods.

Deirdre, by A. E. (George Russell), is a dramatised version of that one of the "Three Most Sorrowful Stories of Erin" which tells how the fatal beauty of Deirdre (the name is said to mean "alarm" or "danger") brought dishonour and doom on the Three Sons of

Usnach and the royal line of Conobar Mac Nessa at Emain Macha. The dresses were designed by the author, and the whole production was singularly beautiful.

The Laying of the Foundations, by Mr. Fred. Ryan, is full of reminiscences of St. Augustine, Ibsen, G. B. Shaw, and that lively little Irish weekly, *The Leader*. It is a mordant satire on the corruptions of the municipal government in Cathair-Tabhairairéidh, which means the City of Lookafteryourself, a town believed to lie not fifty miles from Dublin; but it breaks off in the middle, and refuses to untie the knot it has spent two acts in tying.

Twenty-Five, a little play by Lady Gregory, is called after a game of cards which is very popular in Ireland. A young fellow has just returned from the States with £60 in his pocket, the savings of four years. He finds his old sweetheart married and in distress, for the place is to be auctioned on the morrow. He proffers his purse to her, and when she refuses it, starts playing cards with the husband, and loses £55 to him, sufficient to pay off the debt. Then, after treading a measure and snatching a kiss, the young man goes out, to return next day to America.

Other plays are Mr. Synge's *In the Shadow of the Glen* and *Riders to the Sea*, in the latter of which is introduced the old Irish custom of *keening* over a corpse; *Broken Seal*, by Mr. Mac Cormac Colm; *The Townland of Tamney*, a farce by Mr. Seumas MacManus; and Mr. O'Cuisin's *Racing Lug* and *The Sleep of the King*. A little play in Irish by Mr. McGinley has also been produced.

The above account would be incomplete if it did not mention the fact that numerous plays in Irish have been given all over the country by the Gaelic League. That these plays can fill so large a hall as the Dublin Rotunda with a keen and intelligent audience is one of the most noticeable signs of these times.

All this is no contemptible record. That the Irish National Theatre Society may long continue to flourish must be the wish of all those who regard with favour an enterprise which is altogether free from the corroding taint of commercialism, and which has for its object nothing less than the very best in Art.

Milton and the Church.

By the Rev. WILLIAM MORISON, D.D.

WE know from his own lips that Milton, from his childhood, was destined by the intentions of his parents and by his own resolutions to the service of the Church. When he became a student in Cambridge this was still his purpose, and though it became unsettled while he was passing through the university, it was only at the close of his curriculum that he finally abandoned it. He has left us in no doubt as to his reasons. He stumbled at the subscription and oath that were required of candidates for holy orders. He "thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." He had already made the subscription and taken the oath to which he refers in order to qualify himself for graduation at Cambridge; but when they were required of him in new circumstances—as a preliminary, not merely to an academic honour, but to a vocation—they assumed a graver character which made him pause. Had he, however, approved the way in which the Church was governed at the time, had its rulers been of a less intolerant temper, it is probable that his scruples in regard to these pledges would have given way. It was the growing ascendancy of the hierarchical party that offended the Puritan spirit of Milton and made him revolt against the Church. A mind so serious as his and so concerned with what is vital in religion—one so spacious in its horizon, and so winged for high soaring in the realms of truth—could only turn away with contempt from a Church ruled by men whose passion was ceremonial and whose chief care for the clergy was that they should be drilled in the proper use of vestments. Whenever Milton approaches the subject of ritual you can see his nostrils inflating with scorn and his lips framing themselves to utter their most satiric words. It was not the dressing of the inward man that was the ritualist's care: it was the hallowing and bedecking of the body. "Not in robes of pure innocence did he apparel himself, but of pure linen with other deformed and fantastic dresses, in palls and mitres, gold and gewgaws, fetched from

9th April, 1901

SOME IRISH PLAYS AND PLAYERS.

The other day I came to one of the rare oases that are in the desert of our drama. For one afternoon my feet were on very verdure, and there was clear cold water for my parched throat. We plodders through this unending commercial desert could not plod so bravely if it were not for the oases, dear in proportion to their rarity, offered to us by uncommercial little societies. 'The sands are running out' somewhere, perhaps; but here in this desert, they run on for ever, from every point of the horizon, down our throats. For ever and forever we plod through 'Lady Thingummy's drawingroom, overlooking the Green Park' (a mirage, that Green Park), and (for ever and ever and ever Lady Thingummy) played by Miss So and So with her usual grace and sensibility) gives her husband (whose role is sustained by the manager with even more than his usual sincerity and conviction) by reason to suppose that her flirtation with Mr Blank Dash (Mr Blank Dash has never done anything better than his impersonation of Sir Blank Dash) is a really serious affair, whereas of course all the while... Add a 'decimal point recurring over that last dot. Imagine those dots running on, like the desert's grains of sand, for ever and for ever, and then you will be able to enter into the feelings of a dramatic critic, and to realise with what joy he, condemned to an eternity and an infinity of

barren drawing-room comedy or drawing-room comedy-drama, turns aside to such accidents as the Irish Theatres.

The afternoon's programme included three little plays: one by Mr. Yeats, "The King's Threshold", and two by Mr. J. M. Synge, "Riders to the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen". Very widely though the three plays differed from one another, from all one derived the same quality of pleasure—the pleasure in something quite simple and quite strange. There was in none of the plays any structural complexity, and yet none of them was not truly dramatic. It is fashionably supposed that a playwright, in order to compass a truly dramatic effect, must steep himself in some kind of black art—must become a very wizard, master of all manner of mysterious processes whereat we outsiders dare scarcely guess. Well, of course, dramatic effect can be produced through many complex means. But it is a fallacy to suppose that only through such means can it be produced. Out of a dramatic idea you can produce a dramatic effect, even though you go about it quite simply and straightforwardly. You must, however, first catch your dramatic idea. That is where the amateur often fails, afterwards attributing his failure to his

ignorance of technique. That parrot-cri "technique"! How many a good literary man has been scared off by it; and of how much, therefore, dramatic literature has been baulked by it! My advice to the terror-stricken is quite simple, and quite sound: first catch your dramatic idea, and then go artlessly ahead with your expression of it. When your play is acted, you will be delighted to find that the audience finds it quite dramatic: the idea will have carried it through for you. Belike, your very artlessness is an advantage. For though dramatic effect may be compassed through very complex and highly specialised means, the man who has mastered those means is often, in his turn, mastered by them, inasmuch that one cannot see the wood for the trees. Mr. Pinero is an instance of a man who shows us only trees. Fine, upstanding, thriving trees they are, but—where is the wood? Mr. Yeats showed me a wood quite clearly, and Mr. Synge showed me two woods. And the sight was all the more welcome because there was no fuss about it. Simplicity! That was, also, the keynote of the stage-setting. I have no objection to rich scenery and dresses—so long as the richness be not inappropriate or excessive. But, just for a change, how delightful to have a management which, so far from trying to dazzle us into awed calculations of its

outlay, rather prides itself on its poverty. There is a prologue to "The King's Threshold", and in the printed copy of the play, Mr. Yeats notifies that this prologue was "not used in Dublin, as, owing to the smallness of the company, nobody could be spared to speak it". Of course, the pride of poverty is not in itself less ridiculous than the pride of wealth. But it has, for the London playgoer, at least, the charm of newness. Apart from that, it was fitting that a play about legendary Ireland, and two plays about peasants in modern Ireland, should be produced as simply as possible. As for the acting, I am not sure that so much simplicity as the players exemplified was quite artistically right. Mr. Yeats' poetry, doubtless—or any other man's poetry—gains by simple recitation. Dramatic inflections of the voice, dramatic gestures and so forth, do, of course, detract from sheer melody; but, equally, their absence detracts from drama. For dramatic poetry, therefore, the right treatment is a compromise. And when these players, trained to heed Mr. Yeats' poetry, and untrained to express anything dramatically, came to interpret Mr. Synge's modern realistic prose, they did seem decidedly amiss. They, with their blank faces and their stiff movements, taking up their cues so abruptly, and seeming not to hear anything said by their interlocutors, certainly did impede the right effect of the play. For all that, I would not they had been otherwise. One could not object to them as to the ordinary amateur. They were not floundering in the effort to do something beyond their powers. With perfect simplicity, perfect dignity and composure, they were just themselves, speaking a task that they had well by heart. Just themselves; and how could

such Irish selves not be irresistible? Several of our metropolitan players are Irish, and even they, however thickly coated with Saxonism, have a charm for us beyond their Saxon-blooded fellows. The Irish people, unspoiled, in their own island—who can resist them? But footlights heighten every effect; and behind them unspoiled Irish people win us quicker and more absolutely than ever. And behind London footlights! There they have not merely their own charm, but that charm also which belongs to all exotics. Many people went many times, lately, to "In Dahomey", fascinated by the sight of a strange and remote race expressing through our own language things most strange to us and remote from us. Well, we are as far removed from the Irish people as from the niggers, and our spiritual distance seems all the greater by reason of our nearness in actual mileage. I admit that it was, in a way, more pleasant to see those niggers than to see these Irish folk. When we contemplate niggers, one clear impression comes through our dim bewilderment: we are assuredly in the presence of an inferior race. Whereas he must be a particularly dull Saxon who does not discern, and confess (at any rate to himself), that the Celtic race is, spiritually and intellectually, a race much finer, and also much more attractive, than that to which he has the honour to belong.

I spoke of the Irish Theatre as "an accident" only in reference to myself. I did not mean to imply there was not a good reason for the Irish Theatre, or that there was not an expansive future for it. For a national drama, you require dramatists and players. Acting is not a natural art of the inexpressive Saxon; but the inexpressiveness of Mr. Yeats' own particular players does not shake my conviction that to the Kelt the art of acting will come almost as naturally as to the Latin. Likewise, true dramatists are much likelier to crop up in Ireland than in England. When an idea occurs to an Englishman, his first impulse is to get it put into practice. An Irishman broods over an idea, and translates it into some symbolic form. For instance, it has occurred to Mr. Yeats that he is not taken seriously enough. People buy his books and compliment him very highly; but the State does not recognise him as a factor in public life. No title is bestowed on him. The Royal family does not make him its pet. He sees eminent statesmen,

soldiers, lawyers, and other men of action, being petted and decorated all the time; but he, the man of Thought, is not invited to step out of his niche and join that giddy throng. Were Mr. Yeats an English poet, he would forthwith have written an article for one of the monthly reviews, forcibly demonstrating how necessary a part of the national life is Thought, and how extremely impolitic it is, therefore, for the State to encourage and honour only men of action. In fact, he would have done exactly what was done, a month or two ago, by Mr. William Watson. Were Mr. William Watson an Irishman, he would have written "The King's Threshold", telling us, with exquisite lyric fervour, the tale of the poet Scanchuan, who, because King Guaire refused him his right to sit at meat among the great councillors and warriors, and thus dishonoured through him the majesty of all hards, lay down across the threshold of the palace, and there would have starved himself to death, had not King Edw— I mean King Guaire, relenting at length, kneeled down to him and offered to him the very crown. As it is, I admired Mr. Watson's article very much, and I readily admit that King Edward, a practical man, would be less quickly perturbed by the dream-laden beauty of "The King's Threshold" than by the urgent and unanswerable arguments in that article. Only, one can't have it both ways; and Mr. Yeats' way naturally seems to me, as dramatic critic, the better way; and, as it is also the typical Irish way, I have high hopes of poetic drama in Ireland.

There is plenty of poetry in "Riders to the Sea", modern peasants though the characters are. The theme is much the same as in Heijermans' play "The Good Hope"—a mother whose youngest son is drowned, as all her other sons have been drowned, at sea. Mr. Synge, being an Irishman, is content to show us the pathos of his theme; he does not, as did Heijermans,

try to rouse any indignation. "So it is, and so it must be" is his tone. It is the tone of the mother herself, whose acquiescence is deeper than the acquiescence of the mother in "The Good Hope". She submits not merely because it were vain to rebel. To rebel is not in her nature. She has the deep fatalism of her race; and for her, the things that actually happen, for evil as for good, are blurred through the dreams that are within her. "In the Shadow of the Glen", as a farce, is not less typically Irish than the tragedy. In particular, it illustrates a very odd thing about the Irish people: their utter incapacity to be vulgar. What this farce would be like if it were translated by an Englishman, into English life, and were enacted by English players, I shudder to conceive. But I delight in the recollection of it as it was. And still cherished in my ears are the soft echoes of the brogues. . . . Certainly, the Irish Theatre was an oasis. I will not trouble you, this week, with any samples of the sand I have since collected.

MAX BERNHOLM.

Birmingham Mail Sep 6-

FLASHES FROM THE FOOTLIGHTS.

Why not a national theatre for Ireland? Why should Ireland wait? Certainly, it seems a more hopeful prospect than that national theatre for England of which we have heard so much, and it is one that deserves encouragement, for one of the objects of its promoters is to produce original Irish plays. We all know that admirable dramas have come to us from the Emerald Isle, and the material for them should be inexhaustible. The history of the beautiful country teems with romance, and its fascinating folk-lore offers them with romance, and its fascinating folk-lore offers them with romance, and its fascinating folk-lore offers them with romance. But if they should be written by Irishmen. It was with this intention in view that Mr. J. B. Yeats (who takes great interest in the matter) and his friends organised, a few evenings ago, at the Royalty Theatre, three Irish plays.

Variety-Fair Apr 7-

"The King's Threshold" is from the pen of Mr. Yeats who is undoubtedly a poet of distinction, and is really an ode to the power of poetry set in dramatic form. In a note to his published book, the author tells us that it is founded on an old Irish prose romance, but he has borrowed some ideas for the arrangement of his subject from "Romeo and the Bard," a play that was published some ten years ago. The legend runs as follows:—

Someday, the chief poet of Ireland, considers his craft has been insulted by the King, who has refused to allow the poet to dine at the high table. That poet of later years has been married for "the man who ruled the world, and not the man who sang it." The poet takes revenge at this, and refuses to let a morsel of food pass his lips. The King himself, his courtiers, and even Fleda, his beloved sweetheart, plead in vain. The poet is above worldly rank and natural desires, and it is only when the King is about to offer his crown as a bribe known that the claims of poetry are satisfied.

Another piece on the programme was "Riders to the Sea," by Mr. Synge. It is just a piece of national life transferred to the stage, and the author has the dramatic gift of being able to create the right atmosphere. His peasants are alive, and have the fascination of life. We feel the horror the sea has for Mary, an old peasant woman, whose six sons have saved the eternal light of man against the forces of their implacable foe. All but one, Bartley, have fallen in the fight—some of them were feral, and some of them were not feral. Michael, the fifth son, a leviathan, and the bravest, rather refuses to be comforted by the thought that he has probably found a "clean grave in the North."

The scenes over the fate that has taken all her sons from her, and attempts to present her when taking scenes home to be met by her. She and her son part without a kind word from her, but her two daughters persuade the mother to follow Bartley with a piece of newly-baked bread as a parting offering. The hobble of, but soon returns, horrified by having seen the "writh" of Michael riding on the second of Bartley's horses. From the village below we hear the wailing of peasant women, and soon the body of Mary's last son is borne in by laborers, for he has been thrown from his horse and drowned.

The women, shrouded in black shawls, walk a low flag, which rises and falls as the old mother covers under this last lack of fate. The actors, and the men and women from the village, and at the last, even the mother, except the blow with the calm of those who have lived their daily life face to face with death. They discuss the necessary arrangements for the funeral, and "It's a great rest I'll have now" is the poor old peasant's way of accepting the blow which has fallen on her.

The third play on the list was "In the Shadow of the Glen," by the same author, and in this the vein of humor proved to be peculiarly apt of the soil. From first to last it is a fantasy on national characteristics. That an elderly husband should lay a trap for his young wife by pretending to be dead, and leave the new pleasure of embracing his mistress, seems with the Grouse trials of his character and their plans for the future, is not new; nor is, of course, the discovery of his coming to life (with a thick stick) at the crucial moment.

But when Dan Burke orders his wife out of the cottage, and sends a tramp with her because he has had too much to say for himself (although the two had been born companions for a few moments during the absence of the woman, who had gone out to find Michael Dora, a young barometer, with a view to take the husband's place, we have something new in grotesque humor. And this is accentuated by the unexpected end of the play.

Instead of belabouring the cases of the wedding of his domestic life, Dan's mood changes with racial quickness, and he and Michael sit down to make a night of it. It says much for the author's certain touch that we see the grim fun of the situation. It is also a triumph for the actors. Without losing their solemnity of bearing and vision, they made this strange end of the play seem possible.

The plays were well acted by Mr. F. T. Fay, Mr. W. O. Fay, Mr. George Roberts, Mr. P. J. Kelly, Miss Rose Lavelle, Miss Aligned, Miss M. J. Kelly, and Miss Mary McNeill. The whole entertainment boded well for the future of that much-to-be-dreaded Irish National Theatre.

THE IRISH THEATRE.

THE Irish National Theatre Society, who gave two performances at the Royalty Theatre last week, under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society of London, is perhaps the most characteristic expression of a very notable renaissance in the literary and artistic expression of imaginative thought, which has been growing in Ireland in these latter years. This renaissance is notable as much for the character and extent of its influence as for the achievement of its most distinguished workers. It is not merely a little movement among a few eccentrics, or an accidental association of a few individual artists of more or less sympathetic ambitions. Its sympathies are far wider than this, and the fact that there have been evolved from the movement very definite and distinctive artistic forms, all bearing the character of a consistent unity of inspiration, is evidence of an enthusiasm far more deeply grounded than a mere artistic fashion. The internal evidences of the work—not the least of which are its fearlessly child-like courage of spiritual purpose—tend to its timorously child-like modesty of execution—are indeed enough to show that the whole thing is the expression of something bigger than a local feeling. The external evidences of the organization show it to be sufficiently varied and extended to claim fairly that it may be called national. The members of the group of poets who acknowledge "A. E." as their master—and a little volume published this week affords sufficient testimony that their work is worthy of consideration—are drawn not only from every part of Ireland, but from every class of the community, and have already produced a body of verse of which this published selection is only a tithe. The same catholicity marks the work of the Irish National Theatre Society, not only in its authors, but its actors. Performances are given by the Society in Dublin about once in every six weeks during the winter. The plays are most thoroughly and carefully rehearsed, and all the scenery and costumes are made by the Society's members. And yet this very considerable amount of work is accomplished by a body of amateurs who can only give up to it the leisure hours of their working days. For most of the performers of these plays, who act with a technical competence sometimes elementary, but with a refinement and a dignity for which one would have to seek very far in the English professional stage, are engaged in modest business occupations in Dublin.

The keynote of an artistic revival so widespread in its foundations is one which the ignorant Saxon would not perhaps at first associate with the Irish character. It is the note of a serene and triumphant spirituality. In all the moods of all these plays—whether the most mournful, as in "Riders to the Sea," the most mischievously

humorous, as in "The Pot of Broth" or "In the Shadow of the Glen"; the most militant, as in "Cathleen Ni Houlihan"; or the most fantastic, as in "The King's Threshold"—there is throughout the secure and, for all the misadventures, the joyful conviction that it is not the material and the actual that matters most; there is in every pair of eyes the happy gleam of one who is seeing beyond.

There are many other incidental charms which make the performances particularly attractive to English spectators. The sparkling eyes, the quick and alert expressions of Irish faces, the caressing music of Irish voices, the engaging poindry of Irish pronunciation, are all a peculiar joy in the English theatre. And the simplicity and repose of the stage management—partly enforced by the technical inexperience of the performers—is particularly refreshing after our own stage habit of meaningless unrest. Indeed, this repose might be carried still further, and in a poetical play like "The King's Threshold" the actors might, quite appropriately, be made to speak the words without gesture at all, instead of with a gesture that was often too self-conscious to be eloquent either conventionally or realistically.

Of the plays given on Saturday afternoon, I was unfortunately unable to be present in the evening, when I hear that "Broken Soil" showed most promising work from a young author, Mr. Padraic Colum—the most interesting was certainly Mr. J. M. Synge's "Riders to the Sea," a little tragedy of fisher-life, where an old woman who has lost all but one of her sons at sea, greets almost with relief the death of the last, for "There isn't anything more the sea can do to me. I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south." It is a little play in which

the simple tragedy is interwoven with the commonplace in a way so skillful as only to heighten the reality without ever suggesting the pathetic. In this it may be compared with the Dutch play, "The Good Hope," that powerful piece of work on the same subject, in which, however, the weeping mother being consoled by a mutton chop from the shipowner's table was a conclusion perhaps ironically valuable, but emotionally ugly. Miss Honor Lavelle, it should be mentioned, gave a very beautiful and impressive performance as the old woman. Mr. Yeats's "The King's Threshold" is a sort of apology for poetry, but an apology in which the poet is rather too willing to see his glory in worldly reward for it to be quite genuinely moving. One would have preferred Seanachán to care nothing and go on writing verses, instead of refusing to eat because the King banished him from the highest table. The play, however, contains some fine poetry, which is beautifully spoken by Mr. F. J. Fay, an actor with a real sense of the melodious speaking of verse and a most eloquent facial expression. "In the Shadow of the Glen" is a very amusing little comedy, also by Mr. Synge, of an old husband who pretends to be dead in order to detect the too ready transference of his young wife's affections. Here Mr. W. G. Fay, the admirable stage manager of the company, and certainly its ablest actor, gave a very delicately humorous performance as the tramp.

P. C.

The five plays done at the Royalty Theatre had all the characteristics of the Irish genius—its poetry, melancholy, fun, and the inevitable hint that it is "again" the Government." That particular message was not impressed upon us too strongly. One forget it in the music of Mr. W. B. Yeats's verse, and in the admirable prose plays of Irish peasant life, contributed by Mr. J. M. Synge and Mr. Padraic Collin. And there sounded through the whole performance, despite some shortcomings, a beautiful note of simplicity and sincerity. As I was leaving the theatre a printed document was thrust into my hand, and this also had the note of simplicity and sincerity: simple and sincere anathema upon the English and all their ways. It was a leaflet of the Gaelic League, and it set forth three pages of reason why every Irish patriot should join that body. It was not so much a political challenge to this unhappy island as a moral and religious ban. It seems that we are utterly debased; that all our ideals (such as they are) carry poison; that our pursuit of "wealth and success" makes us a horrible example to Irish youth. Our books and our songs, our speech, and everything that is ours, were cursed by the leaflet with unsparring rigour. I gathered that it beloveth every Irish lad and lass (I grieve to use such debasing terms in my brutal ignorance of the equivalents in Irish) to learn the speech of their ancestors, and find a refuge from our seiling associations in old Irish literature.

See Spence's Cps 9 -
I wonder what Herbert Spencer would have said of this leaflet. In his "Autobiography" are some very plain words about Ruskin and Carlyle, because they were incapable of pure reason. An appeal to the Irish to flee the defilement of English, while still condescending to learn our tongue; an appeal to make old Irish lore a substitute for European literature, to treat French and German as futile, to cut themselves off from the whole modern spirit, and try to live as if Ireland were on another planet; this might have stirred Herbert Spencer to anger. But I was cheered to think that we had not debased the Irish authors and players by our appreciation of their work through a loving day. I had the pleasure of meeting some of them at tea, and they were none the worse for that. They were blithe and gay, and seemed rather to enjoy their visit to our demoralising capital. But I was too timid to ask any questions. The Gaelic League is severe upon those Irish who give their children Christian names that smack of Strongbow and centuries of oppression; and my Irish parents had given me names in no way suggestive of national aspirations. That was bad enough; but worse was the feat of being told that the two Molais would never come again to this

Sphere Cps 9

The recent production in London of some of the plays of Mr. W. B. Yeats through the medium of the Irish Theatre Company should tend to make these plays widely read. The production of them filled the Royalty Theatre for an afternoon and evening performance, and these were attended by many eminent Englishmen and Scotsmen apart from the members of the Irish Literary Society, who flourish exceedingly in London under the capable guidance of Mr. Stephen Gwynn. Mr. George Wyndham, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Lord Aberdeen, and Mr. J. M. Barrie were among the audience, and as far as I have seen the most enthusiastic criticisms of the plays came from Scots writers. I only refer to them now in order to remind you that you may obtain some of Mr. Yeats's plays in three dainty volumes pub-

lished by Mr. A. H. Bullen of 47, Great Russell Street, London. They are as follows:

When There is Nothing
The Heart-Glass
Kathleen ni Houlihan
The Fox of Bane
The King's Threshold
On Ballinacree

There are two other plays of Mr. Yeats's that I am very fond of, but these can at present only be obtained in earlier volumes of his works and have not yet found their way into this series. They are *The Land of Heart's Desire* and *Countess Kathleen*. Of all his plays I still prefer *The Land of Heart's Desire* to any other. Next to that I admire *Kathleen ni Houlihan* and *The King's Threshold*. In *Kathleen ni Houlihan* I find a fervid love of country before all things—a feeling that should be in the heart of every man to whatever nation he may belong, and which he should have the tolerance to admire in men and women of other nations. *The King's Threshold* is an allegory which would be quite

unmeaning to a certain matter-of-fact type of mind.

At the first blush it would be inconceivable that there should be the slightest analogy between the work of Charles Dickens and Mr. W. B. Yeats, but *The King's Threshold* shows the precise quality for which last week I ventured to admire Dickens's *Hard Times*; that is to say, a glorification of the ideal against the real—the imagination as against the hard facts of life. The king who refuses to the poet a place at his table is the counterpart of Mr. Gradgrind, who in the earlier stages of his career will have nothing to do with anything but facts. *The King's Threshold* makes good reading and good hearing in our mundane life.

The King Cps 14

WE have heard so much from Dublin of the Irish National Theatre Society, with its Irish plays, written by Irishmen, that a pardonable curiosity as to dramatic results was only natural. It may be said at once that their great charm lies in their simplicity, and this quality was most noticeable in two one-act plays by Mr. J. N. Synge, called "Riders from the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen." The first of these showed the tragedy underlying the lives of those who go down in the sea in

Ireland in London.

June 16

MR. FAY'S company of Irish actors have lately been performing in London, and their success there is an example of how attractive Irish things are at present in England, and would seem to augur well for the success of an Irish exhibition in London. They were brought over by the Irish Literary Society and gave two performances in the Royalty Theatre. They had the advantage of a good stage and accessories, which must have greatly enhanced the merit of the representations. "Riders from The Sea," "Broken Soil," "On the Threshold of The King," "In the Shadow of The Glen," and "A Pot of Broth" were presented and received with much

enthusiasm by very large audiences. The plays were also well received. One review, indeed, while giving high praise to Mr. Fay and his brother, said, naively, that most of the other actors could not be said to have made any attempt at acting at all. They just did the parts as if they were in real life. It is a question whether this be not the highest possible kind of acting, but, certainly, it is the impression given by these actors when playing Irish persons—they merely seem to be peasants themselves, living their own lives, unconscious that they have an audience.

W. B. Yeats Back.

MR. W. B. YEATS has returned from his Lecture tour in the United States, greatly pleased with his experience. He received a warm welcome and much appreciation everywhere, and naturally has formed a very high opinion of America and the Americans.

Fay will not Fail us!

Amongst others who were invited to go out to the St. Louis Exhibition are Mr. Fay and company. Mr. Fay, however, decided, rightly, we think, not to go. His object (and the desires of all of us), is to form a permanent theatre in Ireland, in which plays by Irish authors and on Irish subjects shall be sincerely represented by Irish actors. Such a theatre is to be for the improvement, elevation, and enjoyment of the people resident in Ireland, not merely a troupe of actors producing plays which they can then carry about the world on tour for purposes of money-making.

Off to St. Louis.

SOME Irish actors are, however, going out, amongst others, I hear, Mr. Digges and Miss Quisen, who left Mr. Fay's company last winter. Plays produced by a set of players brought together hurriedly, and partly American and partly Irish, will be very unlike the real thing, and will rather misrepresent than represent the Irish National Theatre.

ships, or, rather, of their womenkind. The central figure is an old woman whose sons are all drowned while earning a hard livelihood. The acting was unaffected and natural to a surprising degree, and the peasant plays given in Bazaar. It was consequently good, and the play, slight as it was, made a memorable impression. Had it been played by more sophisticated performers, it would have lost in pathos and gained in horror. "In the Shadow of the Glen" was a curious mixture of comedy and something else not very easy to define, although someone did label it as a "Hoon". There was an amusing figure of a tramp in it, played by Mr. W. G. Fay.

"Broken Soil," a play in three acts by Mr. Cohn, is, I believe, the work of an Irish peasant, straight from the plough. It is earnest, poetic, and sad, with the Celtic sadness that is only half grief. It is also dramatically weak. All these plays were made entrancing by the liquid speech, with a delicious lingo, given to them by the players. An Irish National Theatre entertainment would, of course, be incomplete without Mr. Yeats, and he was represented by an amusing little farce, "The Pot of Broth," and a more ambitious effort, "The King's Threshold." The latter was a poetic play emblematic of the right standing of Art, which will starve if unrecognized, contained some very fine lines, and embodied a really beautiful idea. It lost a great deal, however, through not being played in a mystical manner with dim light, like "Fellows and Melancton." There was some tiresome comic relief, which one forgave freely for the sake of some of the poet's beautiful speeches. Altogether, the Irish entertainment was a success, and we should appreciate more visits of the same kind from "dear, dirty Dublin."

New York City Cp 9

In suite of the poetical resolutions that marked Mr. W. B. Yeats's "The King's Threshold," the acting of the Irish National Theatre struck the ladies' playgoers as possessing the elements of naturalness to a far higher degree than most performances. There was about both from the stage and the auditorium that feeling of existing at a somewhat erratic cult that spoils the performances of so many amateur societies. Even had the audience been tempted to take this attitude, the straightforward art of the actors would have richly dispensed them.

Yatter Cp 13

The Irish Instinct for the Play—While Mr. Henry Arbut Jones is hammering away at his idea of a great national drama and peddling Claphams and our "dull little brick boxes" of houses, Young Ireland is quietly creating a real national drama, which even in its poorest form is astonishing everybody who comes in contact with it. The visit of the Irish National Theatre Society was a distinct landmark last year, and the most blatant of critics "sat up." This year they spent practically a whole day in the Royal Theatre, when five plays were given, including:—

The King's Threshold of Yeats. By W. B. Yeats.
A Pot of Broth (farce). By W. B. Yeats.
Broken Soil (three acts). By Patrick MacCormac Cohn.

Refers to the Sea. By J. M. Synge.
In the Shadow of the Glen. By J. M. Synge.
The plays and the players all of them amateurs were quite a revelation, fresh, full of atmosphere, and instinct with ideas.

Why England Lags.—One felt that the reason of this success was that the players were giving expression to a strong national impulse for the play which is practically absent in English people (and still more so in Scots people). The dominant partner is certainly not dramatic. I do not get to the Ellenboroughs, but, though it may be a heresy to say so, that magnificent outburst always seems to me to have been a fiftieth success which culminated like the rocket.

English people do not want ideas or emotions presented in the terms of drama, or at least of acted drama. Browning, Swinburne, and Tennyson (except in *Rockley*) have been complete failures as dramatists. It is this want in the English character that so appeals Mr. Jones. But it is deep and it is ineradicable as long as England remains an island in the North Sea. On the other hand, the Irish are born actors, and now that they have got such poets as Mr. Yeats they are going to work out one of their destinies in a characterful, acted drama. PS.—The present writer is not an Irishman.

The Theatre is, of course, only a part of the general aesthetic revival towards which the national fervour of the Irish is just now being directed. Those who admit the Irish character cannot but be played at this elevation to Art instead of to politics. If the Irish will only go on developing their own inexpressible national life instead of quarrelling about the acquisition of privileges which they think are necessary preliminaries to such development, they should hear much less of the gulf between Ireland and England. Some of the most enthusiastic of the audience at the National Theatre were, if not bigoted Saxons, at any rate very far from being Celts.

A Relief from Politics

Manchester Guardian Cp 12

PLAYS FOR AN IRISH THEATRE. Vols. II. and III. By W. B. Yeats. London: A. H. Bellon. Pp. 81, 117. 2s. 6d. net each vol.

The issue of these volumes will help to show English readers with what good reason the two appearances of the Irish National Theatre Company in London, last year and this, made a sensation among good judges of the theatre. All the plays of Mr. Yeats's which have been performed in London, here, and on the whole we should say that while his prose plays are best when read, his verse plays are better when read. Without raising in its widest form the question of the rightness of the symbolistic theory of art as a whole, one may feel that the special conditions of theatrical representation—the necessity for instant apprehension of each speech's dramatic value, the rigorous temporary averaging and consequent restriction of the intellectual and emotional facilities of an audience, do—render it almost impossible that highly symbolistic writing in plays should achieve its intended effect. It was only at a second performance of "The King's Threshold" (one of the plays given here) that we felt its value to be really coming out, and probably five or six hearings would secure convey its full meaning as clearly as one absorbed reading of the text.

On the other hand, Mr. Yeats's prose farce "The Pot of Broth" when merely read is a lamp without a light in it compared with its performance by the National Theatre Company's and, by all accounts, a good performance works similar marvels for its "morality." "The Hour Glass," and also for the little patriotic play "Cathleen at Heulibawn," though anyone can see at a hasty reading that this last is a thing of rare fire and beauty. The fifth piece, "On Ball's Strand," is a version in verse of one of those old Irish heroic romances which Mr. Standish O'Grady vainly and, we think, mistakenly brought Mr. Yeats to let alone. Certainly Irish legend suffers no wrong at Mr. Yeats's hands; the verse too has great beauties of the opalescent kind he chiefly aims at. In reading it, however, we often feel, as in reading "The King's Threshold," that read it must be, with all the possibilities of pausing and naming which reading gives, and which acting cuts off. It is the special property of verse like Mr. Yeats's to send the imagination off now and then into a delighted trance; in a play, where the effect of the whole usually depends on its uninterrupted effort of attention to verbal detail on the part of the audience, such a property may be bewildering and baffling, and almost an irritant. When all is said, however, these two volumes contain some of the finest work done for the theatre in English in our time.

L'ANNÉE THÉÂTRALE EN ANGLETERRE

Londres, juillet 1904.

Mais il serait hors de propos de m'attarder ici sur des reprises, qu'elles soient shakespeariennes ou autres. Ma tâche se borne à renseigner le public français sur la production du moment. Je commençais en disant que la récolte de l'année avait été déplorablement maigre; je m'aperçois que mon étude ne l'a prouvé qu'avec trop d'évidence.

Permettez-moi de trouver en terminant une note plus réconfortante.

Ce sont « les jeunes », on le devine, qui me la

pourrunt. Un petit groupe de jeunes irlandais et irlandaises se sont décidés à donner une orientation dramatique au mouvement littéraire auquel ils appartiennent et qui portent le titre de « Renaissance celtique ». Ces jeunes gens qui sont, à ce que l'on m'a dit, employés dans les maisons de commerce de Dublin pendant la journée, consacrent leurs soirées à jouer des pièces du poète W. B. Yeats, de Lady Gregory et d'autres personnalités de l'Ecole celtique. Ces acteurs manquent naturellement d'habileté mais ils ont l'enthousiasme et le foi qui valent mieux qu'elle. Ce théâtre national irlandais — qu'ils ont fondé — est un sincère élan patriotique, une tentative d'une réelle purification de l'art dramatique. La mise en scène est réduite à l'absolu minimum, les jeux de scène conventionnels sont bannis ou plutôt inconnus, une simplicité frugale caractérise toute l'entreprise, bref c'est un art ascétique, c'est aussi un art plein de sourires.

Les petites pièces qu'ils jouent ont trait à la vie fruste des paysans irlandais, à leur fatalité, à leur résignation, à leur tendance au rêve. Leurs émotions restent contenues, leurs amours sont chastes, ils ont la calme dignité de ceux qui ont renoncé. Tout le jeu des acteurs est lui-même en mineur. Ils se remuent mollement et parlent lentement, comme des personnages de rêve ou comme des « pupazzi » malades de Molière.

En les écoutant, vous vous sentez envahis par une suave et douce mélancolie. J'ajoute que lorsqu'ils chantent les vers libres de M. Yeats où qu'ils murmurent sa prose harmonieuse, leur prononciation de notre langue est un délice pour toute oreille anglaise. L'impression d'ensemble est d'un haut romantisme. Na-t-on pas déjà défini le romantisme comme un mélange de bonté et d'étrangereté. Certainement la beauté de ces représentations Irlandaises est étrange, étrange et fraîche, étrange et troublante.

C'est une chose étonnante que de voir l'art antique, épuisé, du théâtre se renouveler ou plutôt naître à nouveau dans le cœur de ce petit peuple irlandais.

N'aurais-je pas dit en commençant que le besoin vital de notre théâtre était un peu de brise fraîche. Serait-ce de par delà le détroit de Saint-Georges que nous viendrait ce souffle régénérateur ? — *Spiritus fiat ubi vult.*

A. D. WALKLEY,

Critique dramatique du Tiers.

(Traduit du manuscrit original anglais par R. P.)

PROPOSED IRISH LITERARY
THEATRE.

APPLICATION FOR A PATENT
INTERESTING EVIDENCE.

In the Council Chamber, Dublin Castle, yesterday, the Bailiwick-General (for the Attorney-General) sat to hear applications for patents for new theatres—one in Lower Abbey street, and the other in connection with the Kingsdown Pavilion.

Messrs. Herbert Wilson, K.C., and Joseph Day (instructed by Messrs. Whitney and Moore) appeared for Miss A. E. Horniman, applicant in reference to the Abbey street theatre.

Messrs. Matheson, K.C., and D. O'Brien, instructed by Messrs. Haywood and Scott appeared on behalf of the proprietors of the Kingstown Pavilion.

Messrs. Denis Henry, K.C., and Moriarty K.C. (instructed by Mr. Michael Kavanagh) appeared for the proprietors of the Gaiety Theatre.

Messrs. O'Shaughnessy, K.C., and Jellison (instructed by Mr. E. Harris) appeared for the proprietors of the Theatre Royal.

Mr. Hood, K.C. (instructed by Messrs. Hamilton and Craig), appeared on behalf of the proprietors of the Queen's Theatre.

Mr. Webb, solicitor, appeared for the trustees of the Mechanics' Institute.

It was decided to take the Abbey street application first, and not to take the Kingstow case until Monday next.

Mr. Wilson, R.C., in opening on behalf of Miss Horsman, Montague Gardens, Portman square, London, said it was an application for consent for 21 years to keep a well-regulated theatre for the performance of interludes, comedies, pastimes, &c. The memorial was very short.

Mr. Wilson, K.C., said that Miss Horniman was a lady of independent means, and a member of a well-known family in England. She had taken an absorbing interest in Irish dramatic art, and her one object in taking the step she had taken was for the promotion of an institution

tion known as the Irish National Theatre Society. That society was registered under the Friendly Societies Act last December, and an immediate preference in its name is known as the Irish Literary Theatre Society, which is a sole existence since 1897. The Irish Literary Theatre Society had a great deal of success, as many of their plays had been enthusiastically received, both in this country and in England. However, it was cramped in many ways, and became necessary to extend the society. Accordingly, last year a new society was incorporated under the Friendly Societies Act. The objects of the society were to create an Irish national theatre to produce plays in Irish, or English by Irish writers, and on Irish subjects or such dramatic works as would be of interest to the Irish people.

terest the public in the higher aspects of dramatic art. Miss Hirschman, being to a considerable extent imbued with the world's good, conceived that one of the best ways she could use those goods was in developing this institution.

tion for the purpose of developing the national instincts as regards the drama. And, looking across Dublin for a suitable home for the society,

a theatre where plays produced under the auspices of the society might be produced in proper way, and where the economic

might have a more or less permanent home, she and her friends decided on the small theatre belonging to the Mechanics' Institute, Lower Abbey street.

This had been used in recent years as a place
assessment confined to members of the same
and she had succeeded in getting it from
members of the institute on a lease for 25 years

joined and which was known as the Morgan Loan
was following to the Corporation having the
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Birth date: 1941-01-01

to keep Irish people at home in their own country, and to cultivate the dramatic instinct. His cheerfulness, approval of the society. He considered also that there was a want of the class of plays produced by the society, and he thought that the establishment of such a theatre would tend to the interest of the country.

Mr. Henry, K.C.—Even though there is no bar? Yes. (Laughter.)

Mr. Cunningham Bailly stated that he thought he had seen all the plays produced by the society, which seemed to him to be very interesting, and a class of play which would probably not be a success in the other theatres, as they require a different support. He did not think the plays would be a great monetary success; so if they had to go to theatres where they would have to pay more they would not likely be a success. He thought that as they helped to make people think, and encouraged artistic taste, they would be a great benefit to the country.

To Mr. Moriarty—Witness suggested the plays he had seen. Among them was "The Reading of the Bogh".

Did you consider that play from the political point of view? I never considered it from the political point of view, but as a drama.

With what tendency? As to tendency, I cannot say it made a very vivid impression on my mind.

Don't you know that it was a political play, written for the purpose of exciting animosity between England and Ireland? Certainly it never occurred to me from that point of view.

Was it the sentiment of the "Reading of the Bogh"? I have very largely forgotten the play.

You were present at the play and you are not aware with what object it was written. Does it not illustrate the difference between the East and West? I do not think it does. It is a play which I could not find.

Mr. George Moore a member of the Irish National Theatre Society? I don't know.

And don't you know that one of the objects of the society is to produce plays which are to be given in this country something similar to Theatre Libre in Paris? I don't know. I went there as an ordinary spectator.

You went to "Reading of the Bogh", and came away with your own complete bias, and as to the object of it? I may have had a full view at the time, but I have a blank mind now.

Was it not a political play in allegory? It is five years ago now.

The Solicitor General—Did it not alter your political view? No. (Laughter.)

Mr. Moriarty, K.C.—Do you know any of the plays that are coming off? No.

Do you know how to give evidence in support of the objects of the institution which are appointing yourself with what the objects were? I came here to say that I had seen the plays produced by the society, and it would be very desirable that an opportunity should be given to all new men—Dermot and Gaithe, "The Twisting of the Rope," "The Cousins Kathleen," &c.

The Solicitor General—"The Twisting of the Rope" is rather suggestive. (Laughter.)

Witness—it is a little story by Mr. Douglas Hyde, and eminently characteristic of the Celtic people.

Yes, the President of the Irish National Theatre Society, stated that their objects were to make possible the production of plays which by their very nature would not be given in the ordinary theatre, and that as to the Theatre Libre, they had the same objects in the same, that like that theatre they sought to give an opportunity for the performance of dramas of a very intellectual nature, but, of course, he did not commit himself to any particular set by saying that they desired to follow the methods adapted by those other places. They desired, for instance, to be content rather than to be in Germany the various municipalities subsidised the theatre, which made the production of intellectual drama possible, and those productions would be impossible in the case of an unsubsidised theatre. Where there is no subsidised theatre it was all done by the enthusiasm of the few that was the object of the society.

Mr. Wilson, K.C.—Mr. Moriarty suggested that there was a political allegory in the play, "The Twisting of the Rope".

Mr. Yeats—it would be very hard to find on the nature of the political allegory. Certainly a good many people took it as a satire on the divisions of the Irish party. It was a general political satire on all parties in Ireland. It is written by a Nationalist, and, if you like, with a Nationalist tendency; but it was a general political satire. I do not like plays that express political views, and so far as I am responsible for the society, that will be its policy.

"Kathleen no Houlihan." Was there any political tendency in that? I was quite unprepared to say that it was written with a political tendency. It was not. I simply wrote material for the drama in every country, and in all the books that I have published it is the only thing that even the wildest politician could suggest that an opinion of any kind was advocated. We have no propaganda except that of good art. That is the beginning and end of the society. The actors of the society do not receive any remuneration.

To Mr. Wood, K.C.—Arrangements have been made with Mr. Fay, as stage manager, to supply the staff. I can myself raise some money. We have always paid our way by the profits.

To the Solicitor General—Mr. Ardagh's theatre in Paris had quite changed French art. As regards a fund to provide against loss, they had a small subsidy of £50 a year.

Mr. T. P. Gill, who was next examined, stated that he was in favour of the granting of the petition on the one ground only, that under present conditions when there was no municipal or State aid given to the theatres in this country the ordinary theatre was bound to produce plays of a commercial popular kind. It could only afford to produce plays that would pay. Here in Ireland this evil was aggravated by the fact that the theatre could only produce plays which had already proved paying specimens in England or Scotland. He thought that was a bad state of things for the literature of a country. He thought it would be a good thing if the means could be provided by which plays might be produced on their merits as a literature. This, of course, is the means of doing that.

Mr. Moriarty, K.C.—Don't you know that among the plays produced by the Theatre Libre are the plays of Moliere, and that his play "L'Ecole des Femmes" is one of the plays which you propose to produce here? I know nothing about that. I do not propose to discuss the merits of any of the plays that have been produced. In my opinion, some of them have been very bad, but my point of view is that in the interests of literature it is necessary to provide some other means to bring on the stage productions of a literary character than those which now exist.

Mr. Moriarty—Do you know that Mr. Yeats produced a play at the Independent Theatre, London?

Mr. Yeats—Yes.

Mr. Moriarty—Do you know that the Times newspaper in its critique characterised it as "presenting the doctrine of revolt against marriage"?

Mr. Wilson, K.C.—What is the name of the play?

Mr. Moriarty, K.C.—Well, no matter now. (Laughter.) To witness—You know nothing about it?

Mr. Yeats—You don't know the name of the play? (Laughter.)

Mr. Moriarty—Do you know that "Theatre Libre" was produced at the Independent Theatre? Yes, and I think it was a very good play. (Laughter.) You speak on which grounds it are literary grounds. I don't think that novels are much affected by that class of play.

To Mr. O'Shaughnessy, K.C.—Witness was not aware of any old patent for the assets theatre had in 1905.

Mr. Robinson, member of the Literary Theatre Society, and Mr. Fay, stage manager of the society, also gave evidence in support of the application.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy, K.C., on behalf of the Theatre Royal, submitted that the application should not be granted in its present form. He would not concede what was the object of having this small theatre. The old patent held for it and lapsed; and this would also probably not be a financial success, and would do in consequence. There was at present plenty of accommodation in the way of concert, and lecture halls. It was all very well to say that they did not propose to use the theatre in a certain way, but once the patent went all control over it by the Crown ceased.

The Solicitor General and they all knew well how carefully managed and fully equipped the Theatre Royal, the Gaiety, and the Queen's Theatre were. But he asked whether anyone appearing on the behalf suggested any form which, while conforming with the objects of the petition, would at the same time provide such a protection to the legitimate theatres as they were entitled to, namely, as to the absence of competition, on the part of a theatre of the dimensions stated, in ordinary theatrical displays.

Mr. O'Shaughnessy said he had not had an opportunity of thinking over the thing from that point of view.

The Solicitor General said that he would be sitting again on Monday, and if the solicitors for the petitioner drew up their application on the lines he had indicated, and submitted it in the meantime to the solicitors for the other parties interested, he would consider it further on Monday. He thought it would be a disturbance to the city and to the country if they lost the hall that this lady, Miss Horne, had so generously offered to provide. His present view, however, was that if the application was to be maintained, the income of the petition should be considerably less than 25 years. Perhaps it should not exceed the first instalment, 6 years.

Miss Horne said she thought that was perfectly fair.

The matter was then adjourned till Monday.

The purpose of establishing a permanent theatre in London under the name of the "Irish National Theatre Society" is deserving of support. The application for a licence, which was heard yesterday by the Solicitor General, was made in nice respects. One of it is a wealthy English lady who applies for the Letters Patent, and she does not propose to use the rights, if conferred, to her own advantage. Miss HORSKIN, the applicant, appears to have been attracted by the works produced during the last few years by the members of under the patronage of the Society. She accordingly formed the idea of founding a theatre in Dublin, which would be, as it might be said, the capital of the organisation. The objects of the Society are fairly well known, the rules define them clearly enough—to create an Irish National Theatre, to act and produce plays written in Irish or English, by Irish writers, on Irish subjects. But the Society does not limit itself to Irish dramatic genius; it will, if occasion offers, take such works by foreign authors if such works are likely to tend to educate the Irish public.

We have on some occasions and some severe things about the Irish Literary Theatre. The pieces hitherto produced were calculated to arouse the critical passions of the ordinary theatre-goer, and they were also calculated to

more controversy on subjects which could very well be boycotted from the stage. Still the Society is undoubtedly an earnest effort by talented writers and readers to do something better for the play-going public than is being done by the stock dramatists of the day. These dramas are not on the face of it paying drama, they do not write or act down to the Bank Holiday audience, they exact from the spectators the exertion of thought as to words, character, and idea. It is needless to say that the task which we have thus very briefly outlined is of immense proportions. There is nothing more difficult than to make the bulk of the people take their amusements seriously, and yet derive from their amusements the necessary and desired relaxation. We must confess that the Irish Literary Theatre thus far has not succeeded in diminishing the difficulty.

Now, however, that the members of the organization are, as we anticipate, about to be placed in possession of a "house" all to themselves, we should see some progress. Hitherto they laboured under many disadvantages. They could only arrange short seasons about once a year, and their dramatists were a very limited corps. They could not have adequate rehearsal, and they could not hope to make their plays pay, for if the truth must be told the work of selection was not done in such a way that even friends of what has come to be known as the Gaelic Revival were entirely satisfied. Now, when they come into a "house of their own," we would like to give the members of the Society a few words of advice. They ought not to exclude plays in Irish, they ought not to exclude works written by members, they ought not to try to be too austere or too exclusive. We are glad to notice that plays produced by the Elizabethan Society are to be welcomed within the walls of the new theatre.

This venture—for we assume that the patent will be granted—is a most interesting one to every respect. It will be the nearest approach that we have in these countries to an endowed theatre. A building with considerable possibilities of extension will be handed over free, gratis, and for nothing to a society which has not for its main object the making of money. The old Mechanic Institute Theatre is an exceedingly good site for the experiment, to which we wish every success. The other theatres need not fear that their fortunes will be in any way jeopardized. The particular class of drama which would be seen in the new house would not, unless under exceptional arrangements, be placed on their boards. Might we suggest the formation of a stock company in connection with the theatre? As Miss Horneham has done so much it seems advisable to ask her to do more. Perhaps somebody else or some societies would supply the foundation of an endowment to form such a company. In formation would be the completion of a scheme which has all along been kept in mind by those associated with the Irish Literary Theatre.

THE MUSE AT THE MORQUE

APPLICATION FOR THEATRICAL PATENTS

in French May 4
EVIDENCE OF SIR MORACE PLUNKETT AND MR. W. B. YEATS

To-day at the Council Chamber, Dublin Castle, the Solicitor-General (Mr. The Attorney-General) sat to hear applications for patents for theatres. It was decided to defer an application with reference to the Kingsford Pavilion until Monday at 11 a.m.

Miss A. E. F. Horneham, Montague gardens, Portman square, London, applied for a patent for 21 years to enable her to establish and keep a well regulated theatre in the city, and therein to perform all interludes, tragedies, comedies, melodramas, operas, ballets, plays, farces, pantomimes.

Messrs. Herbert, Watson and George Day, instructed by Messrs. Whitely and Moxey, appeared for Miss A. E. F. Horneham, applicant in reference to the Abbey street Theatre. Messrs. Matheson, K. C. and D. O'Brien, instructed by Messrs. Hayes and Sun, appeared on behalf of the proprietors of the Kingsford Pavilion.

Mr. Louis Henry, K.C. and Mr. Moriarty, K.C. (instructed by Mr. Michael Kavanagh), appeared for the proprietors of the Gaiety Theatre.

Mr. O'Sullivan, K.C., and Jefferson (instructed by Mr. E. Harris) appeared for the proprietors of the Theatre Royal.

Mr. Flood, K.C. (instructed by Messrs. Hamilton and Cochrane), appeared on behalf of the Queen's Theatre.

Mr. Webb appeared for the trustees of the Mechanic's Institute.

Witness detailed at length the scheme. Miss Horneham took a great interest in Irish dramatic art. The society was registered in December, 1903. The old society had been very successful in England and Ireland. The object of the society was to produce plays in English or Irish and such foreign dramatic works as would interest the people of Ireland in the highest forms of dramatic art. Miss Horneham had acquired the Theatre of the Mechanic's Institute and would also utilize the old Morque. The plan had been sanctioned by the Corporation, and it was not intended to enter into competition with the other theatres, which had large accommodations, while their accommodations would be for about 500. All 600 would be necessary to put the theatre on a proper footing, and Miss Horneham was prepared to pay the cost. She was only anxious to develop that great latent dramatic art which was well known to be one of the national instincts. She intended to give the use of the theatre free of charge to the society.

Miss Horneham, London, then detailed the scheme. When she had finished she had seen the plans of the Irish Literary Theatre in London and Dublin, and she submitted pictures of a very complimentary character, indicating a highly one from the London Times. She had already entered into a contract with builders for the theatre. Money was no object, though she did not wish to waste it. She had no desire to make any money by it, and she wished to develop the theatre free to the Irish National Theatre and the plays of the Elizabethan Society, which produced plays not ordinarily produced in theatres. There would be no war, and there was no room for an orchestra.

Replying to Mr. Henry, she said that she had asked for an unrestricted patent and she intended to be it to travelling companies.

"Do you intend to take any part in the management of the theatre?" asked the Solicitor-General. "No," replied the witness.

I simply made them (the plans) for you see, I take an interest in these people. Questioned as to the agreement with the Literary Society, she said she did not intend to make one and she had written a letter to the Society.

The Solicitor-General said he thought it would be a question of granting a patent to the Society, rather than to Miss Horneham.

Mr. J. Moriarty, architect, gave evidence as to the plan. The theatre would cost about £85,000, in answer to Mr. Flood, K.C., he said the old Morque was to be utilized as a rehearsal room, and, balcony, dressing room, etc.

So Horace Plunkett deposed that he took an interest in the Society. Anything that made the people take an interest in the country was good, and he considered that would tend to keep the people in the country. He had seen the plans produced by the Society, and he had never seen anything like this in other theatres. He had formed a favourable opinion of the class of plays which he had seen, and believed they would attract the people in the country.

"Mr. Henry—Even though there is no bar—"

Yes (laughter). Evidence in support of the application was also supplied by Mr. Commissioner Bailly. This theatre would save the people think, and would exercise their literary tastes.

Witness was here cross-examined by Mr. Moriarty, who suggested that the plays to be produced at the theatre had a political tinge, but witness said he knew nothing of that.

Mr. Moriarty then instanced the "Reading of the Bough," but witness said he had had no political impression from the play.

"You know it was a political play for the purpose of expressing animosity between England and Ireland?" asked Mr. Moriarty. Witness said it never occurred to him from that point of view.

Mr. Moriarty (reading)—"Political content between the East End and the West End"—between England and Ireland? I cannot tell you what it was.

Further cross-examined, witness said he did not know that the new theatre was to correspond with the object of the Theatre Libre in Paris.

Asked as to the original plan, witness said that there were several such as Mr. Hyde's "Twisting of the Rope."

The Solicitor-General—The Twisting of the Rope? (a laugh) would avoid the play?

Cross-examined by Mr. Moriarty, who did not know anything of the production of these plays at the Independent Theatre, London, when they had no theatre in Dublin to produce them.

Mr. W. B. Yeats, President of the Society, was examined at considerable length. In some countries, he said, a society of this kind had recently arisen and were subsidised by municipalities, and when they were not so subsidised they had to be carried on by the subscription of the few. He admitted that new plays might not appeal to the ordinary theatre-going public, and they desired to be more dramatic than real ones. Questioned as to the "Reading of the Bough," witness said it was a general centre on the Irish peasants and the people (laughter). He was simply an artist, and advocated no opinion whatever.

Let real-commissioner witness said that they had no proposals for good and that the actors were not paid, and subsidized, hitherto, to the Society, out of their wages.

Proceeding

1904

Hildebrandt & Co. 13

high raised. Individual English actors, at least, Mr. Ware for instance, will do this to perfection, but a company ordinary as a whole is so far outside ordinary experience here that it is hard to imagine its fascination before it has been seen." And the writer is eulogistic not only of the players, but of the plays, especially of those of Mr. Yeats, Mr. Synge, and Dr. Hyde. They write, he says, as the Scandinavians, French, and German dramatists who have life in them do, "about the things that living people care about in their own lives; they have none of the provincially-minded person's fears of seeming provincial in critical eyes, but make it their aim to let Irish plays express what is essentially Irish in mental habit and in quality of feeling." This is a remarkable tribute to the work of the Irish National Theatre.

United Irishman Aug 13

Through the generosity of Miss Horsman, the Irish National Theatre Society has secured a theatre and a modified theatrical patent in Dublin. The Theatre is that in Lower Abbey-street, almost universally known as "The Mechanics'." It is an historic place. The old Mechanics' Institute was in Young Ireland days the rallying-ground of the Nationalist artisans of Dublin. Its theatre has resounded to the voices of Mitchell and Meagher and Smith O'Brien. In after-times—in the slack time between the overthrow of Young Ireland and the rise of the Fenian movement—the Mechanics' Theatre was the meeting-place of the Nationalist artisans of Dublin who in those dark days were

Keeping the old flag flying,
That their sons might follow
On the road to glory.

There they debated Irish questions, listened to lectures on Irish subjects, held Irish concerts and entertainments, and as far as possible then kept themselves steeped in an Irish atmosphere. In later times when the body of John O'Mahony was refused permission to be placed in the Pro-Cathedral, the artisans of Dublin carried it to the Mechanics' Theatre, where they laid it out in state. In recent years, however, the historic little theatre had been abandoned to variety entertainments, but it will now be restored to a dignified position. The existing theatres opposed the licence being granted in the first instance, but eventually consented to its issue for six years under certain restrictions—one of those being that no dramatic performances save those directly held by the National Theatre Society shall be given therein. The theatre, though small, is far better suited for dramatic representations than any of the halls in which the National Theatre Company has hitherto produced its plays, and henceforward they will be seen to much greater advantage.

It is stated that a new theatre is to be erected in Dublin on the site of what was originally a morgue. We hope that the construction will be thoroughgoing, otherwise doubtless the public would think they had a wasted right to admission.

THEATRE PATENTS. THE LAW IN DUBLIN, IRISH ACT OF PARLIAMENT.

(SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED.)

The applications which have recently been made to the Lord Lieutenant for new theatre patents in Dublin recall the history of the curious and unique mode of procedure. It is under a special Act of the old Irish Parliament that Dublin theatres require a patent from the Crown. The Act does not apply to any other part of Ireland, and in England there are but a few theatres holding patents, the only ones in London being Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the old Haymarket. All the other English theatres are licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, with the approval of the County Council or other local authority. The Lord Chamberlain of England, however, has no authority to grant licences in Ireland, and the strange anomaly exists that outside the city and county of Dublin there is no legal authority to control the character of stage plays produced in Ireland, and any work, no matter how objectionable, may be placed on the boards without restriction save such as is exercised by the police or by public opinion. Fortunately, in Ireland the popular taste is pure enough to deter managers, should they be so inclined, from producing offensive plays in any Irish theatre.

The Act governing the theatre patents of Dublin was passed in 1786. It is the 26th of George the Third, Chapter 57, entitled, "An Act for regulating the Stage in the City and County of Dublin," and while containing several restrictions, it also grants special privileges to the patentees. The patent is issued on application to the Lord Lieutenant, who refers the case to the Attorney-General for his opinion. He must be satisfied that the proposed theatre is structurally suited for the production of stage plays, and that there exists a demand for such a place. Heavy fees have to be paid on taking out the patent, and also on renewal, its duration being limited to a period of twenty-one years as a maximum. The patent, however, carries with it a full express licence for the sale of drink during the performance, and for half an hour after its conclusion. The patentee is also entitled to call on the authorities to furnish a military guard in the theatre, a custom which prevailed up to recent years in the London patented theatres. In Dublin the patentee of the Theatre Royal was formerly entitled to the entry of Dublin Castle, and some curious old ceremonies were observed at that theatre on the occasion of a state visit or command night by the Lord Lieutenant.

The reason why the Act of 1786 was limited to Dublin was that there were then no permanent theatres in other parts of Ireland. Dublin was the social as well as the political capital, and it was probably not deemed likely that any of the provincial cities would be able to support a theatre. Prior to the passing of this Act the law relating to theatres in Ireland did not appear to have been very well defined. The earliest licensing authority was the Master of the Revels, and according

to Gilbert's History of Dublin, it was a gentleman holding this position who opened the famous Smock Alley Theatre in 1662. This was John Ogilby, who, however, had previously embarked on a theatrical venture in Dublin. In 1654 the first theatre erected in this city was opened in Werburgh-street by John Ogilby and James Shirley, the dramatist. With the fall of Sturford and his gay Court, the Puritans became all-powerful in Dublin, and the Lords Justice, Parsons, and Berkeley, ordered the theatre to be closed. At the Restoration Ogilby obtained the office of Master of the Revels in Ireland, and built a new theatre in the street then known as Smock alley, but now called Essex street. This theatre was managed by Ogilby, and after his death, by Ashbury, who had been Deputy Master of the Revels. Ashbury was succeeded by his son-in-law, Ellington, an actor, who continued manager until his death in 1732. About this time a rival house was opened, first in Fownes's street, and afterwards in South Great George's street, by an actress named Madame Violante. She does not appear to have had any licence or patent, nor, on the application of the manager of Smock Alley Theatre, her house was closed by order of the Lord Mayor of Dublin. By what authority the Lord Mayor so acted is not stated, but his proceeding gave much offence, though his right does not seem to have been questioned. The friends of Madame Violante resolved to be even with her landlord, and fitted up for her a new theatre in Rainford street. This otherwise most ineligible site was selected, says Hildon in his "View of the Irish Stage," because it was "in the Liberties of the Earl of Meath, and so outside the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor."

The Rainford street theatre struggled on in a hopeless sort of way for some years, and then closed its doors, being unable to compete with the more flourishing and better situated house in Smock alley, which was conducted under a licence from the Lord Mayor. But the judiciousness of actors and the rivalries of managers, and the persistent effort to keep two theatres going in Dublin. For close on a century the task of supporting two houses was beyond the means of the citizens, and the history of the struggle is but a long record of financial losses and bankruptcy. A new theatre in Angier street, at its junction with Longford street, was built in 1755, and bore the title of Theatre Royal. For a long time it maintained a splendid rivalry with the Smock Alley house, each trying to outdo the other by bringing over such London stars as Quin, and Gifford, and Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, and Peg Woffington. But the rival managers at last became convinced that one theatre was enough for the Dublin public, and that this rivalry was only ruinous to both. An agreement was come to by which both companies were united, and for some time the two theatres were run under the same management and in the same interest, the company playing alternately in each house. This arrangement worked for a while with fair success under the management of Thomas Sheridan; but soon a new rival appeared on the scene.

A music hall had been opened in 1753 in Crow archway. This was twenty-seven years later acquired by a popular Dublin actor named Spenser Barry, who here built the celebrated Crow street Theatre. There ensued a contest between Mooney, manager of Smock alley, and Barry at Crow street even

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THE IRISH LITERARY THEATRE.

[By J. KEPPEL-HOPKINS.]

All lovers of the drama will be interested in the fate of the *bijou* theatre which it is proposed to establish in Dublin, under the auspices of the Irish Literary Society. The project has taken practical shape, owing to the munificence of a London lady—Miss Horniman—who has generously provided the funds for the purpose, and has deputed Lady Gregory to look after her interests in the novel undertaking. A site has been found for the little playhouse in the Mechanics' Institute, in Lower Abbey-street, in the heart of the city, where a theatre capable of holding about 500 persons is to be fitted up for the purpose, and an adjacent public building is to be added to provide dressing-rooms for the artists. Of late years the Mechanics' Institute Theatre has fallen more or less into disuse, as the artisans have found more commodious premises for lectures, concerts, &c., in the Trades Council Hall in Capel-street, which was formerly a palatial coffee palace. The failure of the latter enterprise conveys a useful lesson to certain captious critics of the present Government, who are more temperate in their principles than in their language when dealing with licensing legislation. Having failed to compete with the publican in business, they now direct all the batteries of their platform loquacity and pamphleteering artillery against Ministers in Parliament. However, as politics are strictly tabooed among the poetic dreamers, the literary aspirants and the dramatic idealists banded together in the movement known across the Irish Sea as the "Gaelic revival," I must confine myself to a mere passing allusion to the failure of this commercial venture of a very aggressive body of rabid and rampant teetotalers, who make periodic "raids," by deputation, upon Ministers in the Lobby of the House of Commons.

The Gaelic literary, linguistic, and dramatic movement has breathed a new spirit into our Irish "valley of dry bones." Its poetic and lofty ideals have appealed to men and women of culture, of all shades of opinion and belief, who are disgusted with much of the squalor of present-day Irish politics and these diurnal feuds, wranglings, and dissensions. The late Mr. C. S. Parnell once observed that "Ireland could not dispense with the services of a single Irishman," and those who have felt the force of that far-seeing statesman's remark rejoice to see that the movement for the revival of Irish native

industries, and the cultivation of the Celtic spirit and genius, has united diverse, conflicting interests upon one common platform. Except in Ulster, Irish Conservatives have of late years had little voice in our public affairs, but it is pleasant to see landowners like the O'Connor Don, Mr. MacMurrough Kavanagh, and others taking prominent places upon our local councils and public boards. Similarly, we rejoice to see the most prominent figures in the attempts to foster professional, and mercantile worlds united over the attempts to foster native industries and agricultural enterprise. The new movement, in regard to bringing about the cultivation of the more intellectual faculty of the race, through the medium of literature, language, and the drama, has brought together a brilliant little band of intellectual people.

Just as we see the cultivated youth of England immersed in the learning of the greatest minds of ancient Rome and Greece at Eton and Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge, so it is hoped the young people of Ireland will be induced to study Celtic legends, sagas, tales, and the folk-lore in every hamlet and village throughout the land. In the folk-lore as the ancient plays of the period, when Plato, Socrates, Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes trod the classic soil of Greece and streets of Athens, are performed by the cultured youth of England and amateur stage, so it is hoped to bring the marvellous civilisation, genius, and lore of the very early Celtic peoples before the youth of Ireland to-day by means of the drama. To some material eyes, in both England and Ireland, all these things appear to be mere senti-mentality; however, they appeal strongly to the poetic, dreamy, imaginative spirit of the Celtic peoples, not only in the nature of many peoples, earth. Sentiment is deeply implanted in the natures of many peoples, and it touches with fire some of the best and noblest feelings that are hidden within the human breast. Sir Horace Plunkett has won the warm sympathies of many Irishmen by his graceful official recogni-

tion of the ancient tongue of their ancestors. In the same way Royalty has graciously recognised the ancient language, customs, and festivals of Scotland and Wales. The much-abused British War Office has long ago done the same thing by adopting the ancient, picturesque Highland costume as the uniform of some of the bravest regiments of the Crown. Have they not also emblazoned upon the colours and trappings of the gallant Connaught Rangers their Celtic war-cry of "Faugh-a-Ballagh"? It should be correctly spelled, in Celtic letters, as "Fag-an-Beallac" (pronounced as written phonetically at present) and meaning literally "Leave the way" or "the road." That the study of Celtic will improve the intellects of the scholars, and the plays be of service to the dramatic art, there can be really no question. Sir Horace Plunkett has lent his support to the project financed by Miss Horniman of London, and the Solicitor-General for Ireland has diplomatically smoothed over the obstacles and opposition. The new theatre is not a commercial undertaking, as no charges will be made for seats; so that it will not be a rival of the existing Dublin theatres. Its influence will be a purely educational one, but it can scarcely fail to render as valuable services to the legitimate drama as the Théâtre Libre of M. Antoine, in Paris, has done to the stage and the dramatic art of France. Celtic legends and literature have rendered services to the arts of poetry, literature, and the drama in the past, and it is to be hoped they will prove an even more fruitful field in the future. It is interesting to read some of the criticisms of the English drama, made by the poetic idealists and enthusiasts of the latest literary and historic renaissance. Mr. W. B. Yeats declared to an American interviewer that Sir Henry Irving was the "greatest English actor of to-day," but added that "the greatest genius of the present stage has done more than anybody else to kill poetical drama." But while wrong in principle, Irving is always in good taste. Even his most absurdly elaborate scene is not hopelessly vulgar, like Trevelyan's staging of "Ulysses." Another poet and successful dramatist of the new school stated that "America has produced a very great poet—its only one—in Walt Whitman. Longfellow is a great poet only for those who never read poetry." The same critic declared that Huysman must be a great artist because he has selected a monastery as his retreat. "It is delightful to see God through stained-glass windows." The deeds of these young dramatic "knights errant" will be awaited with interest in artistic circles. It may be said of the Celtic, as Waliszewski says of Russian literature, it is "young and old at once and has not yet found its orbit nor its true balance. Here we see a waste; there extreme refinement."

Reading Aug 6

The members of the Irish National Theatre Society are steadily rehearsing their programme for next season, when, with some other new plays, they hope to produce "On Baile's Strand," by Mr. W. B. Yeats; an historical play in three acts, dealing with the struggle between the Irish and the Danes, by Lady Gregory; "The Miracle of the Woods," a one-act miracle play by Mr. P. Colm; and "The Well of the Saints," a drama in three acts by Mr. J. M. Synge. Several of these plays are rather longer than most of the works that the Society has produced hitherto, and will make stronger programmes than some of those chosen last year. Further it is understood that next season the society will play in a little theatre newly arranged for the purpose, and will thus be able to do far better work than what was possible in the inconvenient concert hall where hitherto the performances have taken place.

In addition to his dramatic work Mr. Colm is engaged on a volume of lyrical poems, of a rather objective nature, which will contain impressions of the intimate life of the Irish country people. A few of his poems of this sort—such as "The Plougher" and "The Drovers"—have already been printed. They have a little uncertainty of form, yet are full of interest and promise, and have a quality that separates them completely from the literary lyrics of which everyone is weary.



Pattern for a Frieze



POST CARD.



Miss E. F. Hesterman

42 Montague Mansions -

Portman Square



The Solicitor-General, sitting at Dublin Castle yesterday, granted a new theatre patent to Miss Horniman, Montagu-gardens, London, to establish, in the interest of the National Theatre Society, in Dublin, for the production of Irish plays. The patentee, with Miss Horniman's consent, would be Lady Gregory, and only plays in Irish or English by Irish writers on Irish subjects or such foreign dramatic works as would elevate the Irish public taste could be exhibited.

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THEATRICAL PATENTS IN DUBLIN AND KINGSTOWN.

JUDGMENT BY THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL.

BOTH APPLICATIONS GRANTED, WITH CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS.

On Saturday in the Library, Dublin Castle, the Solicitor-General, Mr. Campbell, K.C., M.P., gave judgment on the applications for patents by Miss A. E. Horniman, in behalf of the Irish National Theatre Society, in respect of the hall attached to the Mechanics' Institute, Lower Abbey street, and by the Kingstown Pavilion Theatre, in respect of the Kingstown Pavilion.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

The Solicitor-General, giving judgment on the application with reference to the Lower Abbey street premises, said that from the opening observations of counsel for the applicant, it was quite plain that the solicited patent was not required, and the applicant would be content with a patent which would authorize the production of certain plays in which the Irish National Theatre Society were interested. There were two difficulties at the onset of the application, one owing to the residence of Miss Horniman outside the jurisdiction and the other as to the possibility of limiting the play as to time and personnel. The avowed purpose of the applicant, namely, the encouragement and promotion of the operations of the National Theatre Society. Owing to the consultation at the hearing and mainly, also, due to the generous action of the persons interested in the existing theatres in Dublin, their counsel consented to the application provided that it was limited in certain directions. These were the conditions, and, personally, he was glad to think that owing to the munificence of Miss Horniman a chance was given to the Irish National Theatre Society to maintain its existence and carry out its programme under very auspicious conditions. Miss Horniman had agreed that Lady Gregory, to whom no objection could possibly be taken, should be substituted for her as the patentee, and the various parties present, representing what he might call the opposite interests, practically came to an agreement as to the limitations which should appear on the patent, which it was considered would carry out the objects of the applicant and at the same time protect the legitimate interests of the existing patented theatres in Dublin. Some little friction, he believed, had since arisen with regard to the exact form of these conditions, but he was himself satisfied and intended to take them in the form that was agreed on that day and in which they had been handed in. They were as follows:

"The patentee shall only empower the patentee to exhibit plays in the Irish or English language written by Irish writers on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign origin as would tend to interest the public in the higher works of dramatic art; all plays to be selected by the Irish National Theatre Society under the provisions of Part 6 of the rules now existing and subject to the conditions therein contained, a clause to be inserted against the assignment of any per-

son or persons other than the trustee or trustees Horniman, her executors or assigns, the patent to cease if the Irish National Theatre Society be dissolved. No enlargement of the theatre to be made, so as to provide for a greater number of spectators than it is capable of holding at present. No entire licence to be applied for or obtained." Some questions had been asked in cross-examination of the witness who appeared in support of the application, suggesting that in previous productions of the Society there had been an attempt to run upon lines, as was suggested, of a somewhat immoral, anti-religious and highly political character. These suggestions were not proved, no evidence whatever was produced before him to justify him in coming to any conclusion, and he could only say that any such attempt to do the contrary would, in his opinion, be fatal to the operations of the society—operations which seemed to him to promise well for the future, and which, under the superintendence and with the assistance of talented Irishmen like Mr. Yeats and Dr. Douglas Hyde and a number of other gentlemen, who in recent years had done so much to remove from oblivion our ancient Irish legends and national myths, he had no reason whatever to believe that any such attempt would be made. He believed that it would be fatal for the success of the movement and of the interests that the Society itself desired to promote; and, in any event, leaving, as he proposed to do, its patent to a period of six years, the Society would of course discontinue it if it was on its trial, and at the end of six years, on the application for a renewal of the patent, of course it would be open to those interested in the matter then to give evidence before him in support of the patent had been in any way abused. On these lines and conditions he intended to advise His Excellency to grant the patent to Lady Gregory for the use and in trust for the Irish National Theatre Society, and on the conditions which were drawn up in this document, and which would be in series in the patent. Miss Horniman had taken upon herself a very heavy financial liability in respect of the rest of the existing promises and the promises which it was proposed to add to the Mechanics' Institute Theatre, and also in respect to loans, for which she would be liable. She had undertaken to spend considerable sums in the remodeling of these premises, and a plan had been drawn to him and handed in of the proposed alterations. The patent would not issue until he had a certificate from the City Architect that that had been fully carried out to his satisfaction, and that every precaution had been taken to secure the safety of the public attending the entertainments at this theatre.

Mr. Michael Kavanagh, solicitor for the Gaity Theatre, said it was not quite accurate to say that counsel for the existing theatres present had been contented to the application. Their instructions were to oppose.

The Solicitor-General—You are rather late. I am afraid. I do not say that the consent was a willing one. There was a reluctant consent to these conditions; but my suggestion was agreed to that the parties should meet together, and by correspondence or otherwise, should see a way to agreeing on conditions, which would be agreed to allow for the production of these plays proposed to be brought forward by the Society, and on the other hand would safeguard the interests of the existing patented theatres in Dublin, far as possible. I may say of course that notwithstanding the opposition of the various interests reported here, I have felt bound to grant it on the conditions I have mentioned.

Mr. Herbert Wilson, K.C., and Mr. Joseph Day (instructed by Messrs. Whitney and Moore), appeared for the applicant, Miss Horniman.

Mr. Denis Henry, K.C., and Mr. J. P. Moriarty, K.C. (instructed by Mr. Michael Kavanagh), appeared for the Gaity Theatre. Mr. O'Shaughnessy, K.C., and Mr. J. J. O'Donoghue (instructed by Mr. E. W. Harris, LL.D.), appeared for the Theatre Royal. Mr. Blood, K.C. (instructed by Messrs. Hamilton and Craig), appeared for the Queen's Theatre. Mr. Webb, solicitor, appeared for the trustees of the Mechanics' Institute.

Coming to the case of the application on behalf of the Kingstown Pavilion,

The Solicitor-General said it was a more difficult case, because it was somewhat novel in its character, and was so vigorously opposed by those who were justified in meeting to protect their interests in matters of this kind, and that was to say the holders of existing theatrical patents in the City of Dublin. Every one acquainted with the way in which the Dublin theatres were conducted and the excellent fashion in which their managers catered to the thousand needs of the audience would agree that they were entitled to every consideration. At the same time, it would be a mistake to suppose that they were in any way entitled to an absolute monopoly. It was plain that the objects of the State, in the case of which this application was made, was to provide that the patent to be established should not be of such a character as to render it impossible to grant further patents so long as the holders of existing patents were not hindered or prevented from carrying on their business on commercial and profitable lines. On the point of law, he was absolutely clear—there was no room for doubt. The main objection, as regards the merits, was that the granting of the patent would unduly conflict with the legitimate interests of the existing theatres. If he considered it was likely to be so he should hesitate, but the evidence upon that point had been extremely unsatisfactory. It had been struck by the admission, that during the period when the Pavilion had been in full blast the receipts of the Dublin theatres had not fallen off in a way that would support such an argument. Speaking for himself, he could not conceive there being any real competition. If the Pavilion was devoted to the production of first-class plays the cost of producing them would not be less than in Dublin, and people would, in addition to the payment for entrance, have to pay their fares to Kingstown. So that the result could hardly be successful. If, on the other hand, as was more likely, it was devoted to the lighter class of plays and more or less insignificant comedies, that would not really involve competition. However, still, if there was some competition developed he had to bear in mind the interests of the public, and he could not forget that visitors to our beautiful Irish seaside resorts were not supplied with amusements, indoor, in the same way and to the same extent that they were in the other side of the Channel. Besides, Kingstown was a place of 30,000 inhabitants, sometimes ranging up to 50,000, and he did not see why the interests of the residents and the desire of the Urban District Council should be ignored in a matter of this kind. He was especially as the Urban Council were making great progress in the direction of rendering Kingstown more attractive to visitors. As to the unsuitability of the Pavilion for such a purpose, which the learned counsel said he was that he had personally visited the place and made an inspection, the result of which had been to satisfy his mind on the several points which had been urged in opposition to the patent. I may say that the danger of fire, which had been said to be a building in which there was less risk of danger to the public in the case of panic

Heeman Aug 22

Reaction of the Public

Book Tins Aug 22

[illegible]

This week. Spa Theatre, Scarborough

Next week. Theatre Royal, YORK

Sept. 5th 1904.

Dear Yeats.

Many thanks for your letter

I am very sorry about Diarmuid, I quite forgot all about it, I can get it for you in a week, if you want it, but if Six weeks will do, it would suit me better, as I shall then be nearer home.

I heartily congratulate you and Lady Gregory on the Start you have made, the whole idea is splendid and I wish I could think that you owed me any thanks at all, My hearty congratulations to all concerned.

Your venture will, I hope, become a Genuine School of Drama and Acting.

Over here, the Tyranny of "Dividend" is heavy.

I doubt if any Art becomes a Field chiefly for Financial Speculation, except when the ^{Taste is} Public ~~is~~ utterly debased, just the time when the effects of the Tyranny are most disastrous.

However, "When everything dies, is the Starting point of new Life"

Please give our kind regards to Lady Gregory, and with all good wishes,

Believe me,

Yours very truly.

Frank A Benson

W. B. Yeats Esq.,

Google Park

Gort

Co. Galway.

were of the most simple character, and that there are numerous exits and entrances. "Some remodelling," he said, "in the internal building would be required, but he was quite satisfied that there was no reasonable ground for apprehending any danger to the public." It is satisfactory to have this very definite opinion; it will allay apprehensions, the more so since it is accompanied by a requirement that the Engineer to the Urban Council is to be asked for a certificate "as to certain suggested improvements. These conditions will, probably make the licence not particularly valuable. The seating accommodation must be of a more permanent character; chairs connected by a board or iron must be removed; the seating in the gallery must be approved, a fire-proof curtain must be provided, and a suitable dressing department; no intoxicating liquors can be sold, and the patent is to expire in seven years. We wish well to the Pavilion, for it has certainly done a deal of good to Kingstown, and we hope it will be found possible under these restricted conditions to found a township theatre which will be profitable, entertaining, and instructive.

The second application with which the Solicitor-General had to deal was that in which the Irish National Theatre Society was concerned. Broadly stated, it was sought to have a licence for the use of the theatre forming part of the Mechanics' Institute in Abbey street for plays produced under the aegis of the Society, Miss HOODMAN of London to supply the subsidy. The theatre of the Mechanics' Institute is not by any means a poor house for the purpose. It has a fairly good stage, and a good auditorium. We are not out-and-out admirers of the Irish Literary Theatre, but those who are will now have an opportunity of seeing Irish literary plays, and such plays as those patronised by the Elmhurst Society, played under conditions favourable to playwright and artist. Lady GARDNER has been substituted for arrangement as patroness. She will only be allowed to exhibit plays in the English or Irish languages, written by Irish authors on Irish subjects, or "such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to educate and interest the public of this country in the higher works of dramatic art." This is sufficiently widespread a condition to make the patentees completely happy, especially as the Solicitor-General added that the "plays were to be selected by the Irish National Theatre Society," who will not care very much about the insertion of a clause against assignment. The old Mechanics' Theatre is to be remodelled and improved, the City Architect

will have to give a certificate before the licence issues. The experiment is an interesting one. We are glad that the rights of existing theatre proprietors have been safeguarded as far as possible. We do not see how it was necessary, with two well equipped houses in town, to have another for the purposes we have described; but "the more the merrier," and the merrier in the theatrical world is certain to live a long, at all events a remunerative, life.

Evening Mail

ESTABLISHED 1825.

DUBLIN, MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 1904.

THE NEW THEATRES

Dublin is to have two new theatres. At least that is the effect of the decision of the Solicitor-General, if those who are promoting the schemes as to which evidence was taken recently are now prepared to carry them out. And that they will do so there is no reason to doubt. Whether Kingstown with its normal population of 20,000, which often rises to double that number owing to the influx of summer visitors, will be able to support a theatre of its own is a matter as to which there are differences of opinion that time alone can settle. But if there are found persons willing to pay for the cost of making the experiment there is certainly no reason why they should be prevented from doing so. And, in taking this view of the matter, the Solicitor-General acted in accordance with the principles of plain common-sense. Much more than local interest attaches to the second of the new theatres, which is to be reconstructed out of the hall

attached to the Mechanics' Institute, and is to be devoted primarily to giving those who believe in the movement for an Irish Literary Theatre a chance of allowing the public to see the best that they can do, and to judge accordingly. The Abbey street theatre will start on its career with certain limitations. It will be devoted mainly to the production of plays by Irish writers on Irish subjects, in either English or Irish; but liberty is also given to perform the works of great dramatists of other countries. But apparently the performance of a play by an Irish writer, the subject matter of which is not Irish, would be an infringement of the conditions under which it is granted. Whether fairyland would be excluded on the ground that it is not Ireland, would be a subject for argument before a Court of Chancery; but for the sake of Mr. Yeats and some other probable contributors to the repertoire of the new theatre, it is to be hoped that, even though stage fairies are by this time pretty well worked out, fairyland will not be taboo. Just as novel as the general scheme of the dramatic fare to be provided is the fact that no bar is to be attached to the new theatre. There was some objection to the inauguration of the new venture on the ground that it might interfere with the financial status of the previously existing theatres. But there is little substance

in such an objection. Theatre proprietors do not carry on their business out of philanthropy. Their object is to make all the money that they can from the public, and they are quite entitled to do so. On the other hand, the public are entitled to get the benefit of any additional choice of places of entertainment to be derived from the enterprise of those who desire to open such places.

EVENING TELEGRAPH

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 1904.

THE NEW THEATRES.

The Solicitor-General on Saturday gave his decision upon the applications for theatrical patents for the Pavilion at Kingstown and the Irish National

Theatre in Lower Abbey street. In each case the grant is conditional, and as the nature of the conditions was widely different so are the considerations. One limitation, however, is common, the operation of the patent being confined in the Dublin case to six years and in the Kingstown case to seven years. With regard to the Pavilion, the chief points raised concerned the questions of competition with existing Dublin theatres and the suitability and safety of the building. The Solicitor-General leaned to the opinion that the productions at the Pavilion would be "the higher class of plays, and more or less insignificant comedies"—that not many people would go from Dublin to Kingstown to patronise such performances whilst they had more solid fare in the city, and that, apart from these considerations, it was desirable to encourage the work of making Kingstown more complete in its provision of indoor amusements for its large population and its many visitors. Kingstown will, therefore, have its theatre, and the managers of the Pavilion will engage in an interesting experiment. How far they will be able to compete with the Dublin theatres in the presentation of first-class plays cannot be foreseen at present. The theatrical world is a highly organized machine, and visits of first-class companies to new theatres of a suburban character are not easily managed. What is probable is that for a considerable time Kingstown must be content with fare having a distinctly holiday flavour. Competition, if it does develop, will do so slowly. On the question of the accommodation, it is satisfactory to have the opinion of the Solicitor-General, after a personal inspection, that there is but little fear of danger from fire or panic. A fire-proof curtain is to be put in place, the gallery is not to have any standing room, the seating is to be improved, and the dressing-rooms are to be extended. These are conditions about which the Kingstown Commissioners, who have powers over public buildings will have a say, and they may be dependent upon so quite as far as the Dublin Corporation is regulations for the

public safety and convenience. Whilst the Pavilion will be the home of light amusement, the theatre in Lower Abbey street will be at the other end of the scale. This is an attempt to establish a small theatre under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre Society where the plays and the audiences will be "As though for." The Solicitor-General made reference to suggestions that some of the plays might be "of a somewhat immoral, anti-religious, or highly political character." Plays immoral or irreligious would, as he said, doom the experiment to disaster. Not only would public opinion in Dublin rise to resist against plays open to this charge, but they would be out of touch with the guiding spirit of the Irish literary revival and with all that is truly National in Ireland which is deeply religious and jealous of morality. On the third point, plays of "a highly political character," it is to be hoped that there will be some latitude. Irish Nationalism, as distinct from slavish following of London models, is looked upon by some people as merely political. The language movement has been denounced time after time for its dangerous political tendencies. The theatre is hardly the place in any country for political controversy, and the examples of the English theatres in booming Mr. Chamberlain's scheme last pantomime season is not likely to be followed by the Irish National Theatre. Yet plays just as patriotically Irish as some of Shakespeare's plays are patriotically English will surely be allowed to pass without protest or censure. In the hands of the present conductors, Lady Gregory, Mr. Yeats, and Dr. Douglas Hyde, the theatre can scarcely be expected to become a hotbed of political agitation. With the old legends predominating in the subjects, with the prominence that literary expression will receive, the fear is that the theatre may be somewhat too classical to be a popular or national force. Still it will be a departure from the London stage, which is overlaid with scenery and mechanism, and is void of dramatic inspiration. It will afford a fair field for "plays in the Irish or English language written by Irish writers on Irish subjects," and for dramatic works by foreign authors which can be held up as examples of what an Irish National drama should be. It seems strange, however, that Irish writers should be confined to Irish subjects. A really great Irish dramatist might find this condition embarrassing, and be compelled to go abroad with a great pity because his subject was not strictly Irish, although its construction and line of thought might be distinctly Irish. For instance, Sheridan would have been ruled out. Chief among the benefits of the new theatre will be its usefulness as a school for Irish actors and actresses, who have already impressed critics at home and abroad by their display of the superiority of Irish dramatic genius. This theatre will not be in competition with the existing Dublin theatre,

although it may eventually have a healthy influence upon the drama in Ireland. The closer the theatre is in touch with the National life the better for the theatre. If an Irish drama can be created that will arouse National enthusiasm we may eventually see the present process reversed and the London theatres as much indebted to us for their material as they are at present to France.

Noted by Aug 25

In spite of the rooted antagonism of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon ideals, it is in England that the Irish National Theatre Society has found its chief support. The theatre that will presently be its headquarters in Dublin is the gift of an English lady, Miss Horniman, who has undertaken to spend about \$10,000 on alterations and equipment and to take the responsibility of a ninety-nine-year lease at an outlay of about \$1,000 yearly. The theatre, which will seat only five hundred spectators, belongs to the Mechanics' Institute in Abbey Street. The city morgue, which adjoins the building and has lately been abandoned by the Corporation, will be taken over for dressing-rooms, the whole expense being met by Miss Horniman, who will make a free gift of the theatre to the Theatre Society. As the income of the Society is only £120, the question of rents has always been the chief difficulty; the actors receive no payment, and are often recruited from the working classes, especially when the plays are in Irish. When Miss Horniman applied this month for a license or patent, an amusing discussion took place among the barristers who appeared for her and those who were present to protect the interests of the existing theatres in Dublin. Mr. Yeats was called to defend the aims of the Society, and was attacked by the opposition for producing plays with a political tendency such as his own "Cathleen at Heolunan." He retorted that he was simply an artist, and as such had no opinions to advocate on the stage. The opposing counsel was obstinately Philistine, and refused to admit that the achievements of M. Antoine and the Théâtre Libre furnished a hopeful analogy for the Irish Theatre. London audiences, they said, had received with a "cry of horror" plays that had been produced by M. Antoine. Sir Horace Plunkett, who supported Miss Horniman, maintained that a patent should be granted on the ground that the Irish plays tended to keep the people in the country by giving them a fresh interest; any movement that would stop the leak at Queensferry would be welcomed by the Department of which he is President. His arguments were patriotic and practical, and told more than the artistic aloofness and claims for the romantic urged by Mr. Yeats and only half understood by his hearers. What really impressed the Court, however, was the fact that the Theatre could not in any case be made to pay, since there is to be no bar and no orchestra. Miss Horniman, as a non-resident, was not legally qualified to obtain the patent; Lady Gregory, the author of "Poets and Dreamers," met the difficulty by offering herself as the patentee. The opposing managers framed certain restrictions as to the character of the plays to be performed in the new theatre. They must be by Irish writers on Irish subjects, and when standard plays are given they must be not less than fifty years old. The patent was finally granted for six years, and the Irish National Theatre now has a home of its own in which to carry

The Solicitor-General, acting for the Attorney-General, gave his decision yesterday upon the application of Miss A. R. F. Horniman, of Montagu-gardens, Portman-square, London, for a patent of 21 years for a new theatre in Dublin. At the hearing of the application some days ago it was explained that Miss Horniman had purchased the famous morgue and the adjoining Mechanics' Institute, and was anxious to replace them by a theatre, to be presented as a gift to the Irish National Theatre Society. The Solicitor-General, in giving his decision, said that one of the difficulties in the case had been that Miss Horniman resided outside the jurisdiction. She had consented, however, that Lady Gregory should be qualified to present, and an agreement had been arranged by which the interests of the existing theatres of Dublin should be protected. Subject to the restrictions imposed by this agreement, he was prepared to recommend a patent for six years, and would advise the Lord Lieutenant to grant this patent in the name of Lord Gregory for the use of not less than for the Irish National Theatre Society. He was very much glad to think that, owing to the cordialness of Miss Horniman, a chance was now given to the Irish National Theatre Society to maintain its position and to carry out its programme under more auspicious conditions than before.

Daily Telegraph:

Considerable interest will be aroused by the fact that Lady Gregory was on Saturday granted a patent for a new theatre for the production of Irish plays in Dublin, the promoter being Miss Horniman, of Montagu-gardens, London. Mr. J. H. Campbell, M.P., the Solicitor-General, acting on behalf of the Irish Attorney-General, granted the patent under the Irish Act of 1786, which vests the power of licensing Dublin theatres in the Lord Lieutenant. The Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction does not extend to Ireland, and outside the Irish capital there is no authority in that country for the control of the production of stage plays. Lady Gregory is the widow of Sir William Gregory, who became Member of Parliament for Dublin City sixty-three years ago, in spite of the opposition of Daniel O'Connell, then Lord Mayor. Sir William was afterwards Governor of Ceylon.

Standard Aug 22

The Solicitor-General for Ireland, on Saturday, gave his decision on the application made by Miss Horniman, of London, for a patent for the use of a hall in Lower Abbey-street, Dublin, as a theatre for the performance of plays by the Irish National Theatre Society. He granted the application, he said, on the condition that the names of plays performed by the Society. The theatre was not to be enlarged, and there was to be no bar. He added that the suggestion made in the examination of Applicant's witnesses that in previous productions of the Society there had been an attempt to run plays on lines of an immoral, irreligious, or highly political character had not been proved. The operations of the Society seemed to him to promise well for the future, particularly as they were under the supervision of an Ireland Irishman like Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. Douglas Hyde and a number of other gentlemen who had shown so much in recent years to rescue from oblivion their ancient legends and National myths. An application for a theatre patent for the Kingsdown Pavilions was also granted, subject to certain internal arrangements being made.

NATIONAL THEATRE.

HOME FOR IRISH DRAMA.

RENOVATING "MECHANIC'S"

Little more than a month has elapsed since a responsible officer of the Crown sanctioned the grant of a patent for the formation of a theatre in Dublin devoted solely to the interests of the Irish National Theatre movement. The object of that movement is to found a stage in the capital of Ireland for the purpose of rendering in dramatic form all that is best in the legendary tale and traditions of our race. Brief as is the time which has passed since the patent was granted, much has been done in the direction of providing a home for genuine Irish drama. For some time past the buildings have been hard at work transforming a very old building, already provided with at least stage equipment into a very much superior establishment.

The promoters of the Irish National Theatre movement have succeeded in securing as the site of their new theatre the old playhouse attached to the Mechanic's Institute in Lower Abbey street. That old-fashioned theatre has had a long and a somewhat chequered career. Started simultaneously with the foundation of the Mechanic's Institute, in the latter years of the last century, it was at one time a regular theatre. Later on it was burned down, and its parts passed into other hands, and was not rebuilt. Up to a few years ago the management of this interesting old concern used to run it for the production of plays of the blood-curdling and hair-raising type. Then the question of the patent, or rather the want of it, arose, and this was put a stop to, and the place gradually drifted into the condition of a cheap variety show.

Now it is going to regain its old dignity—and a great deal more. Working from the plans of a Dublin architect, Mr. Joseph Hollway, M.R.I.A., of No. 21 Northumberland road, Moles, R. and E. Farmer, building contractors, of this city, are rapidly effecting a transformation in the character and appearance of the old Abbey street playhouse. Additional entrances and exits have been provided. The principal entrance, leading to the stalls and balcony, will be from the Marlborough street, adjoining the old Morgan's. The old entrance will be the Abbey street door. New dressing rooms and a green-room have been provided. In the theatre itself a new proscenium wall has been built. The stage has been altered to meet the new condition of things. It will be suitably equipped for scenic purposes, and will have a trefoiled curtain attached. The auditorium has not been enlarged, but all the old seating and fittings have been removed. On the ground floor there will be stalls capable of accommodating 770 spectators. The pit behind the stalls will seat 180, and in the balcony there will be seating room for 186, making a total accommodation of 856 seats.

The scheme of decoration will be extremely simple in character, consisting mainly of a colour arrangement of yellow and cream. The workmanship, in all its departments, will be executed by Irish firms. The underdraining well, it is anticipated, be finished about the middle of next month. It is not unlikely, therefore, that the new Irish theatre will be formally opened early in December of this year.

A number of new Irish plays will, it is rumored, be placed on the stage in quick succession after the opening.

The Academy and Literature

The Past and Future of Our Drama—VII

3 September 1904

INTERESTING as these experiments are they are surpassed both in actual accomplishment and in suggestiveness by the work done by the Irish National Theatre Society, the history of which institution it will be both interesting and profitable to study. It is worthy of note that the present dramatic activity in Ireland is not hampered by either tradition or convention, for until to-day drama has been non-existent in that country, that is to say, drama of home growth, racy of the soil. The average so-called Irish play is sheer burlesque.

I have noted that in the history of the English stage the cultivation of the drama has retreated before the cultivation of the novel. In Ireland exactly the reverse has been the case. Again, it is noteworthy that an Irish audience possesses that facility of emotion, those easily aroused passions which distinguished the Elizabethan playgoers. For the idea of an Irish theatre we are indebted to Lady Gregory, whose "Cuchulain of Muirthemne" and "Gods and Fighting Men" are such admirable modern renderings of Irish legendary tales. In conjunction with her the early workers on the scheme were Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Edward Martyn, and Mr. George Moore, of whom the first named has acted the most prominent and most influential part. With Mr. Yeats' theories of what a theatre should be and of how a public play should be acted I am not here concerned, rather with what has been the outcome of this dramatic experiment—an experiment in some ways akin to the Théâtre Libre of M. Antoine in Paris, which so greatly influenced French drama and French acting. The plays are produced, as with the Stage Society, without any unnecessary expenditure on scenery or costumes, it being rightly understood that the proper rôle of scenery and mounting is to suggest, not to realise.

If the play be strong enough to stir the imaginations and emotions of the spectators, the filling in of the back-

ground may be left to the imagination. It is the tendency in our theatres to-day to leave nothing to the imagination of the playgoer, to dot every "i" and to cross every "t" for him, to throw the limelight on every emotion and on every jest. The first performances were given in Dublin during May 1899, and Mr. Yeats' play, "The Countess Cathleen," raised a storm of discussion, in which I need not join.

Several other plays were produced in succeeding years by the Irish Literary Theatre, which institution made way in 1902 for the present Irish National Theatre Society, with which I am chiefly concerned, the objects aimed at being "to endeavour to create an Irish National Theatre by producing plays in English and Irish written by Irish writers or on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to educate and interest the public in the higher and more vital forms of dramatic art." If we omit the references to Ireland no sinner or more sound programme could be drawn up by the malcontents of to-day in any country. The actors of this Society are all amateurs, workers for love of art and not for the earning of their bread and butter—and champagne. Only one member has had any professional practice, Mr. W. G. Fay, a capital stage-manager and actor, to whom the movement owes a great debt.

In order to understand the importance of the work accomplished, it will be well to examine a few of the more recent productions. Two plays of Mr. Yeats may be dealt with—"The Land of Heart's Desire," a poetic piece of curious beauty, and "The Pot of Bread," a piece of Irish peasant life. The action of the first farce of Irish drama in an Irish farmer's cottage on May named takes place in an Irish farmer's cottage on May

9
"Eve"—God gives great power to the good people on May Eve." The plot is half human, half fairy. Maire is the young bride of Shamus Heuin, son of the good-natured farmer Maarten, and his shrewish wife Bridget; the remaining characters are a priest, Father Hart, and the Fairy Child. Maire is wayward, half filled with human longings, half filled with dreamy desires; she steers primrose, as is the custom on May Eve, outside the cottage door; she gives milk to a queer old woman and fire to a queer old man who knock. Angered by the shrill upbraidings of Bridget, she calls aloud to the fairies to come and carry her away, and the Fairy Child answers to her call. The priest fights hard to save the soul at stake, but the powers of evil conquer—

"Almost out of the very hand of God,
And men and women leave old paths, for pride
Comes knocking with thin knuckles at the heart."

Without copious quotation it would be impossible to convey the atmosphere of this tender fantasy, thoroughly poetic in its dreaminess and glamour of the mystic world. In striking contrast to this piece stands "The Pot of Broth," a rollicking farce, which shows how a tramp, "a very gifted man," contrives to hoodwink a skindint housewife by the most audacious stratagems.

The other plays I will deal with are Mr. J. M. Synge's "Riders to the Sea," and Mr. Colm's "Broken Soil," both intensely interesting as being realistic in the right sense of that ill-used word. "Riders to the Sea" reminds us of a painting by Israels; it is a cottage interior, a picture of fisher life; a mother who has lost her husband and all her sons save one upon the sea; the last son is drowned, and his body brought back to the cabin, accompanied by women weeping; the mother mourns over her dead—that is all. But the slight story is told with simplicity, truth and directness; the dialogue is written in a plain, effective manner. It is an

excellent picture, not a great canvas; but it achieves the end of art, it expresses an emotion. Mr. Colm's play, in three short scenes, is equally direct, though not equally simple; to describe it would rob it of its beauty and its interest. It also deals with the lives of poor folk, tenderly, sorrowfully, with occasional gleams of humour; in fact, it is truthfully Irish. The actors of this Society compare well with any professional performers, save the highest. They never attitudinize, they never exaggerate, they never "make points"; they are as quiet, as simple, and as direct in their methods as the plays they perform.

Is it possible that these efforts of the Stage Society and of the Irish National Theatre Society point out the road which may best be followed by those who desire to see a revival of the English literary drama?

It may appear elementary to discuss the ingredients that go to make a literary drama as distinct from a drama that is not literary; as a matter of fact every good play must be literature. A good play is one in which the plot is founded upon the workings of human emotion and human character and in which the personages speak so as to express themselves naturally and clearly. It is precisely the same with prose fiction. A play that is not literature is therefore a bad play. Mr. Maugham, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Synge, Mr. Colm and a few others have given us fine plays, which fulfil the laws laid down above and which are therefore literature. It is not by the founding of any repertoire theatre or by a wholesale attack upon the present state of affairs that any revival of the literary drama, of the true drama, can be brought about; it is rather by such efforts as those made by the Societies I have been discussing. It is hopeless to expect that the theatre will be reformed from the inside, it is hide-bound with tradition and crushed with commercialism. Mr. Barrie and Mr. Jones have promised to write for a repertoire theatre, why should they not assist the organisations already in existence? Might

there not be reciprocity between Ireland and England, the writers in the two countries producing their plays both in London and in Dublin?

Sufficient support could surely be obtained in London for a theatre somewhat on the lines of the Théâtre Libre of M. Antoine, and we have been shown that there are writers and actors competent to produce fine plays. The writers for the commercial stage either will not or cannot return to nature, the ordinary play-going public has been debauched by lavish luxury in scenery and costumes, but there are dramatists who can write plays instinct with humanity and therefore literary, and there is a sufficient public to support them if their plays be produced with careful economy. The comedies of to-day, as I have said, are healthy enough, it is the serious drama of human life that is aemic, and new blood can be poured into its veins only by new men and new methods; the old bottles would quickly burst were they filled with new wine.

If these Societies focus their good works and increase in number it can scarcely be doubted that many who now hold aloof from the theatre will return to their allegiance and that many writers who now use all their strength in the production of fiction will turn to the drama. One reason, the chiefest perhaps, why we may scarcely dare to hope for reform from within the theatre or even from the establishment of a repertoire theatre is that the hope of the serious drama lies in a sweeping away of unnecessary and hurtful traditions and conventions. Shakespeare and his fellows were hampered by none such; they had not the fear of precedents before their eyes; they wrote directly and convincingly, both in poetry and in prose, setting forth straightforward tales full of dramatic action, based upon human emotions and founded upon everlasting morals. W. T. S.

Reading April 17

Correspondence

The Irish National Theatre Society

SIR,—With much if not most of what is said in the seventh paper on "The Past and Future of our Drama" regarding the work of the Irish dramatists of to-day most people will readily agree. In so far as they draw their inspiration from fresh springs and revivify the theatre by fresh and unconventional methods they perform a real service to dramatic art. But their ideal and their efforts to attain it inevitably suggest two questions: (1) What is the meaning of an Irish or any other National theatre? And (2) is there really a note of Irish nationality in the work of the leaders of the Irish dramatic movement? The Irish National Theatre Society has now acquired a theatre. (It is perhaps worth noting that the theatre has been provided from a source which is neither Irish nor national, but is the sole gift of an English lady.) What is the essence of the drama which, so far as can be judged from the previous history of the movement, is likely to be exhibited on its boards, and how far is it likely to be Irish in any true sense?

As regards the first of the questions asked above, it is obvious that a distinctive nationality is not conferred on a theatre or a play by the mere fact that the actors are all of one race, or that the dramatic personae are called by names and are understood to mean the surroundings appropriate to any given country. It will be granted that if ever there was a distinctively national drama the drama of the Elizabethan playwrights was such. Yet that drama is thoroughly cosmopolitan in its topics, its characters and its scenery. It is rightly observed in your article that if a play be strong enough to stir the imagination, the filling in of the background may be left to the imagination. It is not by labels that national characteristics are best denoted. A drama is national in proportion as it is racy of the moral and intellectual affinities of the nationality of its author, and not in virtue of the origin attributed to the personages who crowd its stage, or the details in which they speak. Will any one say that "She Stoops to Conquer" and "The School

for Scandal" are not essentially Irish in the intellectual characteristics they suggest. Yet neither the one nor the other has an Irish motif. It is from their authors' personalities that they derive their peculiar quality.

As regards the second question, most people are thoroughly agreed as to the monotony of the caricature presented to two generations of playgoers in the stage Irishman of the Victorian drama. Yet, after all, are the Pats and Murrys, with their canbans and knee-breeches and shillelaghs, more essentially un-Irish in their ideas and ideals than the Shannons, the Maartons and the Mainors of Mr. Yeats' peculiarly un-Irish imagination? The physical grotesqueness of the earlier school is really less untrue to life than the mental grotesqueness of the later. Where in Ireland, or in Irish nature, does one find the vague dreamy mysticism which constitutes the warp and woof of Mr. Yeats' fantastic web? The criticism here passed on the movement and its leaders is in no wise connected with the controversies aroused in Ireland by the treatment of religious subjects in the works of Mr. Yeats and Mr. Moore. That is a matter quite alien to this discussion, though the failure to understand a point of view fundamentally Irish is in itself a proof of the non-Irish quality of the art of the leaders of the Irish dramatic movement. What is wanted in an Irish National Theatre, and what has hitherto been signally lacking in too many of the plays produced under its auspices, is a presentation of the spontaneity, abandon, and sense of the brightness of life which are such conspicuous ingredients in Irish character and such powerful elements in its attractiveness. But it seems hopeless to expect anything of the kind from such writers as Mr. Yeats. Under his guidance the Irish National Theatre will doubtless exhibit works with the stamp of genius and originality; but it will certainly not be Irish. A poet whose chief inspiration has been the shadowy symbolism of William Blake has no true affinity with those whom he calls his countrymen.—Yours, &c. DUBLIN.

These remarks apply rather to the prose plays than to "The King's Threshold." I do not know whether Mr. Yeats meant to convey the impression that Seanachan, the poet, was afflicted with an obsession of theoretical physiology, but the recurrence, in various forms, of the idea of

A woman
That, gazing on the cleven lip of a hare,
Bungs forth a hare-tipped child.

(I quote from memory), rather marred in my opinion, and that not from prudery, the beauty of the verses. Mr. F. J. Fay spoke the lines beautifully, and I kept waiting, as the musical sounds rolled on, for those "few moments of intense expression" which were to contain the heart of the play. They came, but in some degree only, when King Guineade bade his court kneel down, and he himself on his knees offered the crown to Seanachan. As the play was ending, a sense of disappointment came over me. "The King's Threshold" is only a stage poem. It is too thin for dramatic representation, and I felt that, with an actor of less elocutionary power than Mr. F. J. Fay, it would have evaporated into weariness.

With "D. O'D's" criticism of Mr. Synge's plays I am in disagreement, especially with reference to "Riders to the Sea," for in this play the note of tragedy is not forced by such artifices as a less careful dramatist might employ, but is sounded naturally by the truth and simplicity of the action. To one who—as "D. O'D." would require, was as one with the arcan fisherfolk, the terrible tragedy of the life, the grim, incessant battle with the hungry sea, would, as I think, wear an aspect more commonplace, or at least less tragic than to him who viewed it in contrast with more placid conditions of existence. It was this unconscious grandeur, this epic simplicity, this almost cruelly literal transcript of a life of fierce struggles, focussed by art into the action of an hour, that went straight to the quick of human emotion, and brought tears to the eyes of the majority of the audience. Mr. Synge's success in "Riders to the Sea" lies chiefly, I think, in the complete withdrawal, or rather concealment, of his own personality; the faintest suggestion of subjectiveness would have spoiled the play. It was this element, if I read aright, that "D. O'D." found lacking, and to the detriment of the piece. Happily, it was lacking. It was this sense of artistic reserve that gave the play its fulness and its power. There was no unnecessary insistence, no Euripidean moralising, no intermeddling choruses to make one impatient by labouring the obvious. The play unfolds easily and naturally, almost as unconscious of its tragedy as are the people whose life it paints. The words spoken by the old mother over the body of her drowned son, the last of all whom the sea had taken, are as fine as any parallel I have ever heard or read; they might almost be taken from a page of Æschylus. And when the curtain fell I had the impression of black sea-rack rising up from the cruel waves—shutting off rather than ending a vision of bitter sorrow—with the wind raising a cosine over the latest victim of its fury:

This cladem illis nectis, qui funera labors
Explicit, non possit lacrimis aquare labores!

That quality which I most admired in the tragedy I could not perceive (or perhaps appreciate) in "The Shadow of the Glen." As a chapter of Irish life the piece is unconvincing. Says "D. O'D.," in the comedy, "Though the old man's wife is not Irish, she is human." I am almost tempted to query, "What are our extra-humanities?" but I prefer just now to analyse these words in search of the underlying idea; for it is important from a critical standpoint, inasmuch as that if this concession be made, though she is not Irish she is human, the play must necessarily be wrong artistically. But in spite of that "D. O'D." crowns the anomaly by continuing, "And the play is right, artistically right." Here I wish to be explicit. Let us suppose that we see Mr. Synge constructing his plot. He desires

6.2. SOME PLAYS AND A CRITIC

If it be a function of criticism to stimulate in the artist that disinterested self-consciousness and that spirit of detachment from meaner things which make himself the most capacious critic of his own creations, I am afraid that "D. O'D's" remarks on the plays produced in London by the Irish National Theatre Company fail to comply with that essential; and if, as one hopes, the efforts of these playwrights and players are to pave the way for great drama in the Irish language, criticism must adopt a more virile tone than this timid rendering of censure or praise. I presume, however, that "D. O'D." is a woman, and preferred the feminine medium of suggesting to the masculine mode of speaking her opinion of the plays; or, to write more correctly, her reasons for the opinions she put forward.

For myself, I went to see the plays in the attitude of the ordinary playgoer armed not with a universal of critical arrows, but with a healthy capacity for a few hours' mental pleasure. I had resolved not to think of technique, stage-craft, dramaturgy, or any of those dazzling terms current in the circles of sages; in a word, I had resolved to enjoy myself. But alas! now and again this guileless garb of commonplace slipped off, and I was forced to drop my rôle of simple spectator for the uncompromising attitude of the critic. The only reason I can give to account for this change was that the plays, with the exception of "Riders to the Sea" and the "Pot of Broth," showed too much technique on the surface to allow the mind to dwell with satisfaction on the undercurrent of emotion. Now it was a turn of speech, beautiful in itself, which jarred by a too near repetition; now it was a metaphor whose "translation" was improbable, if not impossible, in the mind of the character who spoke it; these things arose and stood between my mental vision and the greater mystery that the words were intended to unfold.

JAMES CONNOLLY

[illegible]

One of the most marked features of National life in Ireland at the present time is the intellectual awakening which is going on. This is evidenced in many departments of our life. There is a new interest in literature, and literature is being brought more forcibly home to our people than in the creation of distinctive Irish drama. To some it may seem strange that in the past the drama grew up in this Irish stage movement, which is fairly unknown in Ireland. But with the growth of the Irish language movement Irish talent and genius forced themselves into the dramatic sphere, and though the Irish stage is not a product of the Irish language movement, it is, nevertheless, no mean place in the domain of art.

Plays, many of the best, written in our own language, and in the language of the English people, have been enacted in the theatre, and many of our countrymen have been thus introduced to drama. They have attracted large and intelligent audiences, and have drawn forth sustained praise from even hostile critics. Of the success which has attended the first stage of our drama, I have no doubt. For when we Irish Shakespeare will cease from our storyed past scenes that will live for ever in the world's eye, we shall claim for our Irish drama that we have done for it as the natural thing.

There is a sympathy between the actors and the audience that is delightful. Each seems to understand the other, and though the play itself may be of the highest intellectual character, it is so thoroughly familiar and engages the rapid attention of the more uneducated among

[illegible]

Two or three years ago the *Irish Literary Theatre* was established by the joint efforts of Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Edward Martyn, and Mr. George Moore, for the encouragement of a native Irish drama. In its first year it produced Yeats's "Countess Cathleen" and Mr. Edward Martyn's "The Land of Heart's Desire." Last season it produced "Maive" by Mr. Martyn, and "The Bending of the Branch," a kind of political satire, by Mr. George Moore, as also a beautiful little poetic play entitled "The Last Feast of the Fianna," by Miss Alice Milligan. Last year "Diarmid and Grania," by Moore. Mr. Yeats, was played by the Bessie Company, under the auspices of the Irish Literary Theatre.

This year, however, an interesting experiment has been made. The Irish Literary Theatre as an organisation disappears, and instead of getting English actors and actresses to interpret Irish plays, a company of amateurs has been trained under the direction of Mr. W. G. Fay, and last week witnessed the result of their efforts. The first productions were "Deirdre," an original play in three acts by "A. E." (Mr. George Russell), "The Playboy of the Western World," an original comedy in three acts by J. M. Synge, and "The Playboy of the Western World," an original comedy in three acts by J. M. Synge. The first play, "Deirdre," is a play in three acts, and is a kind of poetic poem of great beauty, with a rendering of the famous story of the flight of the Boon of Uisneach, and the destruction of the Red Branch. The first act takes place in the Dun of Deirdre's Captivity near Naas and Macla, and the love scenes between Nais and Deirdre are at a level of dreamy and delicate poetry which gives that far-off and ethereal effect which "A. E." doubtless intended. The second act takes place in Alba, and the third act in the House of the Red Branch at Emain Macha. As to the performance, the Nais of Mr. J. Duggan, the Deirdre of Miss M. Quinn were excellent. The rôle of Conobar, the Ardic, was interpreted by Mr. F. J. Fay, who is an exceptionally finished actor. Miss M. Nic Shuibhne as Eavran, the daughter of Nais, was particularly good, and the other characters, though the whole were adequately interpreted, though the acting throughout was, as Mr. Yeats says, "grave and simple."

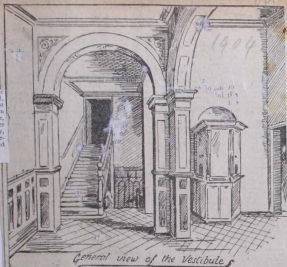
Mr. Yeats's own play, "Kathleen in Houlilan," was as perfect a piece of symbolism of his kind as he has written. The scene is the interior of a peasant's cabin, "close to Killyla in 1798." Michael, the eldest son of the house, is going to be married in the morning to Della Cahel. He has just been to see Della's father, and has brought back Della's "fortune" with him. Michael's father is proud of the luck that is coming to him and to Michael, when an old woman enters with ragged clothes and gray hair and bare feet. They invite her to sit down at the turf fire and ask her what has put the trouble on her. She answers: "Too many strangers in

your house." And then she tells of her "four beautiful green fields" taken from her, and of the hope of one day putting the stranger out of her house. It scarcely needs to be said that "Kathleen" is Ireland. When Peter Gillan asks her what hope has she in her heart, she answers, "I have good friends who will help me, they are gathering to help me now; though they are put down too, they will be the upper hand tomorrow." Kathleen chants a song and then goes to meet her friends, and Michael, attracted by her call, follows her into the darkness, leaving his weeping bride behind. When he has gone, his brother comes running in to say the French are landing at Killala. And then his mother asks him if he had seen an old woman going down the road. "Yes," he says, "I saw a young girl—and she had the walk of a queen!" Altogether the play was very fine. Miss Maudie Vance played the part of Kathleen, and Mr. J. Vance played the part of Peter, and Mrs. J.

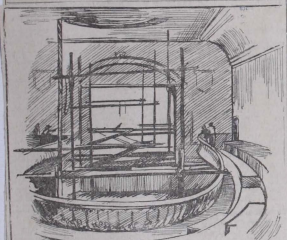
Dudley Digges that of Michael, whilst Mr. W. G. Fay was the old peasant, Peter, who did not understand his son's enthusiasm. In every way the experiment was a thorough success, and on the last night of the performances Mr. Russell and Mr. Yeats made speeches before the curtain in which they remarked that it was due to the actors being in sympathy with the subjects, and working from love and enthusiasm, that they did so well. A subsidised professional theatre will never make such an artistic impression as one which the people make themselves out of their own patriotism. F. R.

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The Irish National Theatre opened its doors to the public on Tuesday evening, when three short plays were produced, one of them the work of the pen of Lady Gregory, an enthusiast and firm supporter of the movement. Miss Horniman provided the funds for the building of the bijou theatre, which is charmingly arranged, and holds a good number of people. There is no orchestra, or arrangements for any, for no music will usher in any of the plays produced. A representative audience was present on the opening night, and the plays were very well received.

KILMARNEY.

Playhouse Jan 7 '05

Playhouse Gossip.

The Irish National Theatre Company are now in possession of a regular home of their own, the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, presented by Miss Horniman, which is erected on the site of the Mechanics' Institute Theatre. The entrance hall is hung with portraits by Mr. J. B. Yeats, including one of the donor. The theatre itself seats 562 persons. The plays produced at the opening were *The Tragedy on Baile's Strand* and *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, both by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and *The Countess Cathleen; or The Shadow Waters*, by Lady Gregory. Everything was intensely Irish, even the names of the performers having a fearlessly national spelling. But when all is said and done "poor Ireland" has founded its experimental theatre, while London has only kept on talking about it. We hope that London will soon follow the Irish example, as it would be a great relief to have

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SCENE—The Outskirts of a Fair.

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PETER GILLANE	W. G. Fay
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PATRICK GILLANE	{ U. Wright
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SCENE—A Cottage near to Killala, in 1798.

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ABBEY THEATRE, Lower Abbey St. and Marlborough St.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY will give the Opening Performances of the Season on Tuesday 27th, Wednesday 28th, Thursday 29th, Friday 30th, and Saturday 31st December, 1904, and on Monday 2nd, and Tuesday 3rd, January, 1905, at 8.15 p.m.

ON BAILE'S STRAND, by W. B. Yeats, and SPREADING THE NEWS, by Lady Gregory, will be produced every evening. In addition to these two Plays, KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN, by W. B. Yeats, and IN THE SHADOW OF THE GLEN, by J. M. Synge, will be played alternately.

Seats can be Booked at Cramer, Wood & Co's., Westmoreland Street, after 14th December. Stalls 3s.; Balcony 2s.

Un petit groupe de jeunes irlandais et irlandaises se sont décidés à donner une orientation dramatique au mouvement littéraire auquel ils appartiennent et qui porte le titre de "Renaissance celtique." Ces jeunes gens tiennent, à ce que l'on m'a dit, employés dans les maisons de commerce de Dublin pendant la journée, consacrent les soirées à jouer des poèmes du poète W. B. Yeats, de Lady Gregory et d'autres personnalités de l'Ecole celtique. Ces acteurs manquent naturellement d'habileté, mais ils ont l'enthousiasme et la foi qui valent mieux qu'elle. Ce "national irlandais" qu'ils ont fondé dans un sincère élan patriotique a pour résultat une réelle purification de l'art théâtral. La mise en scène est réduite à son minimum, les jeux de scène conventionnels sont bannis ou plus inconnus, une simplicité fragile caractérise toute l'entreprise, bref c'est aussi un art plein de souplesse.

Les petites pièces qu'ils jouent ont trait à la vie fruste des paysans irlandais, à leur fatalisme, à leur résignation, à leur tendance au rêve. Leurs émotions restent contenues, leurs amours sont chastes, ils ont la calme dignité de ceux qui ont renoncé. Tout le jeu des acteurs est lui-même en mineur. Ils se remuent mollement et parlent lentement, comme des personnages de rêve ou comme des "pupazzi" malades de Mœtzelinck.

En les écoutant, vous vous sentez envahis par une suave et douce mélancolie. J'ajoute que lorsqu'ils chantent les vers libres de M. Yeats où qu'ils murmurent sa prose harmonieuse, leur prononciation de notre langue est un délice pour toute oreille anglaise. L'impression d'ensemble est d'un haut romantisme. N'a-t-on pas déjà défini le romantisme comme un mélange de beauté et d'étrangeté. Certainement la beauté de ces représentations irlandaises est étrange, étranche et fraîche, étrange et troublante.

C'est une chose étonnante que de voir l'art antique, épuisé, du théâtre se renouveler ou plutôt naître au nouveau dans le cœur de ce petit peuple irlandais.—A. B. WALKLEY, in "Le Temps."

One great charm of the Irish performances lay in the judgment with which the two programmes were composed. What could be more delightful than a "triple bill" of this sort?—a majestic opening, to exalt the imagination; a pathetic sequel, to touch the heart; a comic finale to relieve the nervous tension, and send the audience away refreshed and exhilarated. . . . Every one of these plays was listened to with real pleasure, and all were heartily applauded. A more frank and authentic success the Irish Company could not have desired. . . . Our warmest admiration and respect are justly due to the enthusiasm which animates these young artists, and the dignity and sincerity of all their work.—WILLIAM ARCHER, in the "World," March 29th, 1904.

The afternoon's programme included three little plays: One by Mr. Yeats, "The King's Threshold," and two by Mr. J. M. Synge, "Riders to the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen." Very widely though the three plays differed from one another, from all one derived the same quality of pleasure—the pleasure in something quite simple and quite strange. There was in none of the plays any structural complexity, and yet none of them was not truly dramatic. . . . Certainly the Irish Theatre was an Oasis.—MAX BREREDON, in the "Saturday Review," 9th April, 1904.

The Irish National Theatre Society, who gave two performances at the Royalty Theatre last week . . . is perhaps the most characteristic expression of a very notable renaissance in the literary and artistic expression of imaginative thought, which has been growing in Ireland in these later years.—P.C. in "Vanity Fair," April 7th, 1904.

THE ABBEY THEATRE

ITS OBJECTS AND ASPIRATIONS

Two days after Christmas—on Tuesday, December 23rd—the new Abbey Theatre will throw open its doors, and this night will mark an epoch in the history of the Irish National Drama. The theatre will be opened by a performance of Irish plays by Irish writers, played by Irish actors, for whom the theatre has been specially built and subsidised by a lady whose sole motive is that of encouraging, and obtaining public recognition for, the plays of Ireland. As matters stand at present, the performances will probably be limited to one week in each month. The company of actors, who term themselves the "Irish National Theatre Society," like the writers of the plays, receive no remuneration, and with them the work is, in truth, a labour of love. The plays to be produced on the opening night are: "On Dublin's Strand," by W. B. Yeats, and "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory. In addition to these two, "Kathleen at Houlihan," by W. B. Yeats, and "In the shadow of the Glen," by J. M. Synge, will be played alternately each evening until January 1st, when the series of performances will close.

The repertory of the company will be varied, and will not necessarily be confined to works by modern writers. The primary object of the founders is to elevate Irish drama to its place among the essentially national dramas of other countries, and to show the English-speaking world, in any case, that Ireland should have her place in the history of the stage craft of the United Kingdom. The ancient plays will not, as a rule, be performed in Gaelic, for the reason that the actors have been taught the language, and it is held that for the best acting the language used must be that in which the actor was born.

And now a word as to the theatre itself. Youngster Miss Horniman, the lady to whose disinterested love of art the theatre owes its existence, recruited a number of friends and representatives of the Dublin Press, a private view of the new playhouse. The stage, while not being large, is of ample proportions for its purpose for which it is intended, and it is fitted with all the most modern and approved devices for lighting, scene shifting, etc. The theatre is designed to be held between five and six hundred people, and the seating accommodation is so planned that no "dead seats" will be reduced to a minimum. "Is that," said Miss Horniman to the "Daily Express" representative, "I am used to see in that manner myself, and if I could see that some of my seats which are so obstructed, I shall have them removed. I do not think it is fair to take people's money for seats which do not allow them to enjoy the play in comfort. The whole of the seats, balcony, and pit—are upholstered in red leather, and present a very comfortable and inviting appearance. The theatre is lighted throughout with electricity, and the costumes, which are of wrought-iron and carved wood, are the only things which are not of Irish make and design, being obtained from the Empresshaus, Nuremberg. The copper and brass framed mirrors which decorate the walls, are by the Finghall Art Metal School, and the stained glass windows were designed and produced by Miss Sarah Purser, A.R.C.S., at the "The Town Glass," Finsbury street. In the vestibule of the Theatre are four portraits painted by Mr. J. B.

Yeats—Mr. Francis John, the leading actor; Mr. William George Fay, business manager; Miss Maud Siobhlaigh, and Miss Horniman. In the green room are the portraits of the Vice-Presidents of the Irish National Theatre Society, also by Mr. J. B. Yeats—Mr. Douglas Hyde, and Mr. George William Russell; while a portrait of Mr. W. B. Yeats, the present President, was painted by Miss Lane Treacy. When the theatre is not in use by the Society it will be let for concerts, lectures, and entertainments, and by this means it is hoped that it will manage to pay its way. The architect, Mr. Joseph Holloway, M.R.I.A.I., is to be congratulated on having designed such a thoroughly artistic and suitable building. The following are the various contractors engaged in the erection and furnishing of the theatre, and to them also the highest commendation is due: Building, Messrs. B. and E. Farner; electrical work, Mr. L. J. Sheehan; verandah, Messrs. J. and C. McGeaghlin, Ltd.; seating, Mr. James Hill; heating, Mr. John Kennedy; carpets, Messrs. Mullar and Bostay, Ltd.; dress curtains, Messrs. Mitchell, decorating, Messrs. Marks Bros. In conclusion, it may be remarked that the City of Dublin owes a debt of gratitude to Miss Horniman for her generosity, which can only be repaid by the citizens themselves offering their whole-hearted support and encouragement as a token of the appreciation with which that generosity is regarded.

Today Dec 2

Mr. Yeats' Theatre.

During Christmas week the Irish National Theatre will be opened in Dublin with a play by himself. Mr. Yeats has long held that the Irish public is a playgoing rather than a reading public, or, rather, would be a playgoing public if the plays were there to be attended. It is odd that when Miss Horniman, the founder of the present theatre, applied for a licence for the building, objections were raised on the ground that some of the modern Anglo-Irish plays were seditious in intent. The objection, however, was merely a piece of professional jealousy on the part of those who owned a rival theatre, and was on a par with the coldness with which certain members of the Royal Hibernian Academy are said to view the plans for the purchase of the marvellous show of paintings and drawings now being given in Dublin. If one may judge by the dramatic work of Irish men and women, the National Theatre ought artistically to be a great success. Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. J. M. Synge have already approved themselves "masters" in their work for the stage, and Mr. Padraic Colum shows signs that he, too, will one day be of the same enviable company.

Other Irish Writers.

There are, in addition, numerous other writers of achievement and promise, among them being Lady Gregory and the poet, "A. E." In Belfast, too, the Ulster Literary Theatre recently produced some plays by local writers, a satire on the ways of the City Corporation proving especially effective as an awakener of new and living ideas. It is significant of the wide revival of thought and the arts in Ireland at present even a body of grocers' apprentices in Dublin resolved to write and produce a play on a national subject. Superficially viewed, this may appear ludicrous. It is a very healthy sign, however, and points to the day when every town in Ireland will have its season of plays—written upon national lines, and closely related to the national life. The production of plays in the native tongue is becoming more common every day, and is meeting with great acceptance and enthusiasm on the part of the people. These plays are, in addition, found to be of the utmost value for propagandist purposes by the Gaelic League.

Destina's newest playhouse, the Abbey Theatre, will be opened to the public to-morrow night. The Irish National Theatre Society is responsible for the dramatic fare which is to be provided, and which will consist of plays by Lady Gregory, Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. J. M. Synge. The opening of the new theatre marks the inauguration of a daring experiment. The end may be failure, shape and complete, or it may be success. In either event the public will follow with interest the fortunes of the new venture. The theatre has been provided and equipped at the expense of Miss Horniman, a lady resident in London, who sympathises with the aims of those who are anxious for the creation in Ireland of a drama and a school of acting which shall be characteristic of the country, and may, therefore, to that extent, claim to be national in the broad sense of the word. The Irish National Theatre Society is the only body that has set this ideal before itself. Its efforts may be considered crude and its achievements may be regarded as trifling, but it is at least entitled to the credit of a persistence that is not common, especially in matters relating to art, in this country. Accordingly, Miss Horniman has agreed to allow the Society to have the use of her theatre free of rent for rehearsals, and performances. When it is not required for these purposes the theatre will be let for concerts, lectures, and entertainments. Cheap entertainments are taken, and neither the National Theatre Society nor any other body hiring the theatre is to be at liberty to lower the regulation prices of admission, though permission is given to raise these prices any time it is desired to adopt this course. Whatever else is to be encouraged, it would appear that vulgarity is to receive no countenance. This determination is a laudable one. Whether in an essentially vulgar age it will be possible to adhere to it is quite another thing.

As far as the Irish National Theatre Society is concerned it is in no sense compared with ordinary members of the dramatic profession. These depend on the public for their living, and they must give the public what it asks for, or make room for others of a more compliant disposition. But when the Irish National Theatre Society comes to produce a play, both playwright and actor give their work for nothing. The actual expenses of dramatic representations, in such conditions, with the added advantage of a rent-free playhouse, would amount to little more than the gas bill for the lighting of the theatre, the tailor's bill for the costumes, the cost of the scenery, and the price of the advertisements. A body enjoying these advantages can weather a considerable amount of unpopularity. Yet even such a body will eventually come to grief if as time

goes on is does not elicit the support of a fairly large number of admirers. The whims of the existing theatres opposed the granting of a patent to the new theatre. Their opposition was partially successful, inasmuch as the patent of the Abbey Theatre is restricted to plays selected by the Committee of the Society, the work of Irishmen or on Irish subjects, or to foreign masterpieces, provided these masterpieces are not English. Although the patent system, as applied to theatres in Ireland, is an innovation, it is a remarkable fact that we enjoy more freedom in the selection of subjects of plays than is enjoyed in England. Subjects taken from the Bible are among those which are forbidden to the dramatist across the Channel. The prohibition is all the more singular as the modern drama has been evolved from the mystery plays and the miracle plays of the Middle Ages. If, however, we are free from the interference of the censor in the selection of Biblical subjects, we are liable to another form of interference that is unknown in England.

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For Theatrical Performances a temporary licence must be procured through the Corporation.

The theatre seats 582 persons; 173 in the Stalls, 193 in the Balcony, and 216 in the Pit.

The building is lighted throughout by electricity.

Hot and cold water laid on in the dressing-rooms.

All charges are inclusive of heating in cold weather and gas in case of necessity in the auditorium.

All damage done must be paid for by the temporary tenant.

A deposit of 10s. is to be paid on engaging the theatre, the balance before the commencement of each performance.

An advertisement bill will be displayed at the Abbey Street and Marlborough Street entrances, as soon after the deposit is paid, as may be desired.

The prices for the seats are not to be less than 3s. for Stalls, 2s. for Balcony, and 1s. for Pit.

When attendants or the use of scenery is required, please apply by letter to

MR. W. G. FAY,
Business Manager,

Abbey Theatre,
DUBLIN.

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Hire of theatre with lighting and heating	4 0 0	7 0 0	10 0 0	18 0 0
Attendance of eight persons in front of the house	1 5 0	2 5 0	2 15 0	5 0 0
Use of scenery and services of two scene-shifters	1 1 0	1 10 0	2 0 0	4 0 0
Complete theatrical performance with full attendance in the front of the house and behind the scenes	6 6 0	10 15 0	14 15 0	27 0 0
Complete concert performance with full attendance in front of house	5 5 0	9 5 0	12 15 0	23 0 0
Evening rehearsal with electric light	10 0			
Day rehearsal with electric light	8 0	14 0	1 0 0	1 10 0
Afternoon rehearsal for concert on the day of performance free.				

The hire of the theatre for a week includes a Saturday matinee, but special arrangements must be made for attendance thereat.

December, 1904.

A. E. F. HORNIMAN.

Architect :

JOSEPH HOLLOWAY, Esq., M.R.I.A.I.

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THE ABBEY THEATRE

ITS OBJECTS AND ASPIRATIONS

Two days after Christmas—on Tuesday, December 18th—the new Abbey Theatre will throw open its doors, and this night will mark its epoch in the history of the Irish National Drama. The theatre will be opened by a performance of Irish plays, by Irish writers, played by Irish actors, for whom the theatre has been specially built and subsidised by a lady whose sole motive is that of encouraging, and obtaining public recognition for, the plays of Ireland. As matters stand at present, the performances will probably be limited to one week in each month. The company of actors, who term themselves the "Irish National Theatre Society," like the writers of the plays, receive no remuneration, and with them the work is, in truth, a labour of love. The plays to be produced on the opening night are: "On Balaclava Strand," by W. B. Yeats, and "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory. In addition to these two, "Kathleen Horneham," by W. B. Yeats, and "The shadow of the Glen," by J. M. Synge, will be played alternately each evening until January 1st, when the series of performances will close.

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And now a word as to the theatre itself. Yearlong Miss Horniman, the lady to whose munificence the art of the theatre owes its present position, resolved a number of friends and representatives of the Dublin Press to appropriate the site of the new playhouse. The stage, while not being large, is of ample proportions for the purpose for which it is intended, and is fitted with all the most modern and approved appliances for lighting, scene shifting, &c. The theatre is designed to hold between two and six hundred people, and the seating accommodation is so arranged that the view from every seat will be unobscured. "In fact," said Miss Horniman to the "Daily Express" representative, "I intend to use this matter myself, and I am sure that there are any number which are so arranged that a clear view of the stage is obtained, I shall have them removed. I do not think it is fair to take people's money for seats which do not allow them to enjoy the play in comfort. The whole of the seats—small, balcony, and pit—are upholstered in velvet, and present a very comfortable and inviting appearance. The theatre is lighted throughout with electricity, and the costumes, which are of wrought iron and carved wood, are the only costumes which are made of Irish make and design, being obtained from the Rymans, Newburgh, the copper and brass framed mirrors, which decorate the walls, are by the "Metal Art Metal School, and the stained glass windows were designed and produced by Miss Sarah Palmer, A.R.S.A., at the "Tower of Dublin." The last portrait painted in Mr. J. R.

Yeats, Mr. Francis John, the leading actor; Mr. William George, the business manager; Mr. Macon, Mr. Shillbough, and Miss Bennett, in the green room are the portraits of two Vice-Presidents of the Irish National Theatre Society, also by Mr. J. R. Yeats; Dr. Douglas Hoyle, and Mr. George William Hoyle, while a portrait of Mr. W. B. Yeats, the present President, was painted by Madame Laura Treney. When the theatre is not in use by the Society it will be let for concerts, lectures, and entertainments, and by this means it is hoped that it will be made to pay its way. The architect, Mr. Joseph Holloway, W.R.I.A.L., is to be congratulated on having designed such a thoroughly artistic and suitable building. The following are the various contractors engaged in the erection and furnishing of the theatre, and in them also the highest commendation is due: Building, Messrs. R. and E. Farner; electrical work, Mr. L. J. Sheehan; verandah, Messrs. J. and C. McGeleghlin, Ltd.; seating, Mr. James Hill; heating, Mr. John Kennedy; carpenter, Messrs. Millar and Rosky, Ltd.; door curtain, Messrs. Mitchell; decorating, Messrs. Marks Bros. In conclusion, it may be remarked that the City of Dublin owes a debt of gratitude to Miss Horniman for her generosity, which can only be repaid by the success, therefore offering their whole-hearted support and encouragement as a token of the appreciation with which that generosity is regarded.

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DUBLIN'S newest playhouse, the Abbey Theatre, will be opened to the public tomorrow night. The Irish National Theatre Society is responsible for the dramatic fare which is to be provided, and which will consist of plays by Lady Gregory, Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mr. J. M. Synge. The opening of the new theatre marks the inauguration of a daring experiment. The end may be failure, albeit complete, or it may be success. In either event the public will follow with interest the fortunes of the new venture. The theatre has been provided and equipped at the expense of Miss Horniman, a lady resident in London, who sympathises with the aims of those who are anxious for the creation in Ireland of a drama and a school of acting which shall be characteristic of the country, and may, therefore, to that extent, claim to be national in the broad sense of the word. The Irish National Theatre Society is the only body that has set this ideal before itself. Its efforts may be considered crude and its shortcomings may be regarded as trifling, but it is at least entitled to the credit of a persistence that is not common, especially in matters relating to art, in this country. Accordingly, Miss Horniman has agreed to allow the Society to have the use of her theatre free of rent for rehearsals and performances. When it is not required for these purposes the theatre will be let for concerts, lectures, and entertainments. Cheap entertainments, a taboo, and neither the National Theatre Society nor any other body hiring the theatre is to be at liberty to lower the regulation prices of admission, though permission is given to raise these prices any time it is desired to adopt this course. Whatever else is to be encouraged, it would appear that vulgarity is to receive no countenance. This determination is a laudable one. Whether in an essentially vulgar age it will be possible to adhere to it is quite another thing.

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To Day Dec 2

12/19/12

LE THÉÂTRE DU PEUPLE

I. — LE PAYS

La vallée de la Moselle, plus étroite et plus sauvage à mesure que la rivière se rapproche de sa source, semble, pour le voyageur qui la remonte, mourir au pied d'une montagne massive, barrant au sud tout l'horizon. C'est le ballon d'Alsace, géant d'une race humble et amollie, au regard des Alpes blanches qu'il salue de loin, à l'autre bout du ciel, par les matins clairs. Il se dresse, serré jusqu'aux épaules dans la robe de velours, que lui font les forêts de sapins; sa tête dénudée domine, au-dessus la chaîne des Vosges, d'un côté la Lorraine et le moutonnement de ses bois, la Franche-Comté et ses étangs qui miroitent, les monts blenissans du Jura; de l'autre, vaste et gai verger où brillent de soigneux villages, la fertile Alsace et la plaine du Rhin, jusqu'à la Forêt-Noire.

Cependant, parvenu au pied de la montagne, on découvre à gauche un passage par où la petite rivière tourne et remonte vers l'Est, entre le chemin de fer et la route qui la côtoient, jusqu'à un gros village, Bussang, le dernier de la frontière. Le train, essoufflé de son effort, s'y arrête, pour redescendre ensuite le trajet qu'il a parcouru; la rivière se faufile pendant deux ou trois kilomètres encore, se perd sous les cailloux, se retrouve au bord d'une scierie et d'un vieux moulin, puis se divise en quelques minces filets, qui glissent à droite et à gauche des pentes de la montagne: l'un d'eux, qui jaillit dans une prairie, se vante d'être la source authentique de la Moselle, par la vertu d'un écriteau. La route la dépasse; par un col aux arêtes nettement découpées, elle franchit un souterrain que marque, à mi-longueur, la borne où deux petites lettres, séparées à jamais

par l'épaisseur de la pierre, font cette grande chose de diviser, en les joignant, deux pays. Puis, jetant son lacet sur l'autre revers des Vosges, plus escarpé et d'un aspect nouveau qui annonce une autre terre, elle s'enfoncé, dans la clarté, vers le bel Éden perdu de l'Alsace.

Bussang... Un clocher carré, où la flèche manque, cent maisons ramassées à l'entour, les autres disséminées, égarées çà et là à tous les étages du cirque : petites fermes basses qui craignent, à cause du vent, de lever la tête et s'aplatissent de leur mieux sous le large toit rouge ou gris. Les fenêtres, inégales, peu soucieuses de symétrie, donnent à la façade l'air de loucher : le nez baroque, que leur fait la saillie du four à pain, n'est pas toujours au milieu du visage. L'élégance leur manque, vraiment ; la maison alsacienne ferait la fière auprès d'elles, avec le jet hardi de son pignon aigu, qui invite la cigogne à venir s'y poser ; et le chalet suisse les regarderait avec dédain, du haut de ses balcons de bois, découpés en dentelle. Pauvres rustautes, si gauches et si trapues, si touchantes aussi par l'effort tenace dont elles s'accrochent, au moindre abri que leur offre un pli du mont, à ce sol dur et avare, et par l'humble confiance qui les tourne toutes du côté du soleil ! Le climat est rude ; de novembre à mai, la bise souffle, la neige tombe : un bref et tardif printemps ; peu de fleurs aux jardins, et point de fruits, que d'aigres pommes ou des merises chétives. Le granit est là, tout près, sous la mince couche d'humus que parlent il crève, comme l'os perce la peau du patient amaigri. Il faut peiner sur ce sol, pour en tirer un peu de nourriture, peiner pour l'ouvrir et lui donner le grain, peiner pour lui arracher la récolte, peiner encore pour la remporter sur le dos, au long de la pente ardue, où les genoux touchent presque le front ployé. Qu'y semer ? A peine un peu de seigle. Une seule culture, la pomme de terre, qui vaut presque le pain pour l'homme, et dont il se nourrit, sait déjà, — avant que Parmentier l'eût rapportée d'Amérique, — lui et ses bêtes. La prairie prend tout le terrain ; elle jette d'une pente à l'autre sa trame verte, où juin, avec des fils d'or, vient piquer une broderie rustique. La forêt ne commence qu'en haut, comme une chevelure sur un front dégarni : sapins et hêtres, que l'été harmonise, que distingue, — touchant les uns, respectant les autres, — la faucille de cuivre de l'automne. Souvent, en décembre, pris de soudaine fureur, le vent de Nord-Est,

le terrible « ardenne », s'y tue en grand vacarme et fait en une nuit l'ouvrage de cent bûcherons, abattant les grands fûts l'un sur l'autre, creusant de larges brèches dans l'armée silencieuse, qui semble toujours massée pour un mystérieux assaut. Avant d'atteindre l'ombre, qui vous invite là-haut, quand août fait vibrer, sous un voile de chaleur, l'image dorée de la vallée, attendez-vous à peiner aussi, sur le chemin grimpa, où roulent les cailloux. Mais, l'effort accompli et la lisière du bois atteinte, c'est la fraîcheur du crépuscule sous le toit profond des arbres, l'odeur forte et légère que la résine mêle à l'air pur, et dont la poitrine se dilate ; c'est la grave et religieuse rêverie, dans le parfait silence, dans le clair-obscur velouté, entre les troncs puissants jaillis tout droits d'un siècle de lent effort, droits comme la volonté sans défaillance, comme la parole sans mensonge d'un homme austère et pur.

Une population lente, réfléchie, laborieuse, des fronts têtus un peu baissés et qui tirent sur la nuque, dans un mouvement de lutte ancienne : peu de paroles, des gestes plus rares encore, — voilà ce gros village de 2000 âmes, qui, quoique station thermique, ne prétend pas jouer à la ville : croyant, mais peu dévot, naïf, mais prompt à l'ironie, patriote, mais sans éclats, et sobre, — autant toutefois que ne le tente pas l'alcool. Ce sont les qualités et les défauts communs à la race montagnarde, dans toute cette contrée : un ancien renom, confirmé par les observations de quelques voyageurs, attribue pourtant aux gens de ce village un esprit plus agile et une langue mieux déliée qu'à leurs voisins. Ils aiment le plaisir, ne craignent point la nouveauté des voyages, sont entreprenants et parfois un peu fanfarons. Les femmes y eurent longtemps une réputation de beauté ; on vantait leurs traits réguliers, leurs yeux vifs sous la *béguinette* de velours, bordée d'un ruban de soie noire ou bleue : peut-être, étant, en comparaison de l'homme, moins sauvages et d'un air plus riant, cette réputation leur venait-elle surtout d'un peu de coquetterie. Le passage et le séjour, parmi eux, d'étrangers qu'attirent chaque été des sources minérales, exploitées depuis plus d'un siècle, ont sans doute affiné un peu ces indigènes, les ont rendus accueillants à l'hôte, d'intelligence plus ouverte, sensibles à la douceur du bien-être et à l'attrait du plaisir. Cependant, malgré ses baigneurs et ses touristes, Bussang a gardé son caractère rustique et montagnard. Tous les traits du paysan, tenace, conser-

vateur, économe de mots et rude en son langage, avec ses méfiances, ses superstitions, son tranquille et ironique bon sens, se retrouvent chez ces petits fermiers qui vivent plus ou moins isolés, à mi-côte, parfois très loin sur la hauteur, de quelques « jours » de pré, d'une ou deux vaches, dont le laitage les nourrit et dont ils tirent encore un assez maigre gain, en fabriquant des fromages. L'hiver, enfermé chez eux par la neige, ils vivent dans un demi-sommeil; mais sitôt la terre délivrée, vite à la tâche: et l'été, aux temps de la fension, les nuits sont très raccourcies; on part avant l'aube, et l'ombre est tombée depuis longtemps que la faux ou le crochet besognent encore. A ceux-là, qu'ils nomment un peu dédaigneusement « les gens de la colline, » s'opposent « ceux du village, » commerçans, ouvriers et petits bourgeois; ils raillent leurs préjugés, leur reprochent l'entêtement, le manque d'initiative; et les élections municipales, séparant les deux partis, marquent entre eux de petites rancunes, qui ne vont pas toutefois jusqu'à l'hostilité.

Mieux que l'apport étranger, l'industrie influerait sur le caractère de cette population, en modifiant ses instincts, en transformant sa vie, ses habitudes, ses appétits, en lui donnant peu à peu cette triste uniformité d'existence, de costume et de visage même que l'usine impose à ses habitans. Il n'y en a pas moins aujourd'hui de six ou sept, échelonnées sur le bord de la Moselle: ce sont pour la plupart des tissages ou des filatures de coton. L'appât d'un gain plus élevé et plus palpable que le lent produit de la vie agricole devait nécessairement faire descendre le paysan du champ vers la machine; et l'on ne trouverait plus guère une famille, dans ce village, dont les enfans, après avoir passé hâtivement à l'école, ne soient allés chercher une place à l'atelier.

Quoi qu'il en soit, avec les modifications que, depuis une vingtaine d'années, ce facteur nouveau a pu faire subir au type, et les traits particuliers qui l'individualisent, cette petite communauté d'hommes garde encore les élémens constitutifs et l'aspect d'un village français, enraciné au sol, conciliant le respect des traditions avec les doutes d'un esprit un peu gouaillier: on n'y est point resté étranger aux changemens du siècle et l'on y tient fermement aux libertés conquises il y a cent ans; là vivent, en assez bon accord, la mairie, républicaine, l'église, conciliante, et l'école, circonspecte, sous la ronde tranquille des saisons qui se succèdent, égales pour tous, des soucis de la terre liés aux acci-

dens du ciel, de la vie qui chantonne, à mi-voix, un air discret; la douleur, comme la joie, s'y exprime en peu de paroles, avec l'unique refrain que donne à tout la mort.

Dans ce village à cent vingt lieues de Paris, il n'y a ni casino, ni théâtre, ni journal, ni cercle littéraire, ni société artistique ou morale. Une fanfare qui joue, les dimanches d'été, sur la place, et organise un concert et un bal en hiver, voilà — avec quelques rares vieux airs, d'un tour plus malicieux que poétique, et quelques récits en patois, débités pour exciter le rire pendant les longues veillées de Noël, — tout ce qui représente l'art.

C'est là que fut fondé, il y a bientôt huit ans, le théâtre en plein air qui prit le premier ce nom de *Théâtre du Peuple*.

II. — UN THÉÂTRE DU PEUPLE, TEL QU'IL POURRAIT ÊTRE

Théâtre du peuple... Il n'est de si bons titres qui ne soient périlleux: plus on les souhaite larges, généreux, indépendans, pour signifier une œuvre conçue en dehors de toute formule et de tout parti, plus on s'expose à les voir mal interprétés, au gré des passions du moment et des intérêts particuliers. — Celui-ci, (qui d'ailleurs se trouva venir de Michelet et de la Convention, sans qu'on le leur eût pris) fit fortune; mais peut-être n'eût-il tant de succès que parce qu'il fut mal compris, ou du moins autrement qu'on ne l'avait d'abord prononcé.

L'équivoque est née du mot Peuple. Ceux qui l'employèrent y entendaient tout ce qui, dans la diversité des esprits et des classes, compose une nation (*populus*); on traduisit presque partout au sens restreint du mot, populaire (*plebs*). Un tel théâtre devait être, idéalement, le lieu pacifique où le drame eût retrouvé, en un cadre élargi par la nature, devant un public rajoint par l'apport d'élémens neufs, libres encore de toute habitude et de tout parti pris, la destination primitive, peut-être la seule légitime, de l'art dramatique: réunir les hommes dans une émotion commune, capable d'éveiller en eux une réflexion sur leur destin. Mais, en en reprenant le nom, on y vit surtout un théâtre pour les prolétaires, opposé au théâtre aristocratique ou bourgeois. Au lieu de l'œuvre la plus générale — puisqu'elle s'adressait à tous les hommes d'un même pays sans en exclure aucun, — on ne rechercha qu'une entreprise généreuse, sans doute, mais spéciale et restreinte, tout autant que le théâtre en face duquel elle

se dressait : car, répétons-le encore, un public uniquement composé d'ouvriers ou de paysans, le nombre en fût-il de cent mille, n'en est pas moins un public *spécial et restreint*, de même qu'un public de cent hommes de lettres ou de cent professeurs. Ce n'est pas le nombre qui importe, c'est la diversité. Un peuple est mieux représenté en son ensemble par une réunion, même modeste, comprenant des pauvres et des riches, des ignorans et des raffinés, que par une multitude composée uniquement de « gens du monde » ou de travailleurs manuels.

Il ne s'agit pas d'ailleurs d'imposer une formule, nouvelle ou retrouvée, qui ferait fi de toutes les autres et prétendrait apporter au monde dramatique une vérité définitive. Le Théâtre du Peuple n'a point la prétention, ou la naïveté, de vouloir remplacer le théâtre contemporain, tel que l'a produit dans les villes une évolution fatale de la pensée et des mœurs. Il y a place dans l'art, comme il y a place dans la vie, pour toutes les manifestations sincères de l'esprit, qui raisonne, et du génie, qui crée. Théâtre de distraction, — de digestion, comme on l'a dit — ou théâtre de raisonnement et d'éloquence ; théâtre à thèse, collaborant au Code, à l'hygiène et aux réformes sociales, comme on le voit maintenant ; comédies et tragédies bourgeoises, drames empachés, et jusqu'aux grimaces railleuses qui contractent les pantins du vaudeville, — sachons en toutes ces manifestations reconnaître la part du talent et respectons en elles une triple utilité sociale, qui est de donner de l'agrément à l'existence, de la renommée aux auteurs, et de la matière aux chroniqueurs.

Quant à cet autre théâtre récent, qu'il faut appeler le théâtre populaire ou le théâtre à bon marché, puisqu'il a pour ambition de procurer à ceux que la fortune en privait les jouissances réservées à un petit nombre, il est aussi fort justifié ; et il a le mérite, — quoique parfois la politique le gâte, — d'être issu d'une pensée généreuse et qui a sa noblesse. Au lieu de le combattre, on ne peut que l'encourager, en essayant de régler ses efforts et de mettre en ses essais un peu d'ordre et de cohérence.

Mais à côté de ces théâtres, nés dans les villes, adaptés au goût et aux besoins des villes, n'y a-t-il pas place pour une forme de spectacle plus vaste, plus aérée, dirions-nous, — où la nature se mêlerait à l'action humaine, où la foule, composée d'éléments divers, apporterait un esprit moins affiné, mais aussi moins prévenu et capable d'émotions simples, sincères et fortes ? Un tel

propre initiative, simplement guidée et mise en valeur. Ce soin et cette petite diplomatie lui sont rendus faciles par le sentiment de plaisir intérieur qu'il éprouve lui-même à percevoir les résultats de son œuvre, à s'amuser de la joie commune et à se réjouir de cette fraternité qu'il a pu créer.

Ne dissimulons rien : artiste et cherchant à réaliser de la façon la plus harmonieuse le rêve dramatique qu'il a conçu, il ne peut attendre de ces interprètes la perfection. Il faut ici laisser une part assez large à l'improvisation et compter plus sur la verve naturelle des acteurs que sur un travail minutieux. Les qualités, comme les défauts, sont sincères et ne doivent rien à l'artifice : ceux-ci sont d'autant plus apparents qu'ils ne peuvent se dissimuler derrière les procédés du métier. Les qualités, en revanche, y gagnent du prix ; il y en a de très réelles et de très rares. C'est surtout dans la comédie qu'elles trouvent lieu de s'exercer, là où la tenue et le style importent moins que la chaleur et la spontanéité de la vie. Le naturel de ces acteurs, dans les scènes qui imitent les événemens dont ils furent souvent témoins et les mœurs qu'ils connaissent de près, est extrêmement savoureux. Il avertit l'auteur que son observation a touché juste, dans tous les passages où ce naturel atteint du premier coup son expression ; quand il hésite et se ralentit, il donne à craindre que la scène n'ait qu'une réalité douteuse ou que le mot employé ne soit pas le bon. C'est le contraire de ce qui arrive assez souvent dans les théâtres de ville, où les acteurs secondent mieux l'auteur quand la scène ou le mot sont dans la convention dramatique, et risquent de le trahir lorsqu'il a fait effort pour se rapprocher davantage de la réalité.

Les dons de l'acteur ne sont pas nécessairement en rapport direct avec son degré de culture ; mais je n'ai jamais observé que ces qualités fussent indépendantes de l'intelligence générale : elles en sont la conséquence et le signe. Les meilleurs acteurs de Bussang ne sont pas toujours les plus instruits, mais ils sont les mieux doués, soit d'imagination, soit de jugement, celui-ci dirigeant chez eux l'observation, celle-là y ajoutant la fantaisie. Nul doute, pour un ou deux d'entre eux, que si leur condition sociale leur eût permis de recevoir l'éducation qui est offerte à un fils de famille, ils n'eussent été des esprits distingués.

La tragédie ou le drame héroïque ne saurait guère se passer de cette culture générale ; car elle exige des acteurs une trans-

formation de leur être et un effort considérable pour plier leur langage et leurs attitudes à un style qui est, non pas l'imitation directe, mais une transposition artistique de la vie. Il convient donc de n'y employer autant que possible, pour éviter une interprétation discordante et aisément grotesque, que les sujets ayant reçu une instruction assez étendue : on réservera aux pièces campagnardes et aux comédies rustiques ceux qui seraient incapables d'exprimer, sinon de comprendre, les sentiments prêtés aux héros, ou dont l'accent, trop local, détonnerait étrangement dans le langage poétique du drame. Au reste, la question de savoir jusqu'à quel point des œuvres de ce genre peuvent être représentées sur une scène comme celle-ci, soit au point de vue des acteurs qui les interprètent, soit au point de vue des spectateurs qui les écoutent, est assez délicate : nous devons y revenir. Disons tout de suite qu'il est nécessaire et qu'il n'est pas impossible de développer peu à peu chez ces acteurs les qualités, purement instinctives au début, que l'on a reconnues en eux : c'est affaire de temps et de patience. Il n'est pas question, d'ailleurs, d'arriver à faire d'eux des acteurs professionnels : fort heureusement, ces représentations, sans doute par le caractère de fête qui leur est conservé, n'éveillent point, chez les comédiens de Bussang, l'idée qu'ils pourraient en tirer un métier ; et je n'ai pas eu le remords de voir un de ces jeunes gens, même parmi ceux dont l'amour-propre semble le plus excité par les applaudissements, manifester l'envie d'abandonner l'étude qui l'occupe ou la tâche qui le nourrit, pour monter sur les planches. A Paris, sans doute, le risque serait plus grand ; trop de tentations pousseraient le jeune homme ou la jeune fille, grisés par une ombre de succès, à abandonner l'atelier pour la scène ; et c'est, à mon sens, une raison de plus, entre autres, pour qu'un théâtre populaire parisien ne cherche pas à recruter sa troupe parmi des amateurs : à quoi bon ce soin, dans une ville qui compte tant de professionnels sans emploi ? Il n'aboutirait guère qu'à produire des acteurs médiocres et à grossir le nombre des cubotins.

IV. — LE PUBLIC

Le Théâtre du Peuple donne deux sortes de représentations : les unes payantes, les autres gratuites. Le produit de la représentation payante ne sert qu'à couvrir les frais, ou du moins une

tier d'être comédiens et qui, quand les représentations sont terminées, retournent à leurs études ou à leur labeur habituels.

Et par acteurs populaires, entendez — comme il a été dit pour le public, — qu'il s'y trouve des personnes de fortune, de conditions et de culture très variées, et non pas seulement des paysans : on y peut voir un chef d'usine à côté de ses ouvriers, un professeur, un employé, un officier, des étudiants, un boulanger, un écrivain, etc. Même variété du côté des femmes. C'est dans cette variété que réside sans doute la véritable valeur démocratique de ce théâtre ; c'est elle qui lui assure l'influence sociale la plus directe, à laquelle il puisse prétendre. Cette influence peut naître de deux causes :

1^{re} L'éducation des acteurs par les études de la pièce. Leur intelligence trouve à s'exercer non seulement sur le texte de l'ouvrage, qui ouvre leur esprit à des idées, à des connaissances et à des sentiments nouveaux, mais dans la composition des rôles, — les modèles étant pris dans la vie idéale ou réelle et mettant en jeu les facultés d'observation, — et même dans le petit travail, fait en commun et toujours raisonné, de la mise en scène.

2^{re} Le contact renouvelé et la fusion d'êtres que la dissemblance des conditions sociales tient séparés dans le courant de la vie et qui chaque jour, pendant quelques heures, partagent fraternellement le même labeur et le même plaisir. Les répétitions se font chaque soir, à partir du mois de juillet, sur la scène du théâtre, à la lumière d'une rampe d'acétylène qui supplée à l'insuffisance du clair de lune. Malgré la fatigue et parfois l'énerverment du travail, elles ont un caractère de gaîté et d'intimité infiniment plus efficace que toute les conférences sur la paix et l'union. Il y a là trente ou quarante êtres humains, jeunes pour la plupart, qu'aucune pensée d'intérêt ne rassemble (puisque les acteurs jusqu'à présent ne sont pas rémunérés) ; chaque soir, ils sacrifient quelques heures d'un repos bien gagné pour préparer une fête, dont leur seule récompense est d'être les héros. Les distinctions sociales, au moins en ce qu'elles impliquent d'hostilité, de mépris et d'envie, s'effacent : une familiarité à peu près complète et aisée finit par s'établir entre tous. C'est à celui qui a la direction de cette troupe de chercher à rendre le travail le plus clair et le moins fastidieux possible, à ménager les forces, à ne pas blesser l'amour-propre, à ne réclamer de chacun que ce qu'il peut donner d'après ses moyens et par sa

ou un jour de fête dans l'après-midi, à la lumière du jour.

La collaboration de la nature au spectacle, tant vantée dans le théâtre antique, y apporte un incontestable élément de vie, de force et de gaieté. La sensation du plein air, l'amplitude de l'horizon, la noble beauté ou l'agrément paisible du paysage environnant prédisposent le spectateur à goûter des sensations d'art, simples, saines et spontanées, mieux que le tohu-bohu des rues et que l'atmosphère impure et chaude d'une salle somptueusement dorée. Il ne faut pas cependant se figurer que la nature peut et doit fournir seule le décor du spectacle et participer sans cesse matériellement à l'action. — Sans doute, on utilise le plus souvent possible le fond naturel, les sapins, la prairie, les pierres; mais, à moins de fixer toujours le spectacle dans le même site restreint et bientôt trop connu, il faut recourir aux artifices du décor peint pour varier le lieu de l'action et pour créer le milieu illusoire où le drame a besoin de faire évoluer ses personnages : cette variété répond, d'ailleurs, non pas seulement aux besoins du dramaturge, mais aussi à un goût très vif du public auquel il s'adresse; et le mélange du décor peint et du décor naturel peut, au lieu de paraître choquant, prêter à d'heureuses combinaisons.

Si l'on demande à la nature de collaborer avec l'art, en y ajoutant un puissant attrait de vie et de pittoresque, on devra se résigner aussi à subir ses caprices et sa méchante humeur. Il lui arrive, surtout dans ce pays de montagnes, d'être mal disposée et, au lieu de servir la fête, de la troubler par un orage, une pluie diluvienne, de sinistres coups de vent. C'est un revers qu'on ne saurait éviter : on s'efforce d'en atténuer les effets le mieux possible, sans réussir à y remédier complètement. Les galeries dont j'ai parlé, qui primitivement n'existaient pas, offrent un refuge à la plus grande partie des spectateurs; les autres, stoïquement, endurent l'averse ou s'abritent sous leurs parapluies, quand le velum devient insuffisant. L'essentiel est que l'intérêt excité par la pièce soit assez fort pour lutter avec avantage contre la malice du temps : je note ici, non sans quelque plaisir, que ces accidents n'empêchent plus désormais le public d'accourir de loin au spectacle et qu'une fois installé, les cataractes du ciel peuvent crouler sur sa tête sans lui faire lâcher pied.

II. — *Les acteurs.* — La troupe est composée uniquement d'acteurs populaires, c'est-à-dire de gens qui ne font point mé-

offrant l'attrait de conditions originales, — d'un site pittoresque, d'une installation exceptionnelle, d'une interprétation inédite, etc. : toutes conditions que je ne puis examiner ici, l'ayant déjà tenté ailleurs (1), mais qui constituent les données d'un problème intéressant et ardu : quiconque entreprend de le résoudre devra les avoir examinées résolument.

Et maintenant, ayant laissé entrevoir la conception idéale d'une œuvre qui, même si on la jugeait chimérique, ne paraîtrait cependant pas méprisable ni indigne du génie français, je n'éprouverai point d'embarras à parler ici de la première tentative faite pour la réaliser, — si éloignée de cet idéal, si modeste et si imparfaite qu'on en puisse juger encore la réalisation. Il ne m'en coûte pas de considérer les résultats atteints par le théâtre de Bussang, au bout de huit années d'efforts de plus en plus prospères, comme des études et des expériences ne prétendant à aucun caractère définitif, sujettes au tâtonnement et à l'erreur. Nous ne nous arrêterons sur ces tentatives, désormais accomplies et sur des œuvres qui sont déjà derrière nous, que pour essayer d'y trouver quelques indications utiles, en vue des œuvres à venir.

III. — LE THÉÂTRE DU PEUPLE, TEL QU'IL EXISTE

I. — *Le décor.* Le Théâtre de Bussang a réservé à la nature un rôle important dans les spectacles qu'il donne : de là vient qu'il m'a paru bon d'insister, d'abord, sur la description du pays où il était né. Rappelons brièvement que la scène est dressée sur un palier naturel formé par la montagne à laquelle elle s'adosse. Le fond peut s'ouvrir, par des panneaux mobiles, sur le décor naturel des arbres et des champs. Trois galeries de bois, en style forestier, abritent une partie des spectateurs, laissant entre elles un parterre à découvert, sur lequel est tendu un grand velum. Le verger qui entoure le théâtre sert de promenoir pendant les entr'actes. D'un balcon accroché à la tribune, les spectateurs peuvent embrasser du regard la chaîne orientale des Vosges, entre deux des sommets les plus élevés, le Ballon de Servance et le Drumont. Les représentations ont lieu deux ou trois fois par an, au mois d'août ou de septembre, un dimanche

(1) Étude sur le théâtre populaire à Paris, dans le volume : *Le Théâtre du Peuple, renaissance et destinée du Théâtre populaire.*

dications bonnes pour la chaire et pour l'école : l'art abdique à s'y vouloir risquer.

Or, je crois que si un théâtre, tendant vers cet idéal, a quelque chance de le réaliser et de l'imposer au public, c'est en se plaçant dans des conditions matérielles toutes différentes de celles où se trouve aujourd'hui engagé le théâtre des villes. Ici les auteurs et les directeurs se sont formés, pour la plupart, une conception scénique qu'ils ne sont guère disposés à modifier : le public, de son côté, apporte ses habitudes, ses préjugés et ses conventions, ou plutôt il les retrouve dans l'aspect familier d'une salle, dans les plis des tentures et le geste figé des cariatides. Si l'on imagine qu'un essai de cet art puisse réussir exceptionnellement à se produire et à triompher dans le milieu même et avec les élémens qui servent aux exercices scéniques en faveur, ce ne sera pas pour un long temps : une entreprise ainsi établie subirait très vite l'évolution nécessaire qui a amené au point où il se trouve tout notre théâtre contemporain. — Il en serait de même, et pis encore, d'un théâtre à l'usage des prolétaires, constitué sur le modèle des théâtres bourgeois et n'en différenciant que par le prix des places et le recrutement de la clientèle. Si le goût de ce public, dont la culture est encore nulle ou très grossière, n'est dirigé par celui d'esprits déjà affinés, discernant dans une œuvre les qualités de pensée et de style, c'est-à-dire la beauté véritable, de ce qui n'en est que la parodie, il est fort à craindre que de concessions en concessions, un théâtre populaire de ce genre ne recrée assez promptement l'esthétique de l'Ambigu. Je le sais, et les critiques les plus autorisés viennent de le découvrir : ce public n'est pas si indifférent qu'on l'avait cru aux chefs-d'œuvre ; *Andromaque* l'émeut et *Tartuffe* l'a enthousiasmé. Mais ne feignons pas d'oublier cependant qu'il montre, lui si naïf et si friand de spectacles, le même enthousiasme aux plus mauvaises productions du mélodrame ou du café-concert.

Pour conquérir l'indépendance d'action qui lui manque et pour rester fidèle à sa conception artistique, ce théâtre devra associer aux élémens nouveaux de sincérité, de fraîcheur et de passion que lui apportera la foule, ceux de raison, de finesse et de critique que représente l'élite cultivée. Et pour parvenir à mêler ces élémens divers, à les fondre l'un avec l'autre, il faut les attirer à des spectacles présentant un caractère de fête et

terrain. Il est certains écrivains, et non des moindres, pour qui le contraste entre la beauté de leur conception artistique et la vulgarité des conditions nécessaires à la réaliser est une source de dégoûts et de souffrances sans fin. Ils voient ce qui fut jadis une enceinte presque aussi sacrée que celle du temple, livré de plus en plus aux trafiquans ; et ils s'éloignent du théâtre, perdant l'espoir de le purifier. Le seul moyen qui reste d'échapper à cette servitude ne peut guère consister que dans un changement des conditions mêmes où se trouve aujourd'hui placé le théâtre des villes : de là seulement peut sortir une réforme de ces mœurs tyranniques et avilissantes, qui sont déjà un obstacle à l'art, si elles ne deviennent pour lui une cause de mort.

Telle est, résumée en ses grandes lignes, la conception d'un théâtre du peuple modèle. C'est celui que peut rêver un artiste pour qui l'art dramatique est autre chose qu'une opération commerciale fructueuse, ou un divertissement d'oisifs ; qui ne le considère pas comme une simple imitation de la vie réelle, ni comme un jeu compliqué de l'esprit ; qui y voit le moyen puissant offert au poète d'exprimer les sentimens les plus forts et les plus hauts rêves de l'humanité, par la voix de créatures héroïques formées à l'image de l'homme, mais plus grandes que l'homme, contenant en elles tout ce qu'il a de vices et de vertus en puissance, de détresse et de joie, d'ironie et de pitié, mais les réalisant et les exprimant mieux qu'il ne saurait le faire lui-même dans la petitesse de son existence quotidienne. — un théâtre tenant fortement à la réalité par ses racines et y puisant sa sève, mais ne mentant pas à la vie, mais en donnant une interprétation conforme aux aspirations légitimes de cet être simple, généreux, affamé de justice que devient une foule, même composée d'hommes égoïstes et cupides, à la voix du poète qui sait l'émouvoir.

Voilà le théâtre qui pourrait trouver encore un retentissement dans les âmes et donner à un peuple ces grandes leçons que la religion offrait aux rois. Du moins saurait-il lui parler de ses destinées, l'exalter à l'évocation des grandes actions passées, éveiller en lui de belles espérances, le rendre sensible au langage de la poésie et ressusciter des héros. Là est le moyen pour lui de prétendre encore à cette puissance morale et éducatrice qu'on lui conteste et que ne sauraient lui communiquer ni des débats de thèses accessibles à un petit nombre, ni des pré-

spectacle se rapprocherait du théâtre antique par les conditions matérielles de la scène, faite pour une vaste assemblée, et aussi par le dessin général des œuvres représentées; celles-ci devraient en effet, pour être comprises de tous, dérouler une action facile à saisir, faite pour émouvoir le cœur et non pour chatouiller l'intelligence, avec une conclusion morale (au sens le plus vaste et le moins utilitaire de ce mot), capable de justifier, dans l'esprit du public, les émotions du jeu; elles seraient traitées largement, sans complication de sentimens et sans raffinement de pensées; presque religieuses dans la gravité, ou franchement épanouies dans le rire. Mais bien entendu, là s'arrêterait l'analogue; et l'on se garderait d'emprunter au théâtre antique ses sujets et ses procédés, pas plus qu'on ne reprendrait au théâtre du moyen âge, — auquel le Théâtre du Peuple pourrait aussi s'affilier, — ses mystères et ses facéties. Une pareille reconstitution n'a guère de valeur que pour des archéologues ou des dilettantes; le public, la grande foule à laquelle on s'adresse, n'est touchée que par des êtres vivans de sa vie ou au moins vivans dans son souvenir, et non par des fantômes entourés de bandelettes savantes.

Pense-t-on que, pour être né aux champs et ne disposer que de ressources limitées, ce théâtre soit condamné à n'offrir qu'un divertissement rustique assez grossier? Mais c'est peut-être une corruption du goût de tenir la simplicité pour un obstacle à l'art, tandis qu'elle en est sans doute une condition essentielle. Rien n'empêche de mettre dans ces spectacles autant d'art qu'il en peut tenir dans une œuvre humaine; ceci ne dépend que de la qualité de l'artiste. Et le voisinage de la nature, au sein de laquelle l'écrivain se place, le contact d'une vie plus large et moins factice où il peut s'inspirer, ne lui apportent-ils pas des élémens nouveaux, capables de compenser le luxe dont il se dépourville et la complication des sentimens, à laquelle il devra renoncer?

Enfin, le théâtre ainsi compris offre peut-être aux écrivains que rebutent les exigences matérielles et morales de la scène moderne, un moyen de s'en affranchir ou un refuge pour les éviter. Une simple allusion à ces exigences suffit ici; car le public commence à soupçonner, et ceux qui ont dû s'y risquer ne connaissent que trop ce que l'on nomme la cuisine théâtrale, d'un mot assez bas, qui rend à peine aujourd'hui le genre de besoin, la qualité des ouvriers et les odeurs de ce lieu sou-

à l'instinct du grand nombre l'autorité d'un goût plus sûr.

Soit que la majorité des spectateurs étant composée d'élémens naïfs, leurs sentimens se manifestent sous une forme plus vive, soit que beaucoup de ces spectateurs, entendant la pièce pour la seconde fois, la comprennent mieux et plus rapidement, les représentations gratuites l'emportent sur les autres par la spontanéité des impressions et par la chaleur des témoignages que le public en donne. Ce public est plus facile à émouvoir, sans doute; mais il est incapable, s'il s'ennuyait, de feindre l'intérêt. Il n'est jamais arrivé qu'une pièce, ayant eu du succès à la première représentation, en retrouve un moindre à la reprise; mais il est arrivé que des pièces accueillies d'abord avec quelques réserves ou dont l'effet pouvait sembler douteux ont pleinement réussi ensuite, — quoique les réserves, formulées par les spectateurs lettrés de la première représentation, eussent précisément pour cause le doute où ils se trouvaient que le public populaire pût comprendre et goûter le spectacle. J'en montrerais facilement des exemples, si ce que ces œuvres ont de trop personnel ne me faisait une obligation d'être bref sur ce point.

La psychologie du public populaire est encore mal connue; elle expose à des erreurs assez grossières ceux qui mettent trop de hâte à vouloir en définir les lois. Un fait qui frappe beaucoup les spectateurs ayant une éducation théâtrale déjà faite et habitués à mettre de l'ordre et de la logique dans leurs sensations, est le suivant : ce public manifeste presque exclusivement le plaisir que lui procure l'émotion dramatique par le rire. Le rire peut très bien éclater au cours d'une situation qui semble propre bien plutôt à provoquer une impression de tristesse, de terreur ou de pitié. Ce rire intempestif blesse les autres spectateurs, dont il interrompt l'émotion et qui croient y voir une marque de sottise ou d'ironie. Un peu d'expérience montre cependant qu'on ne doit pas l'interpréter ainsi : il ne traduit le plus souvent que le plaisir causé par une imitation exacte d'une action réelle ou d'un sentiment juste. Certains gestes, un baiser, un mouvement brusque et violent, un coup, même destiné à donner la mort, le provoquent, dans quelque situation que ce soit, et presque à coup sûr. Il est bon de noter que ce public ne dispose, pour donner cours à ses sentimens, que d'un mode d'expression simple et assez grossier; que le rire est, chez lui, une façon d'applaudir; qu'il déguise souvent des émotions dont un être rude et vigou-

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partie des frais causés par les décors, les costumes, la machinerie et l'entretien du théâtre. Toute préoccupation de bénéfice est écartée, et les dépenses de premier établissement, — construction de la scène, de l'orchestre et des galeries, — sont considérées comme un don par celui qui en assumait généreusement la charge. Les acteurs, je l'ai dit, ne sont pas rémunérés. Peut-être serait-il juste, lorsque les circonstances le permettraient, de leur attribuer sur la recette une indemnité légère, car le plaisir qu'ils prennent ne saurait compenser toujours le travail que l'on réclame d'eux; on établirait ainsi entre eux une association propre à les attacher plus étroitement à cette œuvre; mais en veillant bien à ne pas transformer en une entreprise commerciale un théâtre dont le caractère essentiel est d'être un divertissement.

La représentation payante est consacrée à une œuvre nouvelle. Cette œuvre est reprise l'année suivante et donnée, au moins une fois, en représentation gratuite; ainsi tous ceux qui n'auraient pu déboursier le prix, même modeste, d'une place à la première, voient pour rien la pièce, dont de plus fortunés qu'eux auront payé la nouveauté.

Il résulte de ceci que la composition du public n'est pas tout à fait la même à ces deux sortes de spectacles: aux représentations gratuites, il est plus populaire, c'est-à-dire que les paysans et les ouvriers y sont plus nombreux. Les représentations payantes attirent des spectateurs auxquels leur situation sociale assure une éducation et des goûts plus affinés. Toutefois, ces deux sortes de spectateurs diffèrent moins l'une de l'autre qu'on ne pourrait croire: le prix des places, aux premières représentations, est assez modique pour qu'un grand nombre de villageois, de Bussang ou des environs, impatient de connaître l'œuvre nouvelle, n'hésite pas à se procurer ce plaisir. D'autre part, aux représentations gratuites assistent beaucoup de spectateurs bourgeois, qui ont été empêchés d'assister à la première ou que la curiosité d'une seconde représentation ramène au théâtre; et l'on y trouve toujours aussi un groupe important de touristes, d'étrangers et d'artistes, mêlés au public populaire.

Ainsi, à l'un et à l'autre de ces spectacles, le peuple, — au sens où nous avons entendu ce mot, — est présent; et, selon le vœu de l'auteur, l'œuvre dramatique trouve toujours un certain nombre d'auditeurs assez éclairés pour contrôler et corriger au besoin le jugement ingénu du public populaire, et pour opposer

reux à la pudeur. Mais ces sentiments mêmes sont à la fois plus simples et plus complexes que les nôtres; et il faut, pour essayer de s'en rendre compte, les rapprocher des sensations de l'enfant.

D'abord, sa faculté d'illusion diffère de celle que l'éducation nous a donnée en ceci que, tout en se laissant facilement absorber par le jeu scénique, *il ne s'efforce jamais d'oublier, comme nous, qu'il s'agit d'un jeu*. Notre volonté aide beaucoup à l'artifice; plus nous sommes accoutumés aux conventions théâtrales, plus nous avons besoin de tromper notre imagination, pour qu'elle y reste crédule; et c'est en nous suggérant fortement d'admettre pour réel le spectacle, que nous arrivons à nous en créer la foi. Nous fuyons tout ce qui peut nous éveiller de ce demi-rêve et risque de détruire l'harmonie de nos impressions, en nous rappelant qu'elles ont une origine factice. Un esprit ignorant et ingénu ne fait pas cet effort; il n'a pas acquis cette habitude. L'illusion lui est spontanée et facile; elle n'est pas gênée par le sentiment latent qu'il s'agit d'un jeu. Il passe sans aucune peine, plusieurs fois de suite et presque dans le même temps, de la vie imaginaire créée par le spectacle à la vie réelle, où un incident quelconque suffit à le rappeler; cependant son plaisir n'en est pas détruit. De même l'enfant qui joue avec sa poupée et la transforme en une personne vivante, en une petite fille malade, une dame en visite, etc.; la suggestion qu'elle se crée est si forte qu'elle ne diffère guère d'une véritable hallucination. Cependant si quelque chose ou quelqu'un lui rappelle qu'il s'agit d'un être de bois et de carton, l'enfant le constate sans aucune peine (ne l'ayant pas, à vrai dire, oublié), rentre un instant dans la vie réelle, puis retourne immédiatement à sa fiction, et ressaisit le fil de son existence idéale, comme s'il ne l'avait jamais senti brisé.

Cette même manifestation du rire a donné à penser à plusieurs observateurs un peu superficiels que le public populaire, très sensible à la comédie, ne l'était guère au drame, et que, considérant des spectacles de ce genre comme une fête, il aimait mieux y trouver un sujet de grosse gaieté que des émotions tristes ou graves.

Nous l'avons dit: les déclarations sonores de ceux qui revendiquent aujourd'hui pour le peuple la faculté de sentir les grandes œuvres et le droit d'être initié à la Beauté, ne peuvent nous faire oublier que le goût de la masse l'entraîne vo-

lontiers vers les gros effets et les fortes enluminures, qu'elle préfère la farce à la comédie, et à la tragédie le mélodrame. Et comment en serait-il autrement pour des esprits où la culture du goût n'a jamais pu régler les élans de l'instinct et en qui la rudesse de l'existence n'a développé que des sentimens primitifs et des notions intellectuelles encore rudimentaires? La question ne se pose donc pas de savoir si ce public a plus de penchant pour les œuvres où nous reconnaissons nous-mêmes la plus haute forme de l'art, que pour des œuvres médiocres, qui sacrifient tout souci artistique à la préoccupation d'exciter le rire ou les pleurs par les moyens les plus directs (ce point ne fait aucun doute pour ceux qui ne se payent pas d'une illusion, même fort désintéressée); mais si, les œuvres d'art véritable étant, par quelques points au moins, reconnues comme accessibles à ce public, il est bon et juste d'en répandre la connaissance et d'en fortifier le goût. A quoi, il faut répondre affirmativement, non seulement dans l'intérêt du public, mais aussi dans l'intérêt de l'art dramatique; car cet art, à rester le privilège d'un petit nombre, ne peut que se corrompre et s'épuiser, par excès de raffinement; tandis qu'il doit viser, s'il est fidèle à son origine et s'il veut justifier son existence sociale, à être accessible au plus grand nombre possible d'hommes sincères et non blasés, pour les émouvoir et les faire réfléchir. Et la variété des esprits et des consciences auxquels il s'adresse est pour lui une condition de renouvellement.

Ce point admis, on est amené à se demander quelles sont parmi les œuvres où le souci artistique n'est pas sacrifié à la préoccupation d'un succès ni d'un profit immédiats, celles qui peuvent être présentées à ce public: j'entends avec utilité pour lui et sans inconvénient pour elles, parce qu'il est dès maintenant capable de les entendre et qu'elles ne risquent pas d'être entièrement méconnues ou trahies; — et quelles sont celles qu'il convient d'écarter ou du moins de réserver, comme trop peu accessibles encore à la sensibilité et à l'intelligence des spectateurs.

V. — LE RÉPERTOIRE

Cette question du répertoire n'est pas la moins importante, quoique souvent ceux qui s'occupent du théâtre populaire ou du

Théâtre du Peuple, paraissent la considérer comme secondaire; peut-être faudrait-il dire qu'en définitive, elle est seule importante. Car que signifierait un théâtre, de quelques élémens qu'il soit composé et à quelque public qu'il s'adresse, et qu'importe-rail l'organisation théorique même la plus parfaite, si l'œuvre vivante qui doit en sortir n'avait qu'une valeur indifférente? C'est ici surtout que l'arbre doit être jugé à ses fruits. Ou bien il faudrait considérer ce théâtre comme ne visant qu'à une fonction didactique et politique, ou comme n'interessant la curiosité que par un certain air de pittoresque, sans prétendre en aucun cas à un caractère d'art. Or nous avons reconnu que notre façon de concevoir le Théâtre du Peuple repoussait cette solution: la préoccupation de rapprocher l'art dramatique du grand public et de la nature reste subordonnée au souci de faire œuvre d'artiste, ou plutôt elle se confond avec lui, elle a en lui sa cause et sa fin. Toutefois des raisons auxquelles il a déjà été fait allusion me forcent à passer rapidement sur la partie principale de ce répertoire: car il s'agit d'œuvres personnelles, qu'il ne m'appartient pas de juger. Tout ce que j'en puis dire, c'est que les huit pièces représentées à Bussang (1), par la variété volontaire des sujets choisis, du dessin et du ton, marquent chacune un essai vers une forme théâtrale adaptée aux moyens d'une scène rustique, mais où l'écrivain, en cherchant à être intelligible à tous, a entendu maintenir sa liberté d'artiste et ses tendances vers un idéal dramatique de plus en plus général.

On a cru voir dans ses œuvres une intention de moraliser: les uns lui en ont fait un blâme, les autres un éloge: éloge et blâme résultent d'un malentendu, sur lequel il s'est expliqué déjà maintes fois. Si l'on peut trouver un enseignement dans ses pièces, c'est qu'en effet l'art dont il s'inspire, l'art classique de tous les pays et de tous les temps, d'Eschyle à Shakspeare et de Molière à Ibsen, reste inséparable d'une idée morale, c'est-à-

(1) En voici la liste, avec les dates de la 1^{re} représentation: — 1895: *Le Diable marchand de goutte*, pièce populaire en 3 actes. — 1896: *Mortelle*, drame légendaire en 3 actes. — 1897: *Le Sûr de Noël*, pièce rustique en 3 actes (en collaboration avec Richard Auvray) musique de Ch. Lapique et L. Michelot. — 1898: *Liberté*, drame en 3 parties et *Le Loup de la Forestière*, comédie en 1 acte. — 1899: *Chaque chose son train*, conte de sorciers en 3 actes, musique de L. Michelot. — 1900: *L'Héritage*, tragédie rustique, en prose. — 1901: *C'est le vent*, comédie villageoise en 3 actes. — 1902: *Macbeth* de W. Shakspeare, traduction nouvelle, musique de L. Michelot. Cette année, au mois d'août, en donnera, avec la reprise de *Macbeth*, une nouvelle comédie en trois actes: *A l'Œu d'argent*.

dire qu'en faisant rire ou pleurer l'homme, il lui donne l'occasion de réfléchir sur les joies et les misères de sa condition. S'il n'en était ainsi, quelle différence y aurait-il entre un art qui met en jeu tant de forces et de ressources humaines et un exercice de baladins? Mais il ne prétend ni convertir les ivrognes, ni rendre prodigues les avarés; il pense qu'il est peu de pièces où s'affirme moins que dans la plupart des siennes, la préoccupation de développer une thèse, si forte chez tous les auteurs contemporains. Il lui suffit, en fait de leçons, de répandre un peu de tendresse pour ce qu'il aime, un peu d'aversion pour ce qu'il déteste, et surtout beaucoup de pitié.

Toutes ces pièces ont un caractère provincial et campagnard en ce sens que le pays lorrain y fournit le décor et que les personnages sont généralement pris dans la vie réelle et dans le milieu vosgien, avec leurs mœurs, leur langage et leurs passions familières. Toutefois ce caractère topique et cette couleur locale y ont une importance moins grande qu'on ne leur en attribue, et peut-être ces personnages conserveraient-ils quelque vie, si on les séparait du décor précis où ils s'agitent et si on leur ôtait les agrémens que leur prête l'entourage, le site et la copie minutieuse d'une réalité extérieure si nettement fixée. L'auteur, du moins, ne le cache pas : sa tendance est d'élever de plus en plus l'art comique et tragique vers lequel il s'efforce, à un caractère de généralité et d'universalité, en laissant une part de moins en moins prépondérante aux élémens purement pittoresques et accidentels. Il sait bien que ceux-ci ont la faveur de la mode et de quel poids ils pèsent dans le succès; mais il croit aussi que ce ne sont là, pour l'art, que des ornemens fragiles et souvent une cause de caducité. — Créant de toutes pièces une organisation nouvelle, il lui a fallu réunir d'abord les conditions les plus capables d'en assurer le succès et la durée : il a, pour ainsi dire, planté son œuvre dans la terre natale, afin de lui faire prendre de solides racines. Mais son espoir fut toujours de monter peu à peu avec eux vers des œuvres où la forme, en se simplifiant, donnât plus de concentration et de hardiesse à la pensée, et dont la vie fût accessible, non pas seulement à une population déterminée, mais à l'ensemble des hommes. En même temps il rêvait de faire connaître un jour à ses spectateurs quelques-unes des grandes œuvres du passé, qui sont l'objet de son admiration et de son culte. Il attendit sept ans, pendant les

quels il tâta la confiance du public et les forces des acteurs, et risqua une pièce de Shakspeare, *Macbeth*. Déjà il avait débuté, avant même que le Théâtre du Peuple fût assuré d'une existence durable et d'un nom, par jouer une comédie de Molière, *le Médecin malgré lui*; le succès en fut complet; cette farce est en effet facile à monter et facile à comprendre. D'ailleurs Molière est le plus grand et le plus universel des auteurs comiques populaires : son théâtre presque tout entier est de nature à plaire immédiatement à un public composé en majorité d'élémens simples, presque incultes même; je sais qu'en Russie devant un auditoire de moujiks, une pièce comme *Georges Dandin* est de celles qui obtiennent le plus grand succès.

Pour *Macbeth*, la difficulté d'interprétation et de mise en scène étaient grandes, et il y eut quelque audace à tenter des maintenant l'entreprise. Quelles que soient les imperfections d'un pareil spectacle, — nul, mieux que celui que son admiration pour Shakspeare poussait à cette tentative, ne pouvait les sentir, — le résultat ne saurait être regretté : on a pu dire que par la composition du public et la naïve sincérité des interprètes, cette représentation se rapprochait plus qu'aucune autre des conditions mêmes où le poète anglais donna son œuvre au public. L'accueil que lui firent les spectateurs et l'impression qu'ils en gardèrent sont tels qu'ils nous ont déterminé à annoncer cet été deux représentations, au lieu d'une, du chef-d'œuvre shakspearien. Voilà, je crois, une preuve assez décisive que le drame intéresse notre public et ne l'attire pas moins qu'une farce, encore que les marques de son plaisir y soient moins bruyantes et moins passionnées. Et ceci nous amène à répondre aux écrivains qui croient que des pièces rustiques conviennent seules à des spectateurs rustiques.

Ils se trompent sur quelques manifestations mal interprétées : en réalité, c'est leur goût de raffinés qu'ils attribuent au public simple. Blasés par tous les spectacles qu'ils ont vus, ils cherchent avant tout l'originalité, au moins extérieure, qui stimulera leur curiosité défilante; ils apprécient cette qualité dans les pièces qui mettent en scène des paysans et leur présentent la peinture de mœurs encore nouvelles pour eux, d'une vie différente de leur propre vie. Mais ils ne voient pas que la raison même qui les pousse à rechercher des œuvres de ce genre en est une, pour les paysans, de préférer à leur tour les œuvres qui les initient à

un autre monde et à des mœurs nouvelles. — Je ne dis nullement par là que le paysan soit indifférent à une pièce paysanne et qu'il ne prenne pas de plaisir, lui qui n'est blasé sur aucun, à y reconnaître sa vie, ses préoccupations, ses joies et ses malheurs : l'expérience prouve le contraire. Mais elle montre aussi qu'il a besoin d'autres visions et qu'il demande au spectacle de le transporter dans un milieu différent du sien. Peut-être le réalisme tout nu peut-il suffire à ceux dont la vie est devenue factice, car il a pour eux l'attrait de la nouveauté, mais non à ceux qui ont constamment les regards et l'esprit tendus vers une réalité précise. Et voici bien le point où l'art a pour fonction de créer l'idéal, et où ce mot, usé par la lassitude des oisifs, reprend sa signification et sa légitimité vénérables. — « Oui, c'est une belle pièce : seulement les personnages sont habillés comme moi. » — Tel est le mot entendu de la bouche d'un spectateur, à propos d'une de ces œuvres rustiques. Bien d'autres l'ont redit, et je sais le souhait exprimé à plus d'une reprise par ces spectateurs sincères que ce théâtre, — leur théâtre, — ne leur refusât point un peu de rêve, en leur ouvrant ces royaumes nouveaux où des personnages, vêtus de costumes étrangers et brillants, dans des décors inconnus, accomplissent de belles et fortes actions.

Ce désir, l'auteur le comprenait bien. Lui qui s'était jusqu'alors senti, — et c'est là sans doute le meilleur de sa force, — en accord de pensée avec ceux de sa race, il éprouvait aussi l'envie, après avoir, sept ans de suite, fait parler et agir des campagnards naïfs, malicieux ou cupides, de voir monter sur la scène les représentants d'une plus vaste humanité, d'entendre parler une grande voix tragique : oui, tous nous avons besoin de sortir un instant de notre existence; nous réclamions des héros. *Macbeth* fut joué. — Quand même il n'aurait pas réussi à rendre, sur cette scène aux ressources limitées, toute sa violence et sa terreur, qu'importe? En est-il une, d'ailleurs, où vous l'avez vu se dresser de toute sa taille et où la réalisation ne vous semblait pas trahir, par quelque point, le modèle que s'en était créé votre imagination? — Qu'importe qu'on ait ri en voyant gesticuler les sorcières? Est-ce donc vraiment parce qu'elles ne faisaient plus peur, parce que personne n'y croyait plus? — Mais cet effroi que vous attendiez d'elles, de combien d'artifice, de suggestion, de littérature en un mot était-il mêlé dans votre cerveau? Les sorcières de *Macbeth* sont terribles, parce qu'elles

portent en elles la malédiction et la méchanceté du Destin; mais elles sont grotesques aussi, parce qu'elles ont la figure de vieilles femmes ridées, barbuës, à demi folles, ébauchant des gestes bizarres, prononçant des paroles incohérentes, autour de leur chaudron infernal. Je ne suis pas sûr qu'au temps même de Shakspeare, les spectateurs du Théâtre du Globe, — qui pourtant croyaient aux sorcières, puisqu'ils en avaient vu brûler, — ne riaient point en les entendant conter leurs histoires sur le cochon tué et sur la vieille changée en un rat sans queue; et je ne suis pas non plus sûr que le poète, en mettant ces paroles dans leur bouche (si ce passage n'est pas l'œuvre d'un autre), ne s'est pas attendu à exciter le rire des gros valets de White-Friars, de même que quand il suspend l'horreur, au moment le plus tragique, avec les plaisanteries avinées du Portier. Notez-bien que ceux qui riaient, au parterre de notre théâtre, ce sont ceux-là justement qui sont le plus près encore de croire aux sorcières, qui savent bien à quel jeteur de sorts s'en prendre, quand leur vache est malade, et, plutôt qu'aux drogues du vétérinaire, préfèrent recourir aux incantations des *Secrets*. — Ce rire empêcha-t-il le frisson tragique de passer sur eux, quand, dans la nuit de tempête, le meurtrier de Duncan écoute, hagard, les yeux fixés sur ses mains rougies, la voix de l'irréparable le harceler : « *Macbeth* ne dormira plus! »; quand le spectre sanglant de Banquo surgit à la table royale; et quand lady *Macbeth*, plus défaillante déjà que la flamme de la lampe qu'elle promène dans le ténébreux couloir, gémît en frottant ses petites mains, où l'odeur du sang est restée pour toujours? Que demander de plus? Je sais bien qu'il y a d'autres beautés dans cette œuvre, et que celles dont nous nous étonnons surtout, cette profondeur psychologique du génie, cette vue de l'instinct, servie par l'intelligence, qui démêle et fonde à nouveau, dans la conscience de l'ambitieux, le courage physique, la lâcheté morale, la ruse et la folie, associées pour le meurtre, ces mots d'une simplicité et d'un raccourci sublime, oui, tout cela échappe à la plus grande partie des spectateurs, sensibles seulement à la brutalité des faits et à la violence du mélodrame. Mais est-il donc nécessaire, pour qu'une œuvre soit à sa place au théâtre, que tous comprennent également et pénétrant jusqu'au fond la pensée et l'art du poète? Cette unanimité est irréalisable, et il faudrait renoncer à représenter un chef-d'œuvre, si l'on prétendait qu'il fût entendu également

de tous les spectateurs. Contentons-nous que chacun y prenne l'émotion dont il est capable et s'en fasse l'interprétation que son intelligence lui permet : pourvu que sa sensibilité soit sincère et son intelligence mise en jeu.

Sans doute une expérience comme celle-là, tentée avec une œuvre étrangère, dont les particularités ethniques et chronologiques obligent un auditoire populaire français à un effort intellectuel assez grand, ne saurait être reprise tous les jours. Le Théâtre du Peuple n'abandonnera donc pas son répertoire ordinaire de pièces françaises, voire rustiques et provinciales. Mais il doit, pour faire œuvre qui compte et prendre, dans le mouvement dramatique, la place à laquelle il peut prétendre, élargir le cercle de ses tentatives, en les mesurant à ses forces, et ne pas perdre de vue, par désir du succès immédiat, l'idéal d'universalité qui assure à l'art la durée et la grandeur.

Il pourra donc encore faire appel, dans la suite, aux grandes œuvres du génie humain pour grossir son répertoire : l'essentiel est que ce choix ne soit pas déterminé par un hasard capricieux et que, même s'il est faillible, il connaisse clairement les raisons qui peuvent le justifier. Après *Macbeth*, donné en premier à cause de la simplicité de l'intrigue et de l'ordonnance, qui ne déroute pas trop les habitudes françaises, on essaiera plus tard d'autres pièces shakspeariennes. Les grandes comédies de Molière, quand on pourra leur assurer une interprétation convenable, auront aussi leur tour. Je ne crois guère possible de faire un emprunt à notre tragédie classique; car c'est une forme d'art aristocratique qui me semble peu convenir à l'auditoire d'un Théâtre du Peuple, et des acteurs populaires ne sont point faits pour parler la langue que Corneille et Racine prêtent à leurs héros. — Pour les œuvres originales qui doivent constituer le fond du répertoire, j'ai indiqué à quelle tendance elles devaient de plus en plus obéir; on n'y omettrait pas ces grandes fresques, tirées de l'histoire, dont M. Romain Rolland a essayé de formuler l'esthétique et de donner l'exemple. Je ne puis que souhaiter, en concluant, que le temps et la force me soient accordés de réaliser quelques-uns des projets auxquels cette tentative reste ouverte, pour répondre à la confiance de tous ceux qui l'ont saluée de leurs vœux et soutenue de leur intérêt.

A notable event in the history of Irish Drama occurred last night, when the new Abbey Theatre opened its doors under the auspices of the National Theatre Society. Broadly speaking, the efforts of this body to create a national repertoire of plays and to cultivate a taste for them among the public are deserving of every praise. In spite of great difficulties, and for a long time with but scant encouragement, the Society has maintained the uphill fight and won the day, at any rate for the present. The very novelty of the idea that there could be an Irish drama was an obstacle which had to be surmounted. Then the Society had to write its own plays, and with limited resources produce them often under the most depressing circumstances and among the most inconvenient surroundings. Halls but all adapted for dramatic representations had to be hired at considerable expense. The buildings did not permit, even if the treasury of the Society allowed, any of those additional scenic effects which go to make up half the success of the modern play. Next the audience had to be educated to the true sense and meaning of the Irish drama, which at first sight appeared so unreal, weird, and mystic. Now at last, through the generosity of an English lady, the Irish National Theatre has a home of its own in the very centre of the capital of Ireland. A comfortable house, talented management, popular sympathy, mean money, but not everything. After all, "the play's the thing," and it must be the duty of the Society to see that once but genuinely Irish plays, plays of the real, native in sense

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

DUBLIN, THURSDAY NIGHT.

A little company of unworldly artists has at last appeared before an Irish audience under suitable material conditions. Herbert the performance, have been held in halls open stages, improperly lit and with level auditoriums. To-night, however, the Abbey Theatre, the generous gift of Miss Horniman, was opened, and the little company gave their first performance in the new building to a crowded house. The Abbey Theatre stands on the site of the "Mechanics' Institute Theatre, where popular melodramas were once played, and much tobacco smoke, to an audience that sometimes sat upon the stage. Miss Horniman has rearranged and partly rebuilt the ancient theatre, which is of the old houseshoe type. The decoration of the house has been done by Irish people in nearly every case, under the general management of Miss Horniman, though one or two articles, such as the carved figures of the electors came from the Continent. On either side of the main entrance and in the green-room are stained-glass windows, designed by Miss Sarah Parker, with the image of a tree in leaf. The entrance hall is hung with a few portraits by Mr. J. B. Yeats, including a portrait of Miss Horniman, the donor of the theatre, and portraits of Miss Walker, the "leading lady," and of some of the principal actors. The theatre has seats for 500 persons, and when not used by the National Theatre Company will be let for lectures and entertainments.

It had been the wish of Mr. Yeats to have a projecting stage, in the manner of the Elizabethan theatre, but it was found that the projection in such a small theatre would secure too much space. Let me have only to bear Mr. Fay's little company as they move slowly across the stage, speaking their lines with reverent and subtle intonations, to imagine oneself in that simpler age when great poetry subtly spoken might be heard at the theatre by all who could spare a penny. The experience, to one accustomed to the English stage, is strangely new and strangely beautiful. Like the sight of some lovely and novel country, it touch a virginity of sense. As we listened to the rhythmic rolling of the verses we felt that something of the old heroic spirit was actually present there before us. By the beauty of the poetry we were allied to its beauty; we felt that Mr. Fay had restored to us that ancient drama which was half a ritual.

Of the three plays performed to-night, two were by Mr. W. B. Yeats and one by Lady Gregory. Of the former "The Tragedy on Ball's Strand" was performed for the first time. I think that it is the best of Mr. Yeats's plays, for it belongs, as it were, to an older order of drama than his lyrical plays, such as "The Countess Cathleen" or "The Shadow Waters." The play deals with a passage in the life of Cuchulainn, the Irish hero. A woman he loved of old sought against him his son from a far country to challenge him to single combat. The fight takes place outside the palace of King Conchobar, and Cuchulainn kills the boy, not knowing him to be his son. The last scene of all Mr. W. G. Fay, as the Fool, and Mr. F. J. Fry, as Cuchulainn, were together upon the stage. It is difficult to appraise an art of just that quality, but we are sure that none of those who heard the noble declamation of Cuchulainn answered by the quiet irony of the Fool, adding touch on subtle touch to the horror of Cuchulainn's

discovery of the dead lad's identity, will readily forget the night's performance. It was all done with the utmost dignity. The play was made by the admirable acting of the brothers Fay. Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan, as the blind man, was a little unequal, a little lacking in stature, but yet fine. Mr. MacSinnibhlaigh, as Cuchulainn's son, seemed to me a little over-forcible.

The piece was followed by the little one-act play "Cathleen Ni Houlihan," by Mr. Yeats. This touching little country drama was received rapturously. Miss Marie NicSinnibhlaigh, an actress of genius, taking the part of Cathleen Ni Houlihan.

Freeman, 28 Dec

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

OPENING NIGHT.

NEW PLAY BY MR. YEATS.

IRISH COMEDY BY LADY GREGORY.

Last night the new theatre which the Irish National Theatre Society has had so generously placed at its service by Miss Horniman was opened under the happiest auspices. There was a crowded and a popular audience. Long before the curtain rose the pit and gallery were packed; and, though some of the leaders of the reformer stalls spoiled the opening scene of Mr. Yeats's play by coming late, there was not a vacant place in the theatre when all the audience had assembled.

Amongst those present were—Mr. Dillon, M.P.; Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. J. M. Synge, Mr. George Russell, Mr. Edward Martyn, Dr. O'Connell, Dr. Cox, Dr. Fottrell, Mr. Stephen Gwynne, Mr. H. C. MacDonnell, Mr. T. W. Lytton, Mr. T. P. Oll, Mr. E. J. Gwynne, Mr. T. W. Rolleston, Mr. C. H. O'Sullivan, Dr. Quinn, Mr. L. E. O'Connell, Mr. Lane, and many representatives of the Irish literary and artistic movements.

The plays selected for performance were a new play by Mr. Yeats, entitled "On Ball's Strand," the same author's "Cathleen Ni Houlihan," and "Opening the News," a comedy in one act, by Lady Gregory. They all had an enthusiastic reception from the crowded house. It was night's promise is fulfilled, the new theatre has a long and prosperous career before it.

"On Ball's Strand" is one of the best acting plays that Mr. Yeats has written, though one would hesitate to place it as a literary performance beside "The Countess Cathleen." The poet has emerged successfully from the shadows. There is less of the mystical and more of the human element in the composition than in most of Mr. Yeats's dramas. The characters are more vivid and actual; and in the introduction of Bursch, the fool, and a certain note of homeliness, contemporary Mr. Yeats has approached somewhat the Shakespearean model without sacrificing any originality of treatment. His story is taken from the old Celtic legends. The scene is laid in the great hall of Conchobar, "by the

sea close to Dunsinane." There enter Finbarr, a blind man, and Bursch, a fool. The blind man tells of his travels in other kingdoms, and of what he saw before blindness came upon him. He had visited the kingdom of Queen Eithne, who had loved him once, the only knight that had conquered her in battle. She had been deserted before her son was born, and now none knew save the name of the champion who so wounded her in heart and pride. But the son has long grown beard and pale cheek of the Queen and the eyes of Conchobar. The King enters, and there December proceeds.

So, amidst the place of the new palace of Eithne, which is to be the monument of the conquest and the peace that the sword of Conchobar has won, while the love discourse with the youth the lasting of the hero that is told by the growth of happy children and his own love of the fierce fighting Queen over the mock brides of the distant. The lines spoken by the hero contain some of the author's most brilliantly polished work, and there is a real music in the speech, which only the uneven voice of such an actor as Mr. F. J. Fay could have given with all its fine romance. Then comes a stranger youth to challenge the hero of Dunsinane. He refuses to give name or lineage, but boasts of descent from kings whose lineaments he may say. The heart of Chuchulainn goes out to the youth. He discerns the features of the lost Eithne; and he begs the youth to join his own band of knights and to dwell a while in friendship with the heroes of Malinbeg. Both the other chiefs and King Conchobar protest against the friendship. Their swords are drawn until Chuchulainn intervenes with a plea to protect the lad he has taken to himself. The opposition of the High King enrages him, and he raises his hand against Conchobar. His treason overwhelms him, and he is no longer within the reach of the sword. The stranger youth falls on Ball's Strand, the stranger youth returns to learn from the blind man and the fool that he has slain his own son. In despair he rushes to smother his sword in the breast of Conchobar, but turns it against the waves on the strand, fighting in madness against the overwhelming sea. He falls, while the fool steals away to rob the ocean of the houses deserted by the wailers. The play, it will be seen, is purely romantic. The poet strains after no novel, but tells a heroic tale in finely sustained verse, to which the actors of the Society do full justice. Mr. F. J. Fay's Cuchulainn is as far from a piece of acting as could be seen on any stage, and his declamation is far better than could be heard in any of the theatres of commerce; while Mr. W. J. Fay's Bursch, is an entirely opposite vein, to be no less finished. A more restrained "natural" could not be imagined. The other parts are also well sustained, and the frequent applause was no more than the performance merited.

There were loud calls for the author when the curtain fell. Mr. Yeats, who did not disguise the pleasure that the reception of the play gave him, made a brief speech expressive of his thanks to his audience, and his thanks to the lady who gave spirit and generosity to the Irish of his new home. "Aithne," he said, "must be free to choose their own way; it is their privilege towards beauty and truth they required companions by the way." He thanked the audience for having accompanied him even to one brief hour. He was specially anxious to thank Miss Horniman

The Shadow-Banshee of the Legends.
In its actors and actresses the Society has good material at its command. In Mr. F. J. Fay, Mr. W. G. Fay, and Mr. George Roberts they have a poetic color of considerable power and two comedians of more than respectable ability, and they are well served also by Miss Maline Nic Shilleblagh, and Miss Algood. It may be hoped, therefore, that in the future their abilities will be devoted to the unfolding of plays, and not merely to the exposition of pretty and pleasing incidents. The staging of Mr. Synge's "In the Shadow of the Glen" last year seemed to me to open a chapter in the work of the Society which was full of promise. I hope that parodies will not be unshilled.

One word in conclusion. The National Theatre Society is

No Longer in a Condition of a Vagabondage
It has been given the use of a well-appointed and comfortable theatre, and there can be little doubt that even now it appeals to a constituency of respectable proportions. If it does not succeed in exercising a real influence on the intellectual life of Ireland the reason, I fear, will be that it has plunged too deeply into the misty twilight of what it regards as the Ideal. The Celt of the twentieth century rarely peeps through the

"Magic moments opening on the foam Of perianth as in fairylands before."

Even when he does he is apt to tire of the spectacle, and to close the concert with a clasp.
R. M.

We are requested to state that the performance begins at 8.15 every night this week. To-night the following programme will be presented: "On Ball's Strand," by Mr. W. B. Yeats; "In the Shadow of the Glen," by Mr. J. M. Synge, and "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory.

Guy Talleygraph Dec 28

Irish National Theatre.

Opening Night.

NEW PLAY BY MR. YEATS.

Irish Comedy by Lady Gregory.

Last night the new theatre which the Irish National Theatre Society has had so generously placed at its service by Miss Horniman was opened under the happiest auspices. There was a crowded and a popular audience. Long before the curtain rose the pit and gallery were packed; and, though some of the holders of the reserved stalls spoiled the opening scene of Mr. Yeats's play by coming late, there was not a vacant place in the theatre when all the audience had assembled.

Anteprize those present were:—Mr. Dilke,



SOME TYPICAL COSTUMES IN MR. YEATS'S PLAY.

M.P.; Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. J. M. Synge, Mr. George Russell, Mr. Edward Marjory, Dr. O'Carroll, Dr. Cox, Dr. Fottrell, Mr. Stephens Gwynne, Mr. H. C. MacWeeney, Mr. T. W. Lyster, Mr. T. P. Gill, Mr. E. J. Gwynne, Mr. T. W. Rolleston, Mr. C. H. Odham, Dr. Quinn, Mr. L. E. O'Carroll, Mr. Lane, and many representatives of the Irish literary and artistic movements.

The plays selected for performance were a new play by Mr. Yeats, entitled "On Ball's Strand," the same author's "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," and "Spreading the News," a comedy in one act, by Lady Gregory. They all had an enthusiastic reception from the crowded house. If last night's promise is fulfilled, the new theatre has a long and prosperous career before it.

"On Ball's Strand," is one of the best acting plays that Mr. Yeats has written, though one would hesitate to place it as a literary performance beside "Kathleen Ni Houlihan." The poet has covered somewhat from the shadows. There is less of the mystical and more of the human element in the composition than in most of Mr. Yeats's dramas. The characters are more vivid and actual; and in the introduction of Bannoch, the fool, and a certain note of humorous commentary Mr. Yeats has approached somewhat the Shakespearean model without sacrificing his own originality of treatment. His story is taken from the Cathleen legends. The scene is laid in the great hall of Conobar, "by the sea close to Dunderlough." There enter Finnian, a blind man, and Bannoch, a fool. The blind man tells of his travels in other kingdoms, and of what he saw before blindness came upon him. He had visited the kingdom of Queen Eithne, who had loved but one lover, the only knight that had conquered her in battle. She had been devoted before her son was born, and now none knows the name of the champion who so wounded her in heart and pride. But the son has the gold brown hair and pale cheek of the Queen and the eyes of Cathleen. The Kings enter, and there Conobar proceeds to unfold the plans of the new palace of Emania, which is to be the monument of the conquest and — we hear that the sword of Cathleen has won; while the hero discusses with the guests the history of the love that is fed by the growth of happy children and his own love of the fierce fighting Queen over the meek bride of the dwarf. The lines spoken by the hero contain some of the author's most brilliantly polished work, and there is a real music in the speech, which only the uneven voice of such an actor as Mr. F. J. Fay could have given with all the true resonance. Then comes a strange youth to challenge the heroes of Dunderlough. He refuses to give name or lineage, but boasts of descent from kings whose lineaments his foes may read. The heart of Cathleen Cathleen goes out to the youth. He discerns the features of the lost Eithne; and he begs the youth to join his own band of knights and to dwell a while in friendship with the heroes of Mairi-bheinn. Both the other chiefs and King Conobar protest against the friendship. Their swords are drawn until Cathleen intervenes with his to protect the lad he has taken to shield. The opposition of the High King enrages him, and he raises his hand against Conobar. His treason overcomes him, and he no longer wishes to avoid the combat. The stranger youth falls on Ball's Strand, and the champion returns to learn from the blind man and the fool that he has slain his own son. In despair he rushes to smother his sword in the breast of Conobar, but turns it against the waves on the strand. Fighting in madness against the overwhelming sea he falls, while the fool steals away to rob the arena of the house decorated by the welkin. The play, it will be seen, is purely romantic. The poet strains after no moral, but tells a heroic tale in freely sustained verse, to which the actors of the Society do full justice. Mr. F. J. Fay's Cathleen is as fine a piece of acting as could be seen on any stage, and his elocution is far better than could be heard in any of the theatres of commerce; while Mr. W. J. Fay's Bannoch, in an entirely opposite vein, is no less finished. A more unstrained "natural" could not be imagined. The other parts are also well sustained, and the frequent applause was no more in the performance merited.

the best training for Government credit as an Irish country dinner. Official credit is awarded by the power of the village poet; and complications arise which are amusing if not particularly involved. It is a capital play, but it would be losing by judicious compression and the addition of a few more incidents. Mr. W. G. Fay was decidedly done as Bartley Falcott, and the other parts were capably filled by James Algoni, J. Vernon, Miss Goughing, and Miss Duff, Marie, Rachel, Miss Southleigh Nash, and J. Fay. To-morrow "On Balin's Strand" and "The Shadow of the Glen" will be given by F. M.C.

Carlton Herald to the
Irish Literary Theatre.

SUCCESSFUL INAUGURATION.

The Irish Literary Theatre was inaugurated on Tuesday night in the presence of a distinguished company of Dublin people.

The plays produced were "On Balin's Strand" and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" by Mr. Yeats, and "Spreading the News" by Lady Gregory. "On Balin's Strand" went extremely well. "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," which has become a classic Irish drama, astonished not only who had never seen it before, but even because of its emotional and dramatic power, but also because the amateur society who interpreted the scenes so ably who interpreted the scenes so ably. The third play presented—that by Lady Gregory—was a comedy of Irish life. I have written our correspondent, I have heard a Dublin audience laughing at heartily. There was nothing in the play, its language was entirely new to Irish life, and that was why it went down.

The new night's success, which seemed to be almost certain to succeed if the new play, which may keep up the standard which our new play has set.

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London Evening Times

OPENING OF THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

The Irish National Theatre at Dublin was formally opened last night. It is a compact little building, but it is well equipped, but with rather crude scenic arrangements. It has neither orchestra nor bar, and the principal entrance is through a building which was formerly the Dublin Morgue. There was a crowded and enthusiastic audience last night, most of the promoters in the Gaelic revival movement being present. Miss Horneiman, of London, through whose generosity the building was provided, occupied a seat in the front row with Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Mr. George Russell, and Mr. Edward Martyn. Lord Killanin and Mr. John Dillon, M.P., were also present. The plays performed were "On Balin's Strand" and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" by Mr. Yeats; "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory, and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" by Mr. Yeats. The first and second of these were first productions. Mr. Yeats's play "On Balin's Strand" dealt with the legendary period of Cuchullain of Muirthemne, so fertile in poetical episodes, and Lady Gregory's play is a short contact comedy dealing with the life of modern Irish life. The unassuming company of amateurs did remarkably well in each play, and the evening was not unenjoyable on the occasion. During an interval Mr. Yeats addressed a few remarks to the house, saying that the promoters were much pleased at finding so many with them on their pilgrimage in quest of beauty and truth.

Carlton Examiner
28 Dec

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

(From our Correspondent).

Dublin, Tuesday Night.
The Irish National Theatre was formally opened to-night. It is a compact little building, but it is well equipped, but with rather crude scenic arrangements. It has neither orchestra nor bar, and the principal entrance is through a building which was formerly the Dublin Morgue. There was a crowded and enthusiastic audience to-night, most of the promoters in the Gaelic revival movement being present. Miss Horneiman, of London, through whose generosity the building was provided, occupied a seat in the front row with Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Mr. George Russell, and Mr. Edward Martyn. Lord Killanin and Mr. John Dillon, M.P., were also present. The plays performed were "On Balin's Strand" and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" by Mr. Yeats; "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory, and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" by Mr. Yeats. The first and second of these were first productions. Mr. Yeats's play "On Balin's Strand" dealt with the legendary period of Cuchullain of Muirthemne, so fertile in poetical episodes, and Lady Gregory's play is a short one set comely dealing with the life of modern Irish life. The unassuming company of amateurs did remarkably well in each play, and the evening was not unenjoyable on the occasion. During an interval Mr. Yeats addressed a few remarks to the house, saying that the promoters were much pleased at finding so many with them on their pilgrimage in quest of beauty and truth.

Manchester Guardian
28 Dec

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

Dublin, Tuesday Night.
A little company of unselfish artists has at last appeared before an Irish audience under suitable material conditions. Hitherto, the performances have been held in halls upon stages improperly lit and with level auditoriums. To-night, however, the Abbey Theatre, the generous gift of Miss Horneiman, was opened, and the little company gave their first performance in the new building to a crowded house. The Abbey Theatre stands on the site of the Mechanics' Institute Theatre, where popular melodramas were once played, and is a brick theatre, similar to an audience that sometimes sat upon the stage. Miss Horneiman has rearranged and partly rebuilt the ancient theatre, which is of the old horseshoe type. The decoration of the house has been done by Irish people in nearly every case, under the general management of Miss Horneiman, though one or two artists, such as the carven figures of the electricians came from the Continent. On either side of the main entrance and in the green-room are stained-glass windows, designed by Miss Horneiman, and the image of a tree in leaf. The entrance hall is hung with a few portraits by Mr. J. B. Yeats, including a portrait of Miss Horneiman, the donor of the theatre, and portraits of Miss Walker, the "leading lady," and of some of the principal actors. The seats cost about 500 persons, and when not used by the National Theatre Company will be let for lectures and entertainments.

It had been the wish of Mr. Yeats to have a projecting stage, in the manner of the old theatre, but it is found that the theatre, in such a small building would occupy too much space. Yet one has only to hear Mr. Fay's little company as they arose slowly across the stage, speaking their lines

with fervent and subtle intonation, to imagine oneself in that simpler age when great poetry might be heard at the penny theatre by all who could spare a penny. The experience, to use a strangely new and strangely beautiful, like the night of some lovely and novel country, it touch a virginity of sense. As we listened to the rhythmic marching of the verses we felt that something of the old heroic spirit was again present there before us. Not only the beauty of the poetry we were allied to its beauty, we felt that Mr. Fay had restored to us that ancient drama which was half a ritual.

Of the three plays performed to-night, two were by Mr. W. B. Yeats and one by Lady Gregory. The former author "The Tragedy on Balin's Strand" was performed for the first time. I think that it is the best of Mr. Yeats's plays, for it belongs, as it were, to an older order of drama than his lyrical plays, such as "The Countess Cathleen" or "The Shadow Waters." The play deals with a passage in the life of Cuchullain, the Irish hero. A woman he loved of old times against him his son from a far country to challenge him to single combat. The fight takes place outside a palace of King Conchobar, and Cuchullain kills the boy, not knowing him to be his son. In the last scene of all Mr. W. G. Fay, as the Fool, and Mr. F. J. Fry, as Cuchullain, were together upon the stage. As the Fool, Mr. Fry was a perfect that quality, but we are sure that none of those who heard the noble declamation of Cuchullain answered by the quiet irony of the Fool, adding touch to touch to the horror of Cuchullain's identity, will readily forget the night's performance. It was all done with the utmost dignity. The play was made by the admirable acting of the brothers Fay, Mr. Seamus O'Sullivan, as the blind man, was like an answer, but yet fine, Mr. MacCullin, as Cuchullain's son, seemed to me a little over-acted.

The piece was followed by the little one-act play "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," by Mr. Yeats. This play, which is a little contact drama, was received rapturously. Miss Marie Nicolson, an actress of genius, taking the part of Kathleen Ni Houlihan.

Daily News 28 Dec
IRISH LITERARY THEATRE.

SUCCESSFUL INAUGURATION.

The Irish Literary Theatre was inaugurated on Tuesday night in the presence of a distinguished company of Dublin people.

The plays produced were "On Balin's Strand" and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" by Mr. Yeats, and "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory. "On Balin's Strand" went extremely well. "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," which has become a classic of Irish drama, astonished those who had never seen it before, not only because of its emotional and dramatic power, but also because the amateur actors who interpreted it seemed to rise entirely to Mr. Yeats's conception.

The third play presented—that by Lady Gregory—was a comedy of Irish life. I have written our correspondent, never heard a Dublin audience laughing so heartily. There was nothing vulgar in the play. Its humor was entirely new to Irish life, and that was why it went down.

The new Irish literary theatre, judging by the night's experience, is almost certain to succeed if the company can keep up the standard which it has now set.

Quoted before the curtain, Mr. Yeats said that "authors needed companions on their way," and paid a tribute to Miss Horneiman, the English lady who has practically enforced the English idea of a theatre. She had given, he said, a freedom to the drama which it had not enjoyed before.

the site of the old Morgue has
been made capable

I at then compare with the dirty
halls in Dublin.

Lighting a bad chill got by being
in that bitter wind.

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Gaiety and the subject. The arch is going on
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Miss Horniman and some of those inti-
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THE FINAL PIECE

on the programme was Lady Gregory's play, "Spreading the News." It is a most entertaining piece, bristling with clever comedy. It illustrates how a peasant's passion for gossip on a fair day evolves from the simple incident of one man following another man to return him a pitchfork which he forgot, a fable that a murder has been committed with motives of intrigue and jealousy. Mr W. G. Fay, as Bartley Fallon, the innocent man, gave to brooding over his misfortunes however, who is accused by mere gossip of murder, acted in splendid style. He looked the peasant part, and spoke as if to the manner born. He was obviously seized very strongly with the humour of the situation in which he was placed. Miss Mairé Ní Garbháin, as the garrulous keeper of an apple stall, was excellent. Mr F. J. Fay, as the removable magistrate was amusing, and the various other parts were incorporated with thorough-going realism. At the close of the piece there were calls for the actresses, and Mr W. G. Fay explained that Lady Gregory was unavoidably absent.

Freeman & Co

THE ABBEY THEATRE.

Mr. Yeats' plays, "On Ball's Street" and "Kathleen at Kesh," and Lady Gregory's new play, "Spreading the News," were repeated last night at the Abbey Theatre. The Eighth Hour, George Wyndham, Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., and Mr. John Redmond, M.P., were present. Mr. Andrew Lamb also returned to the "Traces of the Moon" to describe the way in which the arts become a ground for agreement among people divided by all else. It was certainly crowded at the Abbey Theatre last night.

Society Pictorial Dublin

A New Theatre for Dublin.

On the site of the old Morgue has been built a cosy little theatre, capable of seating nearly six hundred persons; or, to be quite exact, 562. The principal entrance is from Marlborough Street, and there a great many well-known people found their way on Wednesday, the 14th December, when the theatre was opened for the first time for a private view. Miss E. C. Horniman, the English lady who has built it at her own expense, is to be congratulated on the result of her taste and discretion. The theatre is for its size quite as attractive as the two large theatres—the Gaiety and the Royal—and the entrance, softly carpeted, is fronted by a broad stairway, also carpeted. Portraits of Miss Horniman and some of those intimately connected with the theatre are hung on the walls of the entrance hall, and also some beautiful "pictures," embroideries from Dun Emer. Inside the theatre the "house" is divided into three parts—there are no boxes. The stalls face the stage on the ground floor, and behind them is the pit. Upstairs the balcony, which is very roomy, runs round the theatre something like that in the Ancient Concert Rooms. The upholstery is crimson, and the general effect of the colouring on the walls and the large medallions of the city arms painted thereon is very pleasing. The stage is sufficiently commodious, and the electric lighting arrangements perfect.



View from the Stage of the New Theatre in Abbey Street, Dublin.

(Photo. by Chamberlain, Dublin.)

Mr. Yeats' Theatre.

MR. W. B. YEATS has at length attained his desire, and during Christmas week the Irish National Theatre will be opened in Dublin with a play by himself. Mr. Yeats has long held that the Irish public is a playgoing rather than a reading public, or, rather, would be a playgoing public if the plays were there to be attended. It is odd that when Miss Horniman, the founder of the present theatre, applied for a licence for the building, objections were raised on the ground that some of the modern Anglo-Irish plays were seditions in intent. The objection, however, was merely a piece of professional jealousy on the part of those who owned a rival theatre, and was on a par with the coldness with which certain members of the Royal Irish Academy are said to view the plans for the purchase of the marvellous show of paintings and drawings now being given in Dublin. If one may judge by the dramatic work of Irish men and women, the National Theatre ought artistically to be a great success. Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. J. M. Synge have already approved themselves "masters" in their work for the stage, and Mr. Padraic Colum shows signs that he, too, will one day be of the same enviable company.

Other Irish Writers.

THERE are, in addition, numerous other writers of achievement and promise, among them being Lady Gregory and the poet, "A. E." In Belfast, too, the Literary Theatre recently produced some plays by local writers, a satire on the ways of the City Corporation proving especially effective as an awakener of new and living ideas. It is significant of the wide extent of thought and the arts in Ireland that recently even a body of grocers' apprentices in Dublin resolved to write and produce a play on a national subject. Superficially viewed, this may appear ludicrous. It is a very healthy sign, however, and points to the day when every town in Ireland will have its season of play written upon national lines and closely related to the national life. The production of plays in the native tongue is becoming more common every day, and is meeting with great acceptance and enthusiasm on the part of the people. These plays are, in some measure, bound to be of the utmost propaganda purposes by the Gaelic League.

The opening of the Irish National Theatre was an event of considerable importance and interest in Dublin last week. Plays by Lady Gregory and Mr. W. B. Yeats formed the triple bill at the inaugural performance, which gave promise of future success. The audience was representative of art and literary culture, and included the leaders of the Irish Literary Revival movement, Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. George Moore, Mr. Edward Martyn, and Mr. Stephen Gwynn, and also the lady to whose generosity Dublin owes her new "National" Theatre, Miss Horniman. Among the audience on the second night were the Chief Secretary, Mr. T. W. Russell, and Mr. John Redmond.

Would you

Callahan Jan 7

Reynolds 12 Jan

THE NATIONAL THEATRE.

[A Trinity College student sends me the following appreciation of the performances last week in this excellent theatre, which we owe to the generosity of an English lady—Miss Horman.]

I am myself a poor hand at dramatic criticism, and so, though I was present as an interested and delighted spectator, experienced a great difficulty in sitting down to this task, when my young T.C.D. friend came to the rescue. As a first attempt it does not seem so bad, though, with regard to Mr. Yeats' drama, he does seem to me to be too rough both on the play and the chief actor. I thought Mr. Fay played a very difficult part with great spirit.—Ed.]

We must own that whatever Mr. Yeats' faults as a dramatist are, he remains a poet. This tragedy shows all the virtues and faults of the silver age which succeeded Shakespeare. It has its blood and thunder, gloomy and hopeless fatalism, and even its comic interludes seem to make fun of death! It has splendid passages of oratory, all of which, by their frequent recurrence and unnecessary presence, fill the audience with admiration and—weariness. In fact, they suffer from a variety of good things with no time to enjoy them—digest and assimilate them.

The acting suffered badly from the play. To represent an epic hero, akin to a god, with the human vices, and immortal virtues, one requires a training and experience which few actors can boast, and Mr. F. J. Fay, in his representation of Cuchullain, was thus seriously handicapped. He did not look his part, and we are sure he did not feel it. He tried his best; but, even at his best, can hardly, at present, aspire to such an abstruse character as Mr. Yeats' Cuchullain.

The rest of the company performed their parts with credit, and a word of praise should certainly be given to Mr. W. G. Fay for his representation of a fool, with a method in his madness.

The next play was a comedy entitled *In the Shadow of the Glen*, by Mr. J. M. Synge. It was well acted and well written, and to make any distinctions would be well-nigh useless, except, perhaps, that Mr. W. G. Fay came up to all our ideals of a tramp, and both looked and acted his part.

But really the event of the evening was Lady Gregory's comedy, *Spreading the News*. It was real downright fun, and never for an instant did the interest of the plot flag. The delicious laziness of the characters, and the continual feeling that they all had nothing to do but gossip, came like a whiff of fresh air from the country. Miss Sarah Algood as Mrs. Fallon was, perhaps, the best, but the others were far behind.

The highest dramatic art is to be natural, the highest art of the actor is to be natural, the highest art of literature is to be natural, and we hold that, though Lady Gregory's comedy does not treat of gods or epic heroes, it is higher art, and serves well its noble purpose for the propagation of the Irish drama.

IRISH LITERARY THEATRE.

SUCCESSFUL INAUGURATION.

The Irish Literary Theatre was inaugurated on Tuesday night in the presence of a distinguished company of Dublin people.

The plays produced were "On Ballis Street" and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" by Mr. Yeats, and "Spreading the News" by Lady Gregory. "On Ballis Street" went extremely well. "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," which has become a classic of Irish drama, astonished those who had never seen it before, not only because of its emotional and dramatic power, but also because the speaker actors who interpreted it seemed to be actually Mr. Yeats's composition.

The third play presented, that by Lady Gregory—was a comedy of Irish life. Its interest was entirely true to Irish life, and it went home.

The new Irish Literary Theatre, judging by the night's experience, is almost certain to succeed if the company can keep up the standard which has now been set.

Called before the curtain, Mr. Yeats said that "authors needed companies like this, and he paid a tribute to Miss Horman, the English lady who has practically endowed the theatre. She had given, he said, a freedom to the drama which it had not enjoyed for a long time."

Callahan Jan 7
Expos Jan 2nd

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

A CHAT WITH MR. W. B. YEATS

(FROM THE "EVENING MAIL.")

There is certainly no more interesting and probably no more powerful personality in the intellectual life of modern Ireland than Mr. W. B. Yeats. This may seem to be a courageous assertion, but it is true none the less, and in spite of the daring few will venture to challenge its accuracy when they remember that in no small degree it is to the energy and enthusiasm of this young mystic, and so the influence which he has exercised over his fellows, that we must attribute the fact that to-day we seem to have one foot on the threshold of what shapes like an Irish Literary Renaissance. Whether the door will open to the knocking remains to be seen. Even in this curiously hopeful country of ours the grey old world is tired, and is little disposed to acclaim the enthusiasm or approve his enthusiasms. Yet the Irish National Theatre is the offspring of enthusiasm, and what success it has already achieved has

been due to the untiring labours of a band of enthusiasts, who have been, and are, inspired with the unshakable belief that it is in their degraded position which they occupy as a Nation's loss of literature, a nation's contact with what—however excellent—is a second-hand literature, in art, and in the drama. At the head of this movement stands Mr. W. B. Yeats, and as I wandered with him through the Abbey Theatre yesterday afternoon I could not help feeling that in no small degree the enthusiasm had justified his enthusiasm. What the fate of the movement will be it is as yet impossible to indicate with precision, but there can be no question that it is entitled to the respect and support of educated Irishmen. To any mind there is a good omen in the fact that the artist in the Abbey Theatre expects that the entire list of what was once the struggle through the hall of what was once the struggle, but the artist expects more pronounced than the vulgar crowd the threshold of one of the

Twilight and Moonlight.

A new number of "Sanhain," the seasonal dramatic review, edited by Mr. W. B. Yeats, will be brought out before long. It will contain articles critical notes by the editor, a short play—"The Making of the Moon"—by Lady Gregory, Mr. J. M. Synge's "In the Shadow of the Glen," which was played recently in Dublin and London, and has not yet been printed, and a third play, probably Irish. The work we will contain considerably more notes for these three published articles.

illustration of this incongruity desire to present the vast proportions of the legendary hero in an edition for the modern drawing-room. Cuchullain, supernatural son of the ancient gods, beloved of women and goddesses alike, husband of the queenly Emer, lover of the Amazon Eva and the sea goddess Fein, who is wife of no less than the god Manannan Mac Lir; imagine him discoursing prettily about "mook brides of the distaff" to a group of demi-gods like himself. Of course, there is a kernel of historical fact in the Cuchullain Saga, and but for the well-meant alterations by the monastic chroniclers, who were terribly shy of the old heathenism, we should probably know a good deal of solid narrative about the real Court and real heroes of King Conor Mac Nessa at the beginning of the Christian era. The praise which the "Freeman" gives Mr. Yeats's last dramatic sketch, that it is "more virile and actual" than his usual work, and that Mr. Yeats "has emerged somewhat from the shadows" is indeed the condemnation of the whole attempt. Cuchullain is a mighty shadow, a vast hero form on the background of mythic poetry, in which Divine and human are inextricably woven together. To make him "virile and actual" is to unmake him altogether. At least, it would take an Æschylus, dramatising Greek religion for the spectacular worship of devout Athenians, to whom Olympus was the abode of the All-Father and Athens itself the sanctuary of the virgin daughter of the King of gods; or rather, it would take a Druid-bard, still in the midst of the heathen epoch of ancient Erin, to realise a being like Herakles, or Achilles, or Cuchullain. How can we possibly conceive a Divine hero, who could put armies of magicians to flight by a flourish of his enchanted spear, being represented in Mr. Yeats's prettiest verses, declaimed by a Dublin amateur actor, even though arrayed in "the magnificent mantle worn by Cuchullain" and "made with her own hands" by the generous Miss Horniman herself? What we really have is a hero, according to Mr. Yeats's idea of a hero, who speaks Mr. Yeats's elegant Tennysonese, and who is labelled "Cuchullain" just as that country of the "Countess Cathleen," where "ninety-five baronies" sold their souls for gold, was labelled by Mr. Yeats "Ancient Ireland." How much better to give some modern name to very modern people.

CAN ONE-ACT PLAYS BE CALLED DRAMAS?

The theatrical critic of the "Freeman" has some acute and interesting remarks upon these one-act pieces which are rather semi-lyrical sketches and curtain-raisers than real dramas.

"Does the prevalence of the one-act piece indicate a defect of constructive capacity? These short dramatic interludes seem to bear the same relation to the play proper as the ballet to the epic. They offer no scope for the development of character or the dramatic evolution of a plot. They seize a single situation in which to enact the climax to a story or the already accumulated tragedy of a fixed type of character. They do not offer the interest of growing curiosity or contain the terror of a character moving from light to darkness, from innocence to the valley of the shadow. They are lyrical in their momentary concentration of emotion, but they lack the march of growth and movement of genuine plot. It may be as well to cry out for 'the five act' standard, but the great drama will always be a great story fully told, or a

playwrights seem to be growing fairly weary to tell the end of the tale, leaving the audience to glean the beginning and the middle; or the doom of a character the explanation of which has to be surmised. If we were at the beginning of things the criticism might be discounted. But there seems to be a lowering of standards, and a lowering in a direction in which the Irish literary genius may all too easily move. This lack of plot-making and character-building is just the point where discouraging prophetic might follow failure from the deficiencies of past achievements."

This criticism is acute and just. A one-act piece is only a dramatic sketch. It cannot take the place of a real drama, with its gradual development of character and development of plot. But, then, Mr. W. B. Yeats is essentially lyrical, and, like all lyrical poets, he is best at the delineation of a single mood. The criticism that he is "always W. B. Yeats" is really no slur on his lyrical ability, for it is the moods of one's own nature which form the special matter of lyrical expression. His "Countess Cathleen" was such an absurd caricature and deformation of Irish character, history, and religion, that its unreasonableness as a drama hid from many eyes the real beauty of its lyrical features. The "Bard Abert" and the stagey and impossible "Cathleen," made in Germany, were ridiculous as dramatic personages, but their speeches were full of quite pretty things.

Though Mr. W. B. Yeats may never become a dramatic author of more than curtain-raisers, it

does not follow that others may not exhibit more dramatic genius. The most serious difficulty arises, probably, from the sort of audience which Mr. W. B. Yeats has cultivated. Right Hon. Wyndham and Lady Betty Balfour and Mr. John Morley are not quite the patrons to inspire those national dramas which grip the people like a call to arms, or which smite an alien tyranny with a weapon sharper than a sword. Nobody is vexed at a duel between prehistoric heroes. A little graceful sentiment about ninety-eight can be endured by chief secretaries and lords lieutenant. The first national drama worthy of the name will be one which the Duke of Norfolk will proclaim to be anti-social, and which Scotland Yard will try to suppress. The homeless folk of Irish villagers or the swordsmen of legendary heroes who slice up a mountain in a couple of cuts will never make a national drama nor drive Right Hon. George Wyndham to his smelling salts.

TIERCONNELL.

Woolton - Aug 7 Jan

THE DRAMA IN IRELAND.

By Maurice Joly.

Perhaps at no other period of literary history has it happened that, so at present, Ireland should give to the English-speaking world its premier poet. But there are few who doubt that Mr. W. B. Yeats is the greatest of his contemporaries—a lyricist at least. Mr. Robert Bridges, Mr. William Watson may have their virtues, but to neither has come such homage from the intellectual world as to Mr. Yeats. Swinburne belongs to the last generation rather than to this, and the only poet who as a living force can arouse the tradition of genius in Mr. Yeats. The graceful talents of Mr. Bridges, the strong ones of Mr. Watson, are but a little short of genius.

And yet of them we can only say with Browning—

Alas, the little men, and how much is in,
And the little less, and what waste away.

Mr. Yeats has genius, and genius stands in a place apart. There are many of us who think his genius finds its only inevitable and adequate expression in his lyrics; he himself seems for the drama. Browning, who wrote the most admirable dramatic lyrics, wrote also "A Soul's Tragedy," and Tennyson alone strongly after the dramatic art. Since Shelley's "Cenci," it is said to say the only poetical drama has been written by Mr. Yeats. And yet those who know his work best are anxious that he should return to his lyrics as to such narratives as the "Wandering of Oisín." In these last years he has concerned himself chiefly with the Irish national theatre, and has marked its progress in the little annual which he edits and calls *Samhain* (pronounced *Few-in*). In the present number of this magazine, just to hand, he has put much that is genuine literature. With his theories it would be impossible always to agree; he is too individual, too original a mind. But at least we may be grateful that for a shilling we can obtain a little book, printed and published in Ireland, which is a genuine expression of genius.

The object of the Irish National Theatre Company, whose work is done by voluntary players, is to give Ireland a distinct dramatic expression, and to cultivate only the highest forms of drama. In England and America, where the playhouse is a commercial speculation, the energy of creation is dissipated in musical comedy, that clever debauch of double-entendre, or in those plays which we have no patience to literature. Thus, it is easier for the highest qualification that the most earnest effort for the regeneration of this art among English-speaking people should come from Ireland.

Thanks to a generous English friend, Mr. Yeats and his companions now have a theatre of their own in Dublin. It is not so large as the ordinary theatre, but some three thousand earnest followers of drama to fill it as the performance. The artist should have all the encouragement he needed to help him on his way. Recently the first performances were given here. We may, then, say this theatre is now on a firm base and free from the anxieties of a nomadic existence, a wandering from one hall to another.

What then, in its wider aspects, is the Irish National Theatre? It knows no distinction of creed or party; it is a brotherhood of art; it is strong in the love of the ideal; it may rank among the supreme influences which are moulding a new life for this nation. It is in fact to the creation of this new life that our whole efforts should tend—to the development of our own ideas in industry as well as in the arts. Nothing good can come out of mere imitation, and as long as we are content to imitate we deliberately delay our own progress. Some there are who think that with our continual struggle of creeds and parties nothing good can come out of Ireland; but it was in the city of the Douglas and the O'Connell that Leonardo painted, Dante wrote his incomparable works, and Michael Angelo turned his marble into manhood.

After all, our country transcends all her parties.

The *strangest way of developing the drama* is in fostering the growth of societies which are not interested in it. It would be all to the good if there were a little company in every town in Ireland, and if they played plays taken out of the life about them—one play perhaps based on modern life and another on some old tradition—then would come that genuine rivalry in which the arts flourish. No one I ever saw welcomed the appearance of the Ulster Literary Theatre more warmly than Mr. Yeats and his company. This little band of workers in Belfast, earnest students of drama, which produced plays at the Ulster Minor Hall last month, may not improbably become a great force in the North. Drawn from every class and creed, it will epitomize the youthful culture of the city. It has the most remarkable acting talent; its principal back—and this was a remarkable discovery to a Southerner—was a lack of restraint. But if youth is not young it is nothing. Had Shelley not written "Queen Mab" we might not have had the "Prometheus." And while I believe it to be wrong to claim enthusiasm with academicism, there is little doubt that a more deliberate study of models is necessary to acquire the tradecraft of art. Yet, when it is remembered that the Society is but of recent formation, there can be little doubt of its ultimate success.

It has been remarked that drama is one of the earliest developments of literature, and had the course of Irish literature run normally no doubt this principle would have asserted itself here. But in the stress of history there was little opportunity to obtain an audience, without which no drama can have life. In the whole of Irish literature, until recently, only the Ossianic dialogues show any approach to drama, and it is extremely doubtful if they were ever represented on the stage. In one way this is all to the advantage of the modern writer. All those old legends of the vast heroic world, all the intense incidents of history, remain untouched. In Mr. Yeats's latest play, "On Ball's Strand," he has dramatized one of those old legends, and, though his treatment of it is not final, he has shown its possibility. Thirty thousand Athenian citizens waited for the masterpieces of *Æschylus*; that Shakespearean drama which now in London can only find an audience when it is brilliantly staged found three hundred years ago willing audiences in provincial *shells*. The only post-dramatic drama which has succeeded of late years contained much that was but graceful journalism. England and America have cultivated windy controversies on metaphysics for the genuine life of the soul, and without an æsthetic soul there can be no great drama. There can be and is much artificial trifling with the passions and with life, much imitation of the craft, without the sincerity of those. But great drama deals with great things greatly, and the only great things are those which are indestructible. What is topical passes. Art must seek out those places where life is lived intensely and acutely, where the old spirit of reverence still obtains, where she will be sure of a welcome. To create such a sense where there must be a high seriousness, and a great drama is that wherein all things live, move, and have their being in truth.

In this day, then, to foster all the genuine dramatic movements in the country, all that are living towards the production of that national drama which shall be an expression of the country's life and a prophecy, for, as it is said in every modern play, "every drama is

a prophecy in the way of time." It is thus we may find our friendship with Pina and Cavallini, and not only with them, but with the more intimate figures of historic lives. Thus, too, through the fruitfulness of some imagination we may see into the future where the great race for whose coming we labour awaits the dawn. We may, like the Roman poet, yearn for the past—

At mid centennial parties celebrate pastimes
Faded-age antiquities re-emerge there, Lark,
But we sorrow for it only that, under its pres-
ent influence, we may go forward to a more
sublime future, a more immediate ideal.

Clarion 6 Jan

The National Theatre.

Ireland again leads the way. The first English National Theatre has been opened in Ireland—or, to speak by the card, "the first subordinated theatre in an English-speaking country"—was opened in Dublin on Tuesday evening, December 27, in the presence of "an audience composed of the intellect and art of Dublin and Ireland."

Mr. James H. Cousins, whose own plays have been performed by the Irish National Theatre Society, informs us that the new theatre—"the Abbey" is a model of modern equipment, that it seats nearly six hundred people, that it costs nearly six hundred pounds of expense, "it has been built regardless of expense, and solely with a view to the blending of Beauty and Usefulness," and that it has been handed over to the Irish National Theatre Society "from so long as they may choose to occupy its boards."

At the opening performance a triple bill was presented, "On Ball's Strand" and "Cathleen in Houlahan" being by W. B. Yeats, and "Spreading the News" by Lady Gregory. "On Ball's Strand" is described by my correspondent as "a one-act play, chiefly in blank verse, dealing with a tragic incident in the career of Cathleen, Ireland's greatest legendary hero. Ireland's greatest legend is a blend of symbolism and realism, and the impact of one on the other is fruitful of much of the new literature." "Spreading the News" is a delightfully fresh little farce in which a certain Bartley Mallon runs after a certain Jack Smith with the latter's petchirch, which he had left behind him at the fair. Through the incident the mentality of a first appearance, the neighborly intentions of Bartley are transformed into a murderous assault; the peace is spread, and ultimately becomes murder foul, with most ingenious circumstantial evidence, which even the constabulary mind cannot return of the murdered man cannot return. The pieces were played with the skill and naturalness that won the praise of Messrs. Walkley, Archer and Co. last spring, and were enthusiastically received by a crowded house.

The event has prompted Mr. Cousins to send us an interesting article, which appears in another column, explaining the origin and rise of the Irish National Theatre to his fellow-Clarionists, and suggesting parallels between Dublin's achievement and London's need.

But I would submit that, as a matter of fact, there is no real analogy. The intellectual activity suggested in Mr. Cousins' statement that nearly every Irish village has its own dramatic society and its local playwright, is the symptom of an intellectual difference that debars us from belated *Assommoirs* from competition. The Irish, like the

French, have a national sentiment for the theatre, and, as I pointed out the other day, Irishmen, from the times of Congreve and Sheridan to that of Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw, have given the English Drama its highest distinction. It is, therefore, not inconceivable that the village wife of John Bull's Other Island may be able to furnish forth the dramatic banquet of an Irish National Theatre.

But no such hope can be reasonably founded on the dramatic capabilities of England's peasantry. Their intellectual civility appears at present to take the high jump of which it is capable at a Religious Revival, and not all the King's taxes nor all the State's subsidies would be likely to raise it to a higher bound in dramatic composition than, let us say, "The Sign of the Cross."

In England we need to learn to walk before we begin to run. The building and endowment of a theatre for the production of imaginative masterpieces, will not convert yardlings into brains. The utmost that we can do is to lift the popular idea of theatrical art by setting up a higher standard—but that standard need not be made while we wait—or, rather, we need not wait while it is made.

What is wanted in London is not a National Theatre in an insular sense, but—it is no use being afraid of the word—an *Intellectual Theatre* which shall be as international as the National Gallery. We want a theatre that will give us a chance to become acquainted with our own dramatic classics; and all the modern dramatists of whatever nationality who aim at achieving something higher than the pan-circus juices. We want a theatre that will combine the efforts of Mr. Vedrenne at the Court, of Mr. Philip Carr at the Haymarket, and of the Stage Society. We want a theatre that will present Shaw and Sudermann, Hauptmann and Ibsen, Ibsen and Maeterlinck, Maeterlinck, Maeterlinck, Middleton, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Congreve, Wyndham, Vanhook, and indeed, the whole of the dramatists included in Fisher Uewin's "Mermaid Series."

Such a theatre will not immediately attract the people who now attend the playhouse to be kept awake and eating too much dinner, but, if it fulfils its mission worthily, it will draw thousands of people in this big city of London who never go to the theatre at all, unless perhaps to see a showman's man, and when it has established itself as a Recognized Institution, it will also attract the millions—the Great Intelligent Practical British Public—who "spatulate" Shakespeare and who "kick" and every Function which is Established and Respectable.

Thus, and only thus, I am convinced, is the lifting of the English Theatre to be accomplished. The sure and inadequate hole-in-the-corner experiments won't do. They only discourage the appetite they seek to stimulate. But that appetite can be stimulated. The use of good things will make most men desire the best of each.

The International National Theatre, I am convinced, will fill a Long-Felt Want. And I believe that if it were well established and if it were the guarantee of a Carnegie or of the guarantee of all who want that kind of theatre, it would very soon prove financially self-supporting.

THE DRAMA.

MR. YEATS ON THE IRISH THEATRE.

It is with no mischievous desire of vexing the "propagandist" newspapers in Ireland that we venture once more to say a good word for the Irish National Theatre Society. From the new number of *Sarkis* (Fisher Unwin, ls.), the occasional review edited (and apparently written) by Mr. W. B. Yeats, we learn that our former praise of the society has given umbrage to these newspapers. An English critic, even though his criticism resolve itself into eulogy, is, it seems, an "enemy," whose praise should be no more regarded by good Irish patriots than his blame. Well, we are not at all offended by this stern and unbending attitude of the propagandists; indeed we rather like it. It is a picturesque trait of character, and at the same time a little satirical addressed to our sense of self-importance; it gives us, as it were, a kind of international or inter-racial status. The truth, of course, is that in praising the Irish Theatre we had no thought of pleasing the propagandists; we gave no thought to them in the matter; we were simply bent upon pleasing ourselves, out of pure selfishness. Critical praise generally gratifies the objects of it, just as critical blame generally annoys them; but that is, for the critic, a mere accident. His business is to express and, if he can, to explain his emotions in the presence of a work of art. There is no "enmity," or "friendship" either, in the case. The emotions excited in us by the Irish Theatre performances happen on the whole to have been distinctly pleasurable. Their art appeals to us as something simple and sincere and autochthonous. It gives a new orientation to drama and brings a current of fresh air into a playhouse badly in need of ventilation. The fact that this art proceeds from a certain national movement and is mixed up with certain patriotic aspirations, views of government, and the like, has, of course, its interest for the politician and the sociologist; it is nothing to us. In exchange for our half-guinea we bargain for an evening of æsthetic enjoyment; that is all we look for; and we have duly recorded our satisfaction in getting it from the Irish Theatre. If we got it from an *Opérette* or *Siamois* theatre we should be just as pleased.

But it seems that the Irish National Theatre Society has less "self-regarding" friends than ourselves. One of these is Miss A. E. F. Housman, an Englishwoman, who has just presented the society with *affidavit* in Dublin. They have got their patent ("Patent Theatre," abolished in England nearly a century ago, still surviving in Ireland)—a patent limited at the instance of the other Dublin theatres, presumably run by Irishmen, but still a patent; and, as Mr. Yeats puts it, they "start their winter season very cheerfully with a capital of some forty pounds." Mr. Yeats offers the readers of *Sarkis* a dissertation on what he calls First Principles. It is to be read with pleasure, as a Montaignean unbuttoning of the writer's mind. Our pleasure need not be diminished by the fact that it is here and there a little pedantic; poets and mystics like Mr. Yeats when they discuss theories of the drama are privileged to write in that way. He quotes somebody's saying that every nation begins with poetry and ends with algebra, and remarks that passion has always refused to express itself in algebraical terms. So have poetry and mysticism; though if you want to make your theories quite plain it is better perhaps to borrow "the low cunning of algebra." Thus, when Mr. Yeats states that "the masses being women, all literature is but their love-cries to the mankind of the world," we certainly feel that it is the poet, not the algebraist, who is speaking, and that, as a First Principle, the statement does not help us very much. Nor are we quite sure about Mr. Yeats's new version of the old theory about art for art's sake. Art, he seems to say, has a morality of its own which overrides the worldly moral law.

This character who delights in may commit murder like Macbeth, or fly the battle for his overcoat, as did Antony, or bring his country like Cato, and yet we will rejoice in every happiness that comes to him and sorrow at his death as if it were our own. It is of no use telling us that the murderer and the betrayer do not deserve our sympathy. We thought so yesterday, and we will know what comes to, but everything has been changed of a sudden; and we are caught up into another code, we are in the presence of a higher Court.

All this, perhaps, is only a postico-mystical way of saying that æsthetic appreciation and moral judgment are not the same thing; if so, it is a rather misleading way of saying it, for one of two essentially different things cannot be "higher" than the other. We like better the little personal—or, as we have called them, Montaignean—revelations. Mr. Yeats tells his readers that he had Moiré with him on his way to America, and that he "has read hardly any books this summer but Cervantes and Boccaccio and some Greek plays," and, incidentally, that he took three days to dictate his article to his type-writer. This is very naïve and pleasant.

At the end of his gossip and his reveries Mr. Yeats does succeed in laying down three definite principles by which the Irish Theatre is to be guided. First, the plays must be literature. They must have musical and solid speech. We will just remark that there is a good deal of nonsense talked about the drama as "literature," mainly by people who are thinking all the time of literature as something to be read. A play is not "literary" because it reads well, any more than a platform-speech is good oratory for that reason. The "literary" quality of a play, like that of an oration, consists in the artistic choice of spoken words. Its language is, as Edmund de Goncourt called it, "la langue littéraire parlée." Mr. Yeats quotes Mr. Max Beerbaum as saying that a play cannot have style because the people must talk as they talk in real life. True, they must—in plays of real life; but their words are all put into their mouths by one man, the dramatist, and that man's selection from the vocabulary of real life will be as individual, as peculiar to himself, as the shape of his nose or his taste in cigars. The peculiar characteristics of language resulting from that selection constitute, of course, a style. To return to Mr. Yeats—we find that by "literature" he means a good deal more than artistry in language; he is thinking of the spirit, too, and the subject matter. His drama must be a drama of energy and extravagance and fantasy. We shall not complain if he sticks to that

ideal; our English drama gives us too much of what Charles Lamb called "drearily concerns." "Will not our next art be rather of the country, of great open spaces, of the soul rejoicing in itself?" Let us hope so—and pass on to Mr. Yeats's second point, which is concerned with acting and stage-management. Briefly, he contemplates a return from the current picture-stage methods to those of the old playhouse. "The actors must move, for the most part, slowly and quietly, and not very much, and there should be something in their movements decorative and rhythmical as if they were paintings on a frieze." It is this effect—we called it a dream-effect—which we noted in the Irish performances in London. A very good effect, too, for their rather passive, was, æsthetic plays; but when they attain to the drama of "energy," which Mr. Yeats has in his mind's eye, what then? Lastly, Mr. Yeats desires a new kind of scenic art. No attempt, necessarily futile, at realistic illusion. Conventional decoration, rather. "It will probably range between, on the one hand, woodlands made out of recurring pattern, or painted like old religious pictures upon gold background, and upon the other the comparative realism of a Japanese print." All new experiments in scenic art are welcome; this Irish fancy among the rest. We have seen M. Maeterlinck's *Japhet* produced in Paris with paper scenery, and his *Pelléas* performed in London behind a gauze veil, and then done again (as an opera) in Paris, with all the resources of coloured electric lighting. All three methods had their charm. So may have Mr. Yeats's notion of light "reflected out of mirrors." With his head so full of ideas, plans, enthusiasms, Mr. Yeats, we feel sure, has some more pleasure to offer us through the medium of the Irish Theatre. We shall take it greedily like any other sugar-plum, not as an "enemy" or a "friend" in the propagandists' sense, but merely because we have a sweet tooth.

Speaker Jan 7

MR. YEATSS NEW PLAY.

COLORADO made this note: "Here, that dramatic poetry must be poetry bid in thought and passion, not thought or passion disguised in the dress of poetry." Apply this stan-

dard to the modern poetical drama in English, and what survives? Little indeed but certainly this latest play of Mr. Yeats.

In a drama of the heroic period we expect to see personages who have been idealized in the sequent imagination of the poets and, it may be, still more idealized in our own. If culture be anything, it should be the gracious fosterer of ideals. But the great primary passions are eternal, and it is probable the human nature possessed by them in that vast world was not greatly different from our own. It is only the incidental minutiae that change. And, thus, *On Baileys Strand*, concerning itself with the inevitable passion of love, has a human interest for any time which transcends the interest of its legendary atmosphere. We could be scarcely more surprised at Mr. Yeats's hero in a motor-car than an Elizabethan audience was at a clock striking within the walls of ancient Rome; but for a different reason. The great protagonist of the play, Cuchullin, is in his element, and to secure a universal audience for him, is shown in one of those intervals in life when the hero in that period, and in ours the man of affairs, returned to dream in peace of some old love. Memory, imagination, are barren brides for passion; and this drama is the tragedy of passion and imagination. The play of the ill King, the Conobar, for the building of Emsin, due to the great Cuchullin; rather would he speak to his followers—and he loves to have youth about him—of some "fiere woman"—

"One is content awhile

With a soft woman who folds up her lives
In silky petticoat. Then, one knows not why
But one's away after a flinty heart."

When, therefore, the son Aoife had borne him returns under bonds to fight him and tell his name only at sword's point, the old warrior-spirit is gone and he would have peate for his dreams. But Conobar, in a finely-concocted scene, commands Cuchullin, who is "his man," to fight and, in the event, the son is killed.

In the opening of the play a fool and a crafty blind man are made to speak what is practically a prologue; at the end they speak an epilogue. The fool and the blind man, shadows of Cuchullin and Conobar, represent the comedy, the insincere side of the drama. That element seems to me the weak point in construction. Its genesis is in one of the numerous subtleties which may be discerned in reading the book but which, as a one-act play, retard rather than advance the dramatic action. It would seem as if Mr. Yeats, lingering lovingly and masterfully over his details, forgot to regard his play as a synthesis. In a longer play the tragedy and comedy might blend, but here they go on as two streams which flowing side by side never unite. Thus, we get a play burning from beginning to end with surreptitious dramatic speeches which are like mosaics in the sun but produce no unified impression. *largesse de richesses*, a play which suffers from its own too-great brilliancy to the audience—a procession of irrelevant genres.

The acting on the whole was scarcely adequate. So subtle a play would require actors of many years' experience. But, as the Fool, Mr. W. G. Fay was admirable. F. F. Fay's Cuchullin was not without merit, and Mr. George Robert's Conobar was good. There is no woman in the play.

Madame Jan 7

MAURICE JOV.

Today

The Irish Theatre.

I AM sorry to learn that the attendance at the performances given in Dublin by the Irish National Theatre Society was not so consistently good during the first week as might have been expected. This, however, is a pity. I imagine, the fault of the society itself. To be a "national" theatre in Ireland, one must appeal to the people, and the prices must be as "popular" in such an institution as in the less ambitious play-houses. There is no seat in the Abbey Theatre, however, at a smaller price than a shilling—a tolerable enough minimum in London, but something of a bar to a great mass of provincial playgoers. Would it not be possible in the Dublin house to reserve the floor at the theatre for the more expensive seats, and to divide the balcony into the equivalents of a pit and a gallery? I think, too, the society will soon find it wise to produce an occasional play in the Irish tongue. Bi-the-way, I hear another complaint from Dublin with regard to the Abbey Theatre. The harp which decorates one of the walls is, I believe, a harp in which the body of a woman figure, and is consequently an instrument unknown in Irish heraldry. This kind of harp, indeed, was introduced into Ireland from this side of the Channel. It is well to be exact in such small matters, and this expectation of a body calling itself by so ambitious a name as the Irish National Theatre Society.

Observer Jan 1

THE IRISH NATIONAL LITERARY THEATRE.

(FROM OUR DUBLIN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Irish National Literary Theatre has been in existence for some time, but not until Tuesday night last had it a local habitation, although it has even for some six years ago, it asked the Dublin public, in the Ancient Concert Rooms, to pass judgment on Mr. Edward Martin's *Heather Field* and Mr. Yeats's *Conobar*. That event was certainly memorable in one sense, for the latter play provoked a bitter controversy as to its orthodoxy from the Catholic point of view—the *Conobar*, in the story, selling her soul to the devil for gold in order to save the people from famine. Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, ex-M.P., had written with his usual vigour in one of the Dublin papers that this was a suggestion utterly subversive of both Catholic and Irish ideas, and he so far affected opinion that a small body of young men with some enthusiasm from judgment, turned up, and, from the gallery, tried to hiss the play of the stage. The friends of the Literary Theatre, however, were sufficiently strong to defeat the jeers and foolish demonstration, and from that day to this the movement has, on the whole, been given a fair field in Ireland, and with very remarkable results indeed. At the beginning the plays were presented by professional actors from London. Now every member of the company is an amateur—an amateur, that is to say, in the sense that they do not play for money. Most of them are hard-working men and women in shape of whom are re-negadged perhaps in the six in the evening in the drudgery of their business. But, if one looks at them all round, they are much better actors, at least of Irish drama, than the members of the numerous companies from England which visit Dublin weekly from one end of the year to the other. I asked Mr. Yeats how it was done, and his answer was that it was by hard work, every play being rehearsed until the smallest detail was mastered and made familiar. Mr. Yeats and the other members of the Theatre Society were very fortunate some years ago in meeting with the brothers Fay, two men who appear to have been born actors, and who have gathered about them a remarkable company, the members of which seem to be masters of their art, so it is known on the best stages in London, and at the same time to practice it with a naïveté and simplicity which is not very usual in the theatre professionals. I may be wrong, but I think that the achievement of the Irish Literary Theatre this week is the first play it has presented is something really admirable.

The opening of the Irish National Theatre is at last an *fait accompli*, and the inaugural performance took place last week with every promise of future success. Plays by Lady Gregory and Mr. W. B. Yeats formed the triple bill on the opening evening, and were well received. They were acted, of course, by amateurs, and the setting of the pieces was intentionally somewhat crude, so as to allow the entire interest to be centred in the play and the playing. Lady Gregory was unavoidably absent, much to her friends' regret, but Miss Horniman, to whose generosity we owe the new theatre, was among those present, as was Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Edward Martin, Mr. Stephen Gyman, and many others who are representative of art and literary culture. At the conclusion Mr. Yeats was called before the curtain and received a most enthusiastic greeting, in reply to which he expressed the thanks of the Irish National Theatre Society for the help and encouragement they had received in their "quest after truth and beauty," a pilgrimage on which he was glad to realise they were very generously accompanied.

to much for the players generally. But even the best players cannot do much unless they have plenty worthy of their talents. The reason for this is in this case, Mr. Yeats's Kathleen in *Howe's* has often been presented in small halls here, but the Dublin public generally did not discover it till Tuesday night last. I have not before experienced such a moving, such an overpowering appeal to the spirit of patriotism, "Kathleen in Howe's" is the Irish heroic impersonation of Ireland. The hero in the Irish drama is about to be wed on the morrow. His sweetheart is in the cabin. It is during the rebellion of 1798. Kathleen in Howe's, with her sad beautiful face framed in the hood of an old Irish shawl, enters, and looking him steadily in the eye, tells him that the French have landed at Killybegs. He bids good-bye to the bride-of-to-morrow, and walks out of the cabin door to join the Army of Deliverance. That is the whole play, but it is so intensely emotional that no one could resist its appeal; and I am quite sure that, although there is no Censor of plays in Ireland, Dublin Castle would have suppressed it in the days of the Peninsular, or in the later days of the Land League. In this connection it is interesting to note that amongst the brilliant audience in the little theatre on Tuesday night was the Under Secretary, Sir Anthony McDonnell, while his chief, Mr. Wyndham, was among those in the stalls two nights later. Another play by Mr. Yeats was given, dealing with the tragic incident in the legend, or story, of Cuchullain, till he tells how he killed his only son in a duel, and then went out in his despair to fight the waves of the sea. It is a tragedy of the fifth century, in order, and contains some of Mr. Yeats's best work; and Mr. W. J. Fay, in the chief character, quite rose to the conception of the author. I did not much care about *In the Shadow of the Glen*, by Mr. J. M. Synge. Its idea, which was to write the story of "respectability" the same as a young girl's affection for the sake of land and money, and which is not so rare in Ireland as may be thought—was excellent; but it was too crudely and too evenly worked out. Quite different was the comedy, by Lady Gregory, *Spreading the News*, a clean-cut bit of Irish life, immensely humorous and laughable, with not a touch in it of what is known as the stage Irishman, and played with astonishing appreciation of the light and shade of the Irish peasant character.

I must not forget to mention the good angel of this remarkable dramatic experiment, Miss Harman. She is an English lady of means with a warm and practical interest in the drama of ideas as distinct from the drama of commerce. She is a linguist, a traveller, a student, a woman of the world in the best sense. She believes in the undervalued and independent theatre, and the Irish Literary Theatre appealed to her as one working on the right lines, and deserving of assistance. So she came along and turned the old Mechanic's Institute into the delightful little playhouse now known as the Abbey Theatre, in which the society has at last found a resting place. "It is the only endowed theatre in English-speaking countries," she said to me. "Do not forget that, and it is the thin end of the wedge." But she has not only put her purse at the service of the theatre, she has put her intellect and her work. Most of the beautiful costumes were made by her own hands, including the magnificent mantle worn by Cuchullain. If the Irish National Theatre Society owes little to English people in general on the intellectual and emotional side, it certainly should be profoundly and eternally grateful to one English lady for the practical and business-like assistance, as well as the artistic encouragement, which came just at the right time, and which promises to make it not only a great influence in Irish life and thought, but an element to be reckoned with in the genuine dramatic literature of the day wherever good drama and good literature are held in respect.

Manchester Guardian

Jan 19

The new number of "Sanctum, an Occasional Review," which Mr. W. B. Yeats has edited and Mr. Fisher Howlin has published in London, carries the propaganda and the record of the Irish National Theatre, as it is now called, a long way further on the way. The movement which owed its virtual pulse to Mr. Yeats's faith and artistic and poetic conviction, and which is signalled by the growing number of the ideas he preached, ought to be particularly interesting to a Welsh audience. It is, for one thing, the only modern stage in these islands which has stood persistently and wholly for other than frivolous things—spectacle, sensation, and the rest. If Mr. Yeats, thinking of these matters and realising the conditions of dramatic art, falls into a critical monologue in the congenial intervals of this most original occasional review, it is not to be wondered at.

Before turning to the two short plays, one by Mr. Synge and the other by Lady Gregory, which figure in "Sanctum" one is tempted to pause long in the vestibule with the editor, who is both a playwright and a lay preacher. And one passage reproduced from his lay sermon will go further than many paraphrases to show the force of his contention and how intelligible it may prove to Welsh readers who believe with him in the eternal behind the temporal and the spiritual behind the sensational influences.

"Every argument carries its backbone to some religious conception, and in the end the creative energy of men depends upon their believing that they have within themselves something immortal and imperishable, and that life is not a loss as in the world of the senses, so long as that belief is not a formal thing, a man will create out of a joyful energy, seeking little for any external test of an imagination, and so that the foundation of his life lies outside life itself. If Ireland could escape from those phantasms of hers she might react, as did the old writers, for she is the Gaelic tradition—and this has always seemed to me the chief intellectual value of Gaelic—a portion of the old imaginative life."

ERNEST REYNOLDS.

Amber Jan 1

The New Dublin Theatre.

An event of threshold importance took place at Dublin on Tuesday evening with the highly successful opening of the new Abbey Theatre, a charming little house constructed by Mr. Joseph Holloway on the ruins of a discredited music hall.

In this structure Ireland now possesses the first endowed theatre in the United Kingdom, for the building owes its existence to the well-directed enthusiasm of a wealthy London lady, Miss A. E. F. Harman, who designs it as the future home of the Irish National Theatre Society, a contemptuous band of dramatic iconoclasts, sturdily captained by Mr. W. B. Yeats, the poet.

Although money is taken at the doors in the old sweet way, the new cult affects a scornful attitude towards the ways and means of the commercial theatre, employs so "burry" music (has, in fact, no orchestra), and admits of no refreshment bars.

On the opening night the large and distinguished audience were favoured by the production of two new pieces, and the inevitable speech of Mr. W. B. Yeats, who, like Elton of yore (commercial theatre again!), has a penchant for rubbing on at every available opportunity, "just to say a few words." On this occasion it would have been better if the good old Dublin principle had been followed, and the pronouncements of the society embodied in a graceful inaugural prologue.

The Plays.

As for the two new pieces, one was a short poetic tragedy by Mr. Yeats, and called "On Ballin's Strand," and the other an amusing farce of peasant life, "Spreading the News," by Lady

Gregory. As the playwrights of the society assume to be the only writers in English of what is platonically described as "literary" drama, it comes as a surprise to find the latter mentioned little piece winding up with a tag slung direct at the heads of the defenceless audience, after the obsolete methods of the despised commercial theatre.

Great as was the enthusiasm throughout the evening, it was a success gained rather by brilliant acting than notable achievement in drama.

The company, who are all volunteers in the cause, have three players almost of the first rank, one two brothers Fay and Miss Walker. All have imagination as well as artistry, and allied to these, Miss Walker has spirituality and genius.

Her entrancing impersonation of Cathleen in Howe's was the sensation of the evening.

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THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The plays that are now being performed in Dublin by this little company are staged simply, so that the moving figures, with their eloquent, impressive gestures, appear as a pattern upon a background. The plays require but the three scenes—a king's hall, hung with cloth and furnished with a bench, a chair, and a barrel; a peasant's cabin, with a table, a bench, a chair or two, and a bed; and a backcloth representing a boarding, which is stuck about with old bills and chalked figures. As with the scenery, so with the robes. The kings of Mr. Yeats's tragedy are dressed with the cloth that hangs the palace, though their garments have designs in red and green, with a trimming here and there of fur. Most of the plays are of the country people, so that a few colored shawls, an old hat or two, a market basket, and a penny-worth of apples are almost all the properties required. The stage is never cluttered, never tawdry, as in those theatres where the actors, and perhaps the audience, are too little imaginative to trust to the work played for their effect. In an English theatre a "picture" is built up, blossom by blossom, branch by branch, marble column and carved staircase, till a garden city, it may be, is produced, upon which the eye may rest while the actors make its realism unreal. But with these young, unselfish Irish artists it is only the play that counts. With art of gesture so fully disciplined and a trumpet delicacy of enunciation they perform the best drama of our time in the method of a lovely ritual. They are not all of equal merit, nor have they all a full sense of vocal colours, and some of them are a little stiff in their restraints, a little monotonous in their gravity. But the art of it is reverent and thoughtful, even in its least expression. They are not of those who treat a passion in tatters or make a situation terrible with physical horror. Their art never lacks personality, but it is never obvious; it is never ostentatious.

At moments of deep emotion the best among the company express not only the human concern but its idea. When Miss Maire Ni Shuibhlaigh as Cathleen-in-Hoolahan (the personification of Ireland in Mr. Yeats's play of that name), or as Nora Burke, the hero's wife in Mr. Synge's "Shadow of the Glen", was before us upon the stage our thoughts ran upon greater matters than a distressed country and a stunted life. Any clever actress with either of those parts could have been moving, or passionate, or appealing, but very few could have moved us as they did, moved us to such poignant memories and tragic pity for the lonely. As Cathleen-in-Hoolahan she was the grey and ancient Eire, "keenening, keenening" for "the friends that are gone" in the old battle and the old gallant ridings. Her speaking of certain lines, and her mourning, mourning of a kind itself a painful thing and one of the most touching of modern poems) was of an infinite sadness, as though the words were as flowers laid upon the graves of patriots. I have seen no acting more delicate nor heart more touching than this in the lady's performance of the lonely glenwoman. Her Nora Burke is perhaps the finer performance of the two. It is a part less fraught with meaning, but the character is subtle, difficult to play justly, easy to play wrongly, easy to misunderstand. Mr. Synge's tragedy is a classic drama in which she appears, in

a little tragedy—comedy full of bitter truth and a heavy sorrow seen through laughter. In about a herd who pretends to be dead in order that he may catch her with fidelity to a neighbour. His plan is successful, and the malingerer rises from his bed and drives the poor woman out of doors in company with a tramp. Perhaps the greater number of these that will be played in the current issue of "Shamblagh" or so on it played will regard it as a comedy. It is far from being that, though parts of it are excellently comic. It is "the bitter old and wrinkled trunk," expressing the tragedy of an emotional nature. Nora Burke, the wife of an old soldier man, passes her life in a lonely cottage in a lonely place, among the hill-mists and the sheep. She is without friends, without children, without "escape" or relief of any sort. It is her tragedy that the only other man she sees is something of a sheep and a good deal of a brute. Mr. Synge has expressed her character with much discrimination. She wins our sympathy, for she is lonely and beautiful and full of the vague sorrow that is in all deep simple natures for "all things unnumbered and broken. All things bowed down and old." Played as Miss Maire Ni Shuibhlaigh plays her, her lonely and driven into the rain by her husband, because one of the high women of tragedy, a calamitous and wretched figure, dignified in sorrow, like a queen born. The little play was very well received. Mr. W. G. Fay, as the tramp, was a study of infinite resource and jest, though his performance on Wednesday night was more restrained than when we saw him in London. He recovered his high spirits until the end, when he makes a rather lyrical speech. His utterance of this speech was upon the exact note, and the rather varied passages gave zest and point to all that he had said and done since his entrance. Mr. George Roberts as Dan Burke, the husband, was impressive as a ceppo and entertaining as an angry old man.

Unfortunately only one of the four plays performed was a political play, and that did not bear quite enough of the beautiful art of speech the company has learned from Mr. F. J. Fay. Mr. Yeats's play "On Ball's Strand" was played on both the nights I was there, and its final scene plays in the memory as one of the most moving I have seen performed. Though the painful horror of the end, where the Fool (Mr. W. G. Fay), with his whimsical cunning, is showing the hero, Ouchlanin (Mr. F. J. Fay), that he has killed his son, most remain in the mind like an anvil of night. I did not forget the musical and ringing declaration, beautiful like a stricken bell, with which Mr. F. J. Fay made magical his part. The play has no political passage quite so fitted to Mr. Fay's genius as the last lines of "The King's Threshold," which was a beautiful and a slightly higher key, as his rendering of those lovely lines. His companions were no less reverent of the poetry, and the speaking of Miss Algood and of one of the older kings (we are not sure of his name) was rhythmic and coloured. Mr. Synge, or rather in pure force, Miss Algood secured another success. As Mrs. Fallon in a delicious play by Lady Gregory, called "Spreading the News," her acting of an indignant countrywoman was excellent. She has a great fund of spontaneous speech, and when allied with so genuine a humorist as Mr. W. G. Fay she carries all before her. "Spreading the News" is excellent feeling all through. It tells of scandal in a village, and of its swift growth and terrible spread. It is told in a series of scenes, and is admirably played by Mr. W. G. Fay, and his repeated victim, a lower part taken by Mr. P. MacShinnagh. Mr. F. J. Fay as the Removable Magistrate was satirical and ironic without losing the individuality of the character he coached.

"Children-in-Hoolahan," the first and moving play of '98 by Mr. Yeats, was remarkable, as we have shown, for the beautiful performance of Miss Maire Ni Shuibhlaigh. It also afforded Mr. W. G. Fay another opportunity for the display of his admirable talent in peasant parts. As Peter Gillane, a shrewd, thrifty countryman, he shows us another side of Irish character as fine in its interpretation as his Burech or his Harry Fallon. Miss Algood as Mrs. Gillane was again excellent, though her appearance did not suggest old age very convincingly. Miss Maire Ni Shuibhlaigh, in the short, passionate part of Dolia Cahel, showed considerable tragic power. In the comedy by Lady Gregory she played an old spinster, a part which Lady Algood fitted her, though she did it amusingly. Mr. P. MacShinnagh and Mr. V. Wright as Gillane's sons were both interesting, restrained, and dignified. "On Ball's Strand," "The Shadow of the Glen," and "Spreading the News" will be repeated to-night and on Tuesday night, and then the theatre will close for several weeks. The company will then perform a new work by Mr. Synge. I came away from their opening performances glad that a company of such talent should have met with such encouragement and with such good results. Miss Horatia. There is no doubt as to the work to be seen in England. It is never common, it is never derivative. One thinks of it as a thing of beauty, as a part of life, as the only modern drama art springing from the life of a people.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE. ITS BEGINNINGS.

Somewhere in 1893 Mr. W. G. Fay, the stage manager and principal actor of the Irish National Theatre Society, with his sister and another young man, startled their peaceable relations by announcing their intention of playing "Box and Cox" in the back drawing-room. They did it, and followed it up, some time after, with the old farce "The Irish Tutor." Mr. Fay playing the part of the schoolmaster, Dr. Flail, while his brother, now associated with him in the Irish National Theatre Society, took the part of Mr. Tilwell. The young man mentioned above impersonated Terry O'Rourke. Mr. Fay, by the way, painted and made the scenery for these performances. Shortly afterwards he got some slight experience as an amateur before the public. About this time a very experienced professional actress opened a dramatic class in Dublin, and Mr. F. J. Fay became one of her pupils. This class gave one performance in the back of a printer's shop, playing "The Chimney Corner," "A Cup of Tea," two pieces well known to the amateur world, and a short sketch in which Mr. W. G. Fay, who was not a member of the class, appeared with his brother. The class came to an end with this performance, and its teacher took upon her the "small" or "fit-up towns" of Ireland a couple of these concoctions, which by courtesy are called Irish dramas. She brought Mr. W. G. Fay with her as advance agent, and, with some of the pupils of the class already referred to, getting as much experience of playing as amateur before paying another class was to be held. The company that Mr. Fay had to lead, after a rather successful tour in the "fit-up" towns of Ireland, came for a week to one of the Dublin theatres, where they produced Falconer's old melodrama "Eileen Oge," in which the writer saw Mr. Fay make his debut as a servant, carrying a bundle, and doing some of the "fit-up towns" work. He was indeed, after this Mr. Fay remained for some years in

stately moving of the figures never detracts from the speech. Such postures as they are are simple and elemental. Such tones as they employ in speech are those of beautiful conversation, rising to great passion, or to lyrical fervour, but never becoming deaf or tedious. The speech of some members of the company is less beautiful, and less various than that of others, while one or two lack the ease of the practised actor and his power of adaptation. But while we watched them last week we felt that every member of the company was expressing a high ideal, and setting, not for applause, nor for profit, but for a love of art and a reverence for lovely things.

The tragedy by Mr. Yeats, "On Baile's Strand," was performed on Tuesday for the first time, with Mr. F. J. Fay in the principal part. The play, which is the best of Mr. Yeats's dramas, is based upon the old Irish myth of Cúchullain. That hero, in his youth, loved a foreign queen, when he deserted. When her son was grown to be a man, this queen sent him to seek out Cúchullain and kill him. The play opens a few moments before the lady's arrival at the Court in which Cúchullain lives. After a frustrated effort to make peace Cúchullain fights and kills the lad, not knowing him to be his son. He then discovers from the lips of a fool that the dead youth was his child. He draws his sword and rushes down to the edge of the sea, and there hurls the waves until they overwhelm him. The opening passages seemed to us a little too long, but from the entrance of Cúchullain's son the play takes on attributes of romantic beauty which make it one of the finest dramas of our time. The final scenes, in which the fool (Mr. W. G. Fay) acquaints Cúchullain (Mr. F. J. Fay) with a knowledge of the dead lad's identity, are of a strange and terrible intensity. Mr. W. G. Fay is a connoisseur of genius, but in his performance of the fool he rises to great heights of tragic power. It is not easy to forget him, as, with his lowering idiot's face, his hair streaked with feathers, and his body bowed, his wining, horrible rore, adds touch on touch to the hero's agony.

A Distinguished Performance.

Mr. F. J. Fay's performance was remarkable for the extreme beauty of his declamation. In March last, when he played "Seanachán" in "The King's Threshold," in London, he showed us how beautiful verse should be spoken on the stage. His part in "On Baile's Strand" is less lyrical than that part; but his speaking of the verse is not less beautiful. It requires a rather wider compass, a fuller range, a greater variety of passionate tones and accents. Of the speeches in the part, we thought the sword speech, in which Cúchullain speaks of his sword, the most beautiful and the most distinctive. But his art throughout was distinguished and memorable.

Mr. Yeats's symbolic play, "Cathleen ni Houlihan," which followed "On Baile's Strand," has been performed frequently with great effect. It is a moving little piece, made specially memorable to us by the acting of Miss Maire N. Shindblagh, as Cathleen ni Houlihan, the personification of Ireland. The play is of the time of the '98 rising. It shows us Ireland in present company, and she asks the cabin to call to her service a young man about to be married. The part of Cathleen ni Houlihan, taken by Miss N. Shindblagh, is one of strange beauty, demanding qualities of voice and posture rarely combined. Her playing of the difficult part, almost unceasingly in its pathos, threw into strange and beautiful contrasts of the simple peasants among whom she moved. In Mr. Synge's play, "The Shadow of the Glen," she played a more human part with searching insight. As "Nora Burke," a lonely, emotional woman, married to a farmer in "the back hills," her success was as remarkable as in the unearthly part of the play. The character would be welcomed by many living actresses, as an opportunity for the display of passion.

These plays were followed by an extremely merry and sparkling little comedy, called "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory. Its scene is laid at a fair, at which an old deaf apple woman (Miss N. Gharraigh) contrives to spread a rumour that a melancholic man, Bartley Fallon (mimetically played by Mr. W. G. Fay), has murdered a neighbour with a hay-fork. The rumour spreads and spreads till an English magistrate (Mr. F. J. Fay) causes both the murderer and his reputed victim to be arrested. Miss Algood, who had played charmingly in Cathleen ni Houlihan, was excellently comic as Mrs. Bartley Fallon. Her last is spontaneous and overwhelming, and utterly without any trace of stage artifice.

The honours of the delightful little piece must be shared between her and Mr. W. G. Fay. After to-night the theatre will close for several weeks, and will then reopen with a new play by Mr. J. M. Synge.

Northern Whig Jan 14

DRAMA IN IRELAND.

Art and Politics.

In this column last week Mr. Maurice Joy, who is well qualified to deal with the subject, discussed the question of drama in Ireland, with special reference to the progress of the movement that owes its origin to the genius of Mr. W. B. Yeats and his little band of followers in Dublin.

Mr. Joy bases his remarks on the organ of the Irish National Theatre, "Ranchin," and he does not exaggerate when he states that in that magazine Mr. Yeats "has put much that is genuine literature. Since its first issue the little known-covered review has been a force in the intellectual life of Ireland, and has effected more in a few years than the politicians in a generation. Mr. Yeats is always a delightful critic, and he is never so illuminating as when he deals with Irish problems and Irish ideas. One does not always agree with his conclusions, not altogether for the reason Mr. Joy advances—that 'his is too individual, too original a mind'—but because he is a poet, with a very personal and definite theory of art, and the Irish movement has already grown too large to be confined in the shackles of that theory. But if Mr. Yeats's outlook is not sufficiently comprehensive to make him the ideal national dramatist, his sense of the dignity and importance of art well fits him for his position as leader of the new school.

In Ireland for many years art has been subordinated to supposed political and social necessities, and the poet and the dramatist have to put to themselves not merely the question "Is this true for me?" but "Is it helpful to this party or harmful to that prejudice?" Where the intellect is stifled in this fashion it is hopeless to expect good literature, and all who are not blind partisans will support Mr. Yeats's demand for liberty of thought and expression. In "Ranchin" he has frequently touched on the question; but the opening of the Abbey Theatre—the first endowed theatre, as he reminds us, in any English-speaking country—gives him another opportunity of restating the principles which in his opinions should guide those who aim at the creation of a national literature. When he urges the all-importance of freedom he speaks from personal experience. He has not forgotten the storm of ecclesiastical indignation

that broke out on the production of the "Cathleen ni Houlihan" in Dublin, and threatened to overwhelm the first faint attempts at the formation of an Irish theatre, nor the bitter attacks on "Diarmuid and Grania," which not a few of his critics stigmatised as a glorified problem play. To-day the censors of morals are busy once more over Mr. J. M. Synge's little comedy "In the Shadow of the Glen." They ignore the massive beauty, the fine art, the rippling humour of the play; and, because Nora Burke leaves her husband and runs away with a tramp—to feel "the cold and the frost and the great rain and the sun again, and the south wind blowing in the glen"—they accuse the writer of attacking the institution of marriage and insulting the chastity of Irish women.

It is very petty of course, and would be severely ridiculous if such serious issues were not involved. For the question on the last analysis resolves itself into whether the artist is to represent life as he sees it or distort his perceptions to serve the cause of a party or a political movement. Nor does Mr. Yeats believe that the victory, if it is won, will be easy. In some respects the success of the new movement has reacted against it. It has produced a school of dramatists, especially in Gaelic, and many of them are more eager to obtain the applause of an audience than to present men and women as they live. Last year there was a marked increase in the number of purely propagandist plays, and, as Mr. Yeats says, "a certain number of propagandist plays are unavoidable in a popular movement like the Gaelic revival, but they may drive out everything else." It must not be forgotten that a play that is good propaganda is rarely good art; these are exceptions, but they are such as prove the rule. As yet there is little sound dramatic tradition in Ireland; in Gaelic, except for the work of Dr. Douglas Hyde, Father O'Leary, and Father Dinneen, there is practically none. Yet it is the Gaelic who are the greatest offenders, and who, when they should be busy with problems of technique, set out ostentatiously with their craft but learned to convert the world.

It is not strange if Mr. Yeats, in spite of the fact that the national theatre has now entered on a new era, should look to the future with some anxiety. Up to the present he has succeeded marvellously, but the hardest part of his work is still to do. He has destroyed some old prejudices, refashioned some old ideals, and fought strenuously to make criticism a duty instead of a crime. The forces of reaction are not yet broken, however, and there are signs that they are gathering for a new struggle. Nor can the fact be ignored that the reactionaries do not all belong to one party. There are on both sides men who have, in Mr. Yeats's phrase, "a keen eye for rats behind the arras." If a few extreme Nationalists cannot accept Lady Gregory's delicate little sketch "The Rising of the Moon" because it shows a policeman in a favourable light, and "the Dublin crowds should be kept off as high a heart that they will fight the police at any moment," there are some of a different shade of political belief, who refuse to see beauty in Mr. Yeats's "Cathleen ni Houlihan," the most magical expression of the sentiment that has made the Irish an actor figure in a last scene ever written. Parallel with this is absurdity in the sphere in a group that raged, and is still raging, because Mr. Yeats ventured to reprint some questions dealing with the Irish players from Mr. A. B. Walkley's article on the above performed in Ireland during the year

The Review also contains the one-act play *In the Shadow of the Glen*, by J. M. Synge, which was produced at the Gaiety Theatre last March by the Dublin Repertory Theatre.



THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY: SCENE IN "THE BAILEY'S STRAND," BY W. B. YEATS, PRODUCED AT THE SOCIETY'S THEATRE, ABBEY STREET, DUBLIN

1749

United Irishman
Jan 14

THE ACTING IN THE ABBEY THEATRE.

It has been my privilege on several occasions to point out what I considered, from a severely critical standpoint, to be blemishes in the acting of the National Theatre Society. I do not flatter myself that my criticism affected in any degree the work of the society; nevertheless, I cannot let pass the pleasurable opportunity afforded by the society's inaugural performance in the Abbey Theatre, to express my gratification at the remarkable advance which the actors have made since their last public appearance.

No doubt the free stride of a commodious stage and the sympathetic aura of a crowded house will work miracles on even the most nervous debutant. Still the sense of assurance that came across the footlights was manifestly, in a large degree, the outcome of long and careful study and practice. I found, what I had long desired, that repose which comes from the knowledge that all is well; and not even the "dull" in the farce could break the enjoyment of the piece. The casting of the parts was most happy in all the plays, particularly in "Kathleen ni Houlihan," which was even better performed. As the Poor Old Woman, Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh touched splendid heights of feeling, her beautiful voice and excellent technique, making the symbolical character not only convincing but enthralling. I regretted to notice that Mr. W. G. Fay's commendable softening of the realistic lines, whose impact on the symbolical utterances of Kathleen makes comedy in the air, was not sufficient to slay the irrelevant laughter of the uninitiated. I fear there is much yet to be done in the dramatic education of even intelligent audiences.

Mr. Yeats' new play, "On Baile's Strand," has more bone and sinew than anything else of his I have seen or read. It was played with much power. The play was exquisitely dressed and mounted. I

was troubled, however, to understand whether it was not as great a sin to challenge the eye with a golden spiral in the midst of simplicity as it is to decorate the stage with painted trees. To me the call was undesirable. My eye traced the swirling spiral, and my mind cogitated the why and wherefore of the sun and moon, and their relationship to the play. Hence my attention was disturbed, much more severely and interiorly than by the most gorgeous settings of the Commercial Theatre, which usually have no bearing on the psychology of the play, and can be ignored by the slightest exertion of the will.

"Spreading the News" is one of the most delightful little plays I have ever seen. Criticism stands disconcerted in the presence of such freshness and spontaneity. It is only afterwards that one is tempted to ask such a frivolous question as: How the murdered Jack Smith remained so long in ignorance of the fact that he had been murdered, and was allowed to sing his way alone back to the scene of the action through a town on a fair day which was seething with the news. Mr. F. J. Fay's "R.M." was a perfect cameo. The piece appeared to have been lifted bodily out of the country, and I have not laughed so consummately for many a month.

Speke, 10/11.

Sunday Times Jan 1 - 05

The Irish National Theatre was opened at the New Theatre, Abbey-street, Dublin, on Tuesday night. The beautiful little theatre, called "the Abbey Theatre," was a brilliant sight and filled to its uttermost capacity. Mr. W. B. Yeats made a speech from the stage, in the course of which he said: "Our salary list and our expenses are so small that we shall be able to ask ourselves when we put on a play, first, 'Does it please us?' and then, 'Does it please you?'" The opening play was a one-act piece by Mr. Yeats entitled, "On Baile's Strand," partly in verse and partly in prose. It is a tragedy. The final play was "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory. It is a most entertaining piece.

stage, are concerned; perhaps the Gaelic League, under any circumstances, would not improve the "letting value" of the new theatre. Might we suggest that "Up-holding the Letting Value" would not be a bad title for a lively comedy.

Mr. Yeats does not interest us, though, as we have said, he and his kind supply us with matter for good "copy" occasionally. However, he has several admirers, and he is of all-absorbing interest to himself; so interested is he in himself that in a fit of absent-mindedness he allowed two of his own illustrated chants on the hill on the opening night. Mr. Yeats "was not born yesterday," in the Cockney sense of the phrase; he can make a little go farther than any other man we know, and he believes firmly in maintaining his "letting value." Yet with all there is no future before the English illustrated chant in this country. Sparse audiences will, we fear, be frequently referred to by *Alf* and *Pink* and *Green* in what they will, no doubt, soon learn to call "The Cozy Little Abbey Street House" if the Yeatsian chant dominates the programmes.

Go-Bye Jim 4-

EACH of us dreams of some city or season in the history of the world in which he would especially desire to have lived. One looks back in his ecstasies to the Athens of Pericles, and another meditates rapturously on some discoloured Tuscan village of the days before Michael Angelo. Max Beerbohm, less bewildered than his neighbours by moonish dreams, has put it on record that he years after the London of 1881—the London of aestheticism, and long hair, and willow-pattern teacups—above all other times and places. For myself, if I had the choice, I would take no year I ever heard of in exchange for the present, and I would give all other cities to be burned so I might go and make my bed in Dublin. There never was a time when it would have been a sore fate to live in Dublin. There has still been some wit running; there have still been fine thoughts here and there, and easy company, and a freedom from that insistent sadness which has so long covered the greater part of Ireland like a heavy hood. The score of new movements, however, which have filled recent years in Ireland with strange hopes have affected Dublin in a degree scarcely to be equalled anywhere else. The Gaelic League, wisely ambitious, enthusiastically sane, has attracted most of those young men and women who are wise enough to take thought for the morrow; and one hears the Irish spoken with a growing fluency every year. Concurrently with this, the appreciation of literature has widened. The feet of the young men have turned back to the old masters of art, and now they are flinging out verses of their own, and plays, and satirical pieces that I think are the signs of the coming of a new and maturing school of literature. The atmosphere of the town has grown suddenly healthy; the place shows something of the cheer of the woman in the parable who found the lost sixpence. I think the sixpence that Dublin had lost sight of was the sense of being a capital. From the time of the Union she had, by force of circumstances, handed over her political talkers, her artists, her poets, and most of those who were intellectually important, to London. It was in London that Irish battles were fought, and naturally Ireland became more concerned with the city in which her interests were perpetually (if humbly) handled than with the nearer city, which was but a kind of ornamental and superfluous tomb for old greatnesses and broken dreams. The re-discovery, by Dr. Douglas Hyde and the Gaelic League, of the fact that nationality is some thousand times wider

than can be embraced by politics, more than anything else, has changed all this. "We can learn our own language," they said, in effect, "build up our own industries, produce our own literature, establish our native schools of painting and music. What has all this to do with politics? Let others bore the Speaker at Westminster with ineffectual words. As for us, we will stay at home and set to curing our sick nation upon principles that have never been known to fail." Men of this school of thought, though they have not converted all their neighbours, have, at least, influenced most of those who count in the world of intellect and the arts. Mr. W. B. Yeats, for instance, though he has not the approval of all the Gaels, is unquestionably the child of the same time-spirit as are they. Indeed, despite his intellectual sympathies with certain continental schools of thought and poetry, he is doing

much of the same work as the Gaelic League in attempting to rebind the Irish of the present day to the Irish of the old and the splendid traditions. The feeling for beauty and art, which is spreading in Dublin like a new and wise religion, owes to the League and to Mr. Yeats, and to the poet who calls himself "A. E.," an inappreciable wealth of gratitude for its increase. The movement on foot to buy for the nation the darling collection of modern pictures which is now on view in the rooms of the Royal Hibernian Academy would probably never have been so strong had it not been preceded by the revival of Irish ideas. For the emotion of pure nationalism—the supra-political sort—opens the eyes of a people to artistic wisdom in as sure a degree as the eyes of the individual are awakened by the love of a woman or of a strong friend.

The Dublin, however, which is the new-found heart of Ireland, is by no means the Dublin of the Viceroys' Castle, or the Dublin of Professor Mahaffy, or some half-dozen other Dublins of a ridiculous or tragical significance. It is the Dublin, at the same time, of no creed or class, but of the people of all creeds and classes who matter. It finds a very remarkable expression, not only in a widening garden of literature, but in two weekly papers, one of them, *An Claidreamh Solais*, being non-political, while the other, the *United Irishman*, is as strenuous in the advocacy of its political as of its industrial and linguistic ideals. Whatever room for argument there may be as to the rightness or the wrongness of these papers in certain of their tenets, they are both written in a spirit of high idealism, and with an intellectual forcefulness that are the constant marks of the new Dublin. They have brains at the back of them, and every Dubliner of brains reads them. They have this vast merit, too, that they are succeeding to an amazing extent in stamping out the spirit of sectarian intolerance which so long laid Ireland helpless and hopeless—a house divided against itself. Mr. Yeats, however, has propounded the theory that the Irish are a hearing, rather than a reading, people. If this be true, then there could be nothing more important than the establishment over the country of innumerable theatres. One is assured that the day will come when play-houses in countless villages will be filled by audiences bent upon hearing dramas in the Irish tongue. In the meantime, I see nothing but good in the establishment of a national theatre, in which artistically serious plays, written in English by Irish writers for Irish audiences, should be produced. Consequently, the opening of the converted Abbey Theatre in Dublin last week by the members of the Irish National Theatre Society seemed to me to be an event of some importance in the city's history. Mr. W. B. Yeats, who is in some ways the father of the new theatre, may not be conspicuously Irish, either in his manner of speech or in the sort of his visions; but no one who has either read or heard his plays can deny that Ireland has coloured his thoughts, and that his dreams have an easy home

by Irish hills and lakes and in Irish wind. The chaste artist has duties beyond his duty to his country, and I think Mr. Yeats has harmonised in a very successful degree his duty to his country and that the name of the incorruptible Rose. Two of the three plays with which the Abbey Theatre was opened belong to him. One of them, "On Baile's Strand," deals with the sad death of Cuchullain, perhaps the most recently human of all the Irish heroes, and the other, "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," is fuller of the wine of just patriotism than any other modern play I know.

There is a distinguishing air haunting the Abbey Theatre. There is a distinguishing note prevalent in the plays produced there. Mr. Yeats's literary dramas may be as little representative of the moods and the ideals of the common Irish peasant as are Baudelaire's "Fleurs du Mal" of the moods and ideals of the French labourer. Still, Mr. Yeats is to my mind as markedly Irish in the sort of his emotions as Baudelaire is French in the quality of his. The sense of "large spaces and windy light" that one experiences, whether by a reedy Sligo lake or in the peculiar air of a Dublin street before the fall of evening, pervades his rhythms and his elated words. In the thrills one feels at the performance of his plays one is aware of a background, not of trim English landscape but of skies washed by gentle Irish rain. I will not uphold Mr. Yeats as the national dramatist upon whom Irish playwrights ought prudently to model themselves. He is, I believe, a proud separate artist—as separate from common traditions and schools as were Blake and Rossetti in English literature. So remote and scrupulous, indeed, does he stand in relation to all other Irish poets present and possible, that I imagine the National Theatre will require to be careful not to confine itself too exclusively to the production of his plays. That a three-act drama by Mr. J. M. Synge is announced as their next production is a sign of health and wisdom. Mr. Synge, if he only knew it, is a greater dramatist of the realities than any we have in England, when once we exclude the name of Mr. George Bernard Shaw. That Mr. Shaw's "John Bull's Other Island" is not contained among the announcements of the National Theatre Society can only call up sadness in the minds of those who had cherished most ardently the hope that Dublin had become a capital with all a capital's liberty of thinking and criticism. Dublin, however, will, I am sure, produce her own store of dramatists just as she has produced her own store of fine actors and actresses. Of the good players in the Three Kingdoms none are wiser and more complete artists than Mr. Frank Fay and his brother, Mr. W. G. Fay, of the Abbey Theatre. If Mr. Frank Fay has none of the physical grandeur required in one who would personate so tremendous a hero as Cuchullain, he has at least a finer voice and a more earnest eye of acting than can be found almost anywhere on the English stage. If he can personate a poet more smoothly than he can represent a towering Man, he must carry his fault lightly in the knowledge that Mr. Forbes Robertson, who came near being the perfect Hamlet, never breathed comfortably in the more strenuous and vulgar rôle of Othello. As for Mr. W. G. Fay, he is free and easy with a comic genius. He is the poet of the tramp, of the fool, of the loosened tongue and the chainless spirits. Mr. George Roberts, too, is an actor of distinction, of care, and of a considerable range. There are few better artists I know than the Dublin amateurs. The scenic effects, too, of the Abbey Theatre are simple, poetical, and harmonious. Miss Horniman has studied wisely since the Irish productions of last year at the Royal Theatre. The falling amber draperies of the great hall by the sea in "On Baile's Strand" had none of the hardness or

virtulence of the scenery we are accustomed to in English theatres, and the costumes had more decorative loveliness and quietude than can often be found here. The opening of the Abbey Theatre, indeed, was on all scores full of hope. The home of

a particular and non-London beauty, it will at least help in the cultivation of a national taste in art, just, lofty, and discriminating.

Dublin, then, contains the beginnings of a dozen fine movements, all of them making for health in nationhood. She gives signs of becoming the Irish capital again, instead of an English provincial town. There have not been so many persuasive ideals floating in that air for years. She has the elements of greatness, and if she follows the daring line of development she will surely end by creating a new and beautiful Ireland, and, indeed, like Paris, may aid in renewing the beauty of the white world. One thinks of the strong and resolute idealists who, like Mr. Yeats's, "we artists," have "given" their "lives to Ireland," and one remembers with assurance the parable of the grain of mustard seed and of the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump.

R. W. L.

Hogan

Jan 7

The Irish National Theatre

Had a splendid first night in their new house, every seat being filled by enthusiastic friends. Two new plays were given—"On Baile's Strand," by W. B. Yeats, and "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory. Mr. Yeats's play is merely one scene, and contains a version of a Cuchullain Saga not quite authorised by the best MSS. and traditions. It reads much better than it acts. In fact it is not in any sense dramatic, and except for the beauty of many of the lines has little attraction as an acted play. Dramas dealing with barbaric times and attempting to depict warlike passions are at the present day wholly unreal. What do modern writers know of such a life or such feelings? But measure and artificial as it always is, one could imagine such a play being made much more convincing than "On Baile's Strand."

Lady Gregory's little Play

Comes perilously near the ordinary commonplace farce without any literary distinction. It is, however, saved by her knowledge of Irish peasant life and her sympathy with innocent imaginative Irish mind. The absurd sensational story that is built up arises

quite naturally out of the love of talk common to every Irish village and the quick imagination of the Irish intellect. It makes an irresistibly funny little play.

The Other Two Plays

Given, "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" and "In the Shadow of the Glen," are of the very best the Irish theatre has produced. Mr. Synge is, indeed, the most promising playwright they have. The wife, Nora Burke, in "The Shadow of the Glen," is a very remarkable character-portrait in its complexity and genuine nature. The acting was excellent in the peasant plays—less so in "On Baile's Strand," but that was inevitable. No actors could have done much more with such characters and such a play. Miss Walker acted remarkably well, and showed great versatility in playing so truly and effectively such diverse parts as Kathleen Ni Houlihan and Nora Burke. Mr. W. Fay, as usual was inimitable.

The Cork National Theatre Society

Are making considerable reputation for themselves in the South of Ireland. Their performance of "The Last Irish King" on December 9th and 12th in Cork, and on Dec. 30th at Queens-town, has added greatly to their fame as actors and actresses. The Cork papers have praised them greatly. They intend to act "The Last Irish King" in Malloy, Fermoy, and other towns in the South during the winter; and it is rumoured that the same Society will act it in Dublin early in the spring. There seems reason to think that it would be even more successful here than in Munster.

that be alone is the real producer, and that the capitalist, the writer on industrialism, the economist himself are to be catalogued in the same category with the Topsy and the Vaseline!

Next week I will consider the case of those who take charges of schools, hospitals, penitentiaries, and such works; and I speak chiefly in behalf of female communities as they cannot speak for themselves. Religious communities of men are well able to defend themselves, as Sir Horace will soon know if he only will try a specific attack on the Vicarinate, the Redemptorists, the Jesuits etc.

M. O. R.

KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Kathleen ni Houlihán.—The old symbolic incarnation of Ireland, newly revived and imbued with the spirit of the age.

Bing the Patriot

Paddy the Testimonial

Johnny the Shoness

Willie the Green Orator

Mrs. Bung

Mrs. Paddy

Mrs. Johnny

Mrs. Willie

Scene I.—A country road near Ball-testimonial.

Time, early evening. Enter Kathleen ni Houlihán.

Kath.—Back from the jambo of old traditions have I come again. This time I come not for the young, the strong and the bold, but for the old, the weak, the nervous and the cowardly. For those who are old in years, those who are stupid and vain, and weak as the weakest milk, for those do I come. I want no one to fight with the sword for me now as I did of old, for I have lost faith in rebellions. But I have great faith in the strong brain, the strong heart and the skilled hand. For I am getting very wise in this crafty-old world, and I am getting to know the weakness of many enemies. My battlefields no more shall be the hills, the plains and the bogs, but the schools, the shops, the factories and the markets. On such grounds, meet the shopkeepers, and answering ligins be fought, not on the red sod. My arms are sturdy, battle-tested and enduring, and can defeat the shopkeeping enemy upon a fair field. But they are hampered and misled by self-styled leaders among the balt, the jamo, the vicinos and the blind on their own side. Oh, well have I come to know those leaders. Their names have been before upon my ears by the whispering winds of sorrow; and they are called, Bing the Patriot, Paddy the Testimonial, Johnny the Shoness, and Willie the Green Orator.

For those persons have I now come. I will cast a spell upon them, and lead them away to some land of forgetfulness, where stupid and vicious people cease from troubling for a very long time. When those national millionaires are restored, and the new battle-ground is unencumbered of their presence, my sons in the course of time may win back what I have lost.

Here near at hand the whole four are assembled at Mrs. Bung's at home. "Ah, Bung, Paddy, Johnny and Willie, your era of petty impatience is at an end, for Kathleen ni Houlihán is on your track, and you are numbered among her old lost followers, and her lost causes.

Scene II.—The drawing-room of Bung's villa, a very pretentious looking edifice on the road side near Ball-testimonial. Enter Bung the Patriot, Paddy the Testimonial, Johnny the Shoness, and Willie the Green Orator.

Bung.—Well, now I couldn't tell you how grieved I am to hear that Mister Oliver Cockney, the black man, is about to retire from occupation, and go to England.

Paddy.—I'm not worth a button since I heard he. He was a nicey girl, corresponding below, and such a good comic actor, too. As an Irishman on the stage he was second to none. He deserves a testimonial.

John.—The dear old chap, he was delightful company. I have seen the best London comic artists portraiture Irishmen, and in my opinion not one of them gave a better representation of the polking, roaring, drinking, fighting Irishman than Mr. Cockney. It was a treat to hear him sing "Faller O'Ryan," or "How Paddy sold the rope."

Paddy.—It was a regular treat. It is a clear case for a testimonial.

Willie.—It is a healthy sign of the coming millennium of harmony amongst all creeds and all classes to see a gentleman like Mr. Cockney cut asle for a time his racial, political and sectarian prejudices, and mingle in boisterous gilly among the more Irish, whose idiosyncrasies and eccentricities he portrays with such inimitable power and drolery.

Bung.—Outside religion, race, and politics, I have found Englishmen and Irish Unionists real decent fellows. They spend money, and help on trade.

Paddy.—Our dear duty in this case is to give a testimonial.

John.—Undoubtedly we must give Mr. Cockney a testimonial.

Willie.—Really, to allow a gentleman, who, apart from sectarian, political and national matters has condescended to associate so freely with us, to depart without some signal token of our esteem and affection, would be incompatible with our record as humanitarian and testimonialists.

Bung.—By all means we must give him a purse of sovereigns. You, Mr. Paddy, will, of course, drum up the authorities.

Paddy.—With a heart and a half, I am a nation-lie, and like my friend Mr. Bung, I believe that the road to Ireland's freedom must be paved with testimonials.

John.—Put me down for a guinea.

Willie.—And me for the same.

Bung.—Where will the presentation be made?

Paddy.—At the usual place, of course, the Bung's Head.

Bung.—Put me down for a guinea.

Enter on the road before the house Kathleen ni Houlihán.

Kath.—(sings).—

There is not in this wide world a place that's so dear To ligins and hawk clerks as this amired bery, Where the Bung and the shoness appeal to the folk, And give testimonials to peckers and nooks.

Oh, the Bung and the Tradies are thoughtful and kind, To wait and to handily they never are blind.

No pensioned policeman they leave in the fold, But ease his distress with a purse full of gold.

The bank clerk so wrecked, the railway man poor,

Of their kind compassion may always be sure.

To give those poor creatures a bise and a nip,

The Shoness and Paddies big purses make up.

But labourers pampered, and workers, and drosses Who feed in their cabins on water and drosses,

To such who in ease and in luxury live,

The Bung and the Shoness no purses will give.

Bung.—Who is that strange old woman at all, and what is she enacting?

Paddy.—I can't make out a word. She's an uncanny looking creature, and she fascinates me like a piece of

revolving glass.

John.—By giv, she has given me the cold shivers.

Willie.—And so too. (Addressing Kath.) What is your name, my good woman?

Kath.—Kathleen ni Houlihan.

Paddy.—I wonder would she be anything to Sergeant Houlihan to whom we gave the testimonial last month.

John.—Perhaps she's a relation of Mr. George Houlihan, J.P., of Buckingham House, whose daughter was presented at the Cavendish recently, he-he-he. Ugh! I wish she would go away.

Bung.—Do you want anything particular, ma'am, that you stand staring at us there!

Kath.—Yes, I want a testimonial.

Bung.—Good heavens, ma'am, we could never dream of giving a poor woman like you a testimonial.

Paddy.—What! to give a purseful of sovereigns to a poor hungry-looking creature like that. Good God, the woman must be a lunatic.

John.—A testimonial to a beggarwoman, he—he—he.

Willie.—We only give testimonials to deserving cases, ma'am; to public men such as peolers, bank clerks, railway managers and Freemasons who can sing comic songs, and do the stage Irishman. You have no such claims to our regard and esteem, ma'am.

Kath.—No, indeed, I have not. But I am poor and miserable, and my family, who are many, are poor and miserable, too. Many sleep on the cold ground, and many feed upon the cold water and the weeds. Cease to give more to those who have much, and help my cold and hungry ones to face the wolf and the famine.

Bung.—There's a penny for you, ma'am, and be off about your business.

Paddy.—There's a halfpenny, and be off with yourself. It is a testimonial good enough for the likes of you.

John.—There's a farthing. Go away like a good woman.

Willie.—I'm sorry I cannot give you anything, poor woman. The smallest change I have is a threepenny bit.

Kath.—I go, but you must come, too. Come Bung, the Patriot; come Paddy, the Testimonial; come Johnny, the Sheneen; come Willie, the green Orator. You all must leave your country for your country's good, and follow Kathleen ni Houlihan.

Exit slowly, beckoning.

Bung.—I cannot surely be in the horrors, and yet I feel that I must follow this woman.

Exit Bung.

Paddy.—Purses and pensioners, I'm bewitched.

Exit Paddy.

John.—I'm a gone coon.

Exit John.

Willie.—Some mystic coercion is at work. I am psychologically coerced. Coercion, coercion! Police, police!

Rushes out.

Enter Mrs. Bung, Mrs. Paddy, Mrs. Johnny, and Mrs. Willie.

Mrs. B.—What great hub-bub was that I heard? Where are they all gone?

Mrs. P.—Look, there they go down the road like people possessed following a beggarwoman. Come back here, Paddy. Surely you don't want a poor woman like that to subscribe to a testimonial!

Mrs. J.—Oh, Johnny, I hardly know you. Have you lost all sense of what's due to society and respectability? Come back here at once before anyone sees you. Oh, this escapade will be the talk of all the At Homes.

Mrs. W.—Oh, Willie, you green Orator, are you touched in the head with a sunburst? Has the light of freedom led your mind astray at last?

Mrs. B.—Oh, Bung, the Patriot, this is nice, sensible patriotic conduct; nice conduct in a man to whom everyone in the barony looks up to for light and guidance. Do you forget that Mr. and Mrs. Snob are to be here to dinner with the French tutor? Oh, they don't heed us. They follow on after that beggarwoman.

They all rush out shrieking—Bung, Testimonial, Sheneen, and green Orator.
(Curtain).

A.M.W.

CAITHREIM CONGHAIL CLAIRINGNEACH

IN this volume, the fifth of the Irish Texts Society series, we are given an Irish Romance showing the exploits of Conghal Clairingneach, who lived among the over-kings of Ireland shortly before the Christian Era, according to the chronology of the Irish Annals. In this Romance we have the exploits of Conghal from the time that he was made king of Ulster to his appointment as Ard-Righ in succession to his half-brother, Eadhaigh MacEneaney. The scene of the story is laid in Tara and Emain with episodes that take us to Eborac, Island, to Lochlann and to Britain. The Irish version here printed is from a paper MS. of about the middle of the 17th century, which is itself a copy of an MS. now lost. At least the language of the present text, besides preserving a considerable number of old forms, is taken as a whole, older than the earliest that can be assigned to the manuscript. The MS. has now been printed for the first time with the fullest and most of introduction, translation, notes and glosses by Mr. Patrick M. MacSweeney. O'Curry in his MS. Catalogue of Royal Irish Academy MSS. was in the highest terms both of the caligraphy and the geography of this MS., and adds—“The tale which runs up the contents of this MS. is one of great interest, well from the purity and elegance of the language, very best I ever met, as from the number of historical and topographical facts it contains.” Mr. MacSweeney thinks that O'Curry had intended to edit the MS. Had he done so we should have had for some time the most interesting volume on our shelves. But, Mr. O'Curry, the task of editing this interesting Romance could scarcely have fallen into better hands than those of Mr. MacSweeney. It has long been the fashion to regard Irish MS. literature either from an antiquarian and topographical or a philological point of view. The MS. was regarded as valuable, according to the taste of the students, in proportion as it threw light on places or contained references to druidical rites or customs, and, according to another class, its value depended on its wealth of T-preterites and inflected nouns. These lines of research are, of course, all interesting and important, but they should not be pursued to the extent of excluding the literary merit of the document. It is only when we consider a document as literature that the true soul of the past shines in it. No writer, however subjective he may be, whose work deserves to be regarded as a literary production, can fail to reflect, in a greater or less degree, the civilization or an era, and no true antiquarian can fail to neglect the moral and social atmosphere in which literary work is set, apart altogether from its relation to ancient things, and names. Regarded as a piece of literature the *Caithreim* is of great interest and value, and the picture it gives of our ancestors as they lived before the soul of the writer, of their moral exaltation of their respect for women; of their martial spirit of the unwearied journeys in quest of military adventure; of their prowess in the combat; of their provincial patriotism is vivid and real in the extreme. It is indeed a nature epic and comes nearer to the manner and spirit of the *Iliad* than any Irish tale I can at present recall. It is a narrative of war and spoiling and harrying beginning to end, varied with episodes of marriage and adventure. There is epic life and motion everywhere, and considering the length of the piece, there is a little epic characterisation. Conghal himself would be out of place in the *Iliad*. At times he is as noble and as wrathful as Achilles. Take a single instance. As he sits in the banqueting house at Tara, he is informed that the Ard-Righ has decided to deprive him of the kingship of Ulster. “When Conghal heard this

*Conghal Clairingneach—1. Martial Career of the Irish Hero. Edited for the first time, with the Introduction, Notes and Glosses, by Patrick M. MacSweeney, M.A., Professor of Modern Literature in the University of Cambridge. Published for the Irish Texts Society.

Morning Leader Jan 7

STUDY AND STAGE.

"WORDS THAT SING AND SHINE."

By William Archer.

But for the "cold interpolation of the sea," I should certainly have been present at the opening in Dublin last week of the first Endowed Theatre in any English-speaking country. As it is, I can only, from afar, congratulate the donor, Miss A. E. F. Horniman, on her liberality, and the beneficiaries, the Irish National Theatre Society, on their good fortune. The situation created by Miss Horniman's gift is discussed at length by Mr. W. B. Yeats in the new number of "Sinnabhin," and I scarcely know which is the more delightful—Mr. Yeats's poetising for the Irish National Theatre or his philosophising about it. In the present case he gives us thirty pages or so of desultory talk, compounded in almost equal parts of sound sense and stimulating fantasy. Some of his theories are sectarian, some of his generalisations are hasty; but even his half-truths are better worth listening to than many men's single wisest words. One of a sort of single which I should like to discuss with Mr. Yeats, I select one, as to which there is no difference of opinion between us, but only, it would seem, a slight misunderstanding.

Mr. Yeats is denouncing the machine-made play of commerce, from which we come away "knowing nothing new about ourselves, seeing life with no new eyes, and hearing it with no new ears." The single movement of theatrical reform, he says, is towards the substitution of "the sincere play, the logical play," for this lifeless product of conventional cleverness. Then he proceeds:

So far, as we in Dublin mean the sense thing as Mr. Max Beerholm, Mr. Wainley, and Mr. Archer, who are seeking to realize sincerely as the English stage; but I am not certain that we mean the same thing all through. The utmost sincerity, the most unbroken logic, give me, at any rate, but an imperfect pleasure if there be not a vivid and beautiful language. There has cleverness and logic beyond any other writer of our time, and we are all seeking to learn from him; but he is not a great deal less than the greatest of all men, because he lacks beautiful and vivid language. "We will, give me time, and you will hear all about it. If only I had Peter here now," he very like-like, is entirely in the place where it comes, and when it is quiet in other sentences stately like itself, one is moved, one knows not how, to pity and terror, and yet not moved as the words themselves could sing and shine.

Mr. Yeats does not quite explicitly complete his thought, but he rather withholds a quotable limbo. But the suggestion clearly is that my two eminent colleagues and I do not sympathise with that part of the creed of the Irish National Theatre which makes it an essential of the highest drama that its very words should "sing and shine." Now, I leave Mr. Wainley and Mr. Beerholm to answer for themselves; but for my own part, I beg most respectfully to assure Mr. Yeats that on this point I am entirely at one with him.

First, however, as to Mr. Yeats's remarks upon Ibsen. It is much too early to make any definite conjectures as to whether he will rank with "the greatest of all times"; but if it does not, it will not be for lack of words that "sing and shine." Let Mr. Yeats read, even in

translation, the fourth act of "Brand," and Aase's death-scene in "Peer Gynt," and it will be too divine something shining and singing in them he is not the poet I take him for. The fact is that there are few poems of equal dimensions in any literature which sing and shine so continuously as "Peer Gynt." But I am speaking of Ibsen's prose plays, Mr. Yeats may say, "and my point is that in prose drama we have a right to look for distinction of style, and a certain lyric quality." I will not resort by citing the prose of Ibsen's romantic plays—their qualities are perhaps totally obscured in the translations. But I will ask Mr. Yeats why he picks on Ibsen's transitory period of would-be realism—the period during which he tried to do as a poet—as the representative of his power? The play from which Mr. Yeats cites a chance phrase is "An Enemy of the People"—with one exception, the most absolutely prosaic thing Ibsen ever did write that point over and over in his mind steadily realized the upper hand. Is there nothing that sings to Mr. Yeats in little Hedvig of "The Wild Duck"? Nothing that shines in the Ulric Brand of "The Master Builder"? Does he hear no "breeze in the air"? Can he read the last scene of "John Gabriel Borkman," and find in it so "beautiful and vivid language"? Yet we likely he can, for he is in translation, in which a great deal of the beauty must, and all of it may, evaporate. Yet even so I am tempted to cite the last words of the play—the passage between Borkman and her sister, Ella Benzonheim, as they stand on the snowy height, beside Borkman's body:

Mr. Borkman: He was a mine's son, John Gabriel Borkman. He could not live in the fresh air.

Ella Benzonheim: It was rather the cold that killed him.

Mr. Borkman: The cold, you say? The cold—that had killed him long ago.

Ella Benzonheim: Yes—so!—I caught us two into shadows.

Mr. Borkman: You are right there.

Ella Benzonheim: A shadow—two shadows—that is what the cold has made of us.

Mr. Borkman: Yes, the coldness of us.

Ella Benzonheim: I think we may, now.

Mr. Borkman: We are sisters—now we have both loved.

Ella Benzonheim: We are shadows—over the dead dead.

But for the fearfully awkward phrase about "the coldness of us," this represents the original fairly well, and it seems to me to have a solemn beauty of its own, apart from its dramatic quality. Perhaps I am wrong—perhaps I hear the Norwegian through the English and an consequent under a living language. But Mr. Yeats cites this—the discussion would never have arisen had Ibsen's language been one of the dominant tones of the world. Then Mr. Yeats would have read this in the original, and he would have had a doubt as to his "shining and singing" qualities. It is, and will always be, Ibsen's misfortune that the great majority of those who write and read him know him not through translations. It is the burden of all writers in local idioms—they have either a very small public, or a large one which but half understands them. If we will it we may with the Gaelic Ibsen, when he shall arise?

As for my own attitude towards verbal beauty in drama, I can only say this: never, in my knowledge, have I been so horrified or despaired of it. There are other qualities in drama which (for Mr. Yeats's own admission) compensate it some measure for the absence of verbal beauty, and we are too often forced, on such days, to make the best we can of drama without style. But have I not failed to do justice to Yeats's words?

chance it did, for a moment, irradiate the scene? Yes, I remember one day, and the first production of "The Land of Heart's Desire"—when the dialogue was so badly spoken that I heard about a quarter of it. For the rest, I am as eager as Mr. Yeats himself for that that sing and shine. I differ from him only in which language English to be "singing or very at all, language, in which it is hard to find such words. If he said his followers will but, as he put it, "discover an art of the theatre that shall be joyful, fantastic, extravagant, whimsical, beautiful, resonant, and altogether reckless." I shall be the first to welcome it. I was greatly disappointed to find a few lines of the same nature had any recognition for the sake beauty of "Prunella" at the Court Theatre—a piece which, though slight enough in substance, is of a verbal charm. But, apart from such a shadow, I am convinced that even in the praise drama of modern life there is room for words that shine and sing—over all asperities, and exquisite cryptisms.

Unwise Jan 14

The Horniman-Yeats Theatricals.

"NO LOW PERSONS WANTED."

The Dublin "Leader" makes the amusing statement that the new theatre, which Miss Horniman has arranged at her own expense for Mr. Yeats and his dramatic sketches, is to be carefully guarded against the presence of the common sixpenny public. In order to prevent "any lowering of the letting value" of the little theatre, prices are to be five shillings, three shillings, one shilling, and nothing less. The sixpenny gallery is not wanted; and any Gaelic societies who wish to give Gaelic plays must, says the "Leader," go elsewhere, as they do not expect the lads and lasses of the Gaelic League to pay a minimum fee of one shilling, even to save Mr. Yeats's "Gaelic Cathulain." But what matters to the Gaelic audience? They get enough out of the Irish tales.

By the way, an American correspondent sends us a protest of our patriotic and cultured contemporary, "The Gael" of New York, against the funny Yeatsian craze that "the Fairies" are the real religion of Ireland, and that even a Bishop in full canonicals has to run away, when a "swath" or a "Jerusalem" orders him. In "The Land of Heart's Desire," the fairies carry off a young Irishman from her husband, even though she invokes the help of the Blessed Virgin, and though the priest employs all the solemn prayers of the Church to protect her. As this silly dramatic sketch shows that the Church is far weaker than the fairies, it is quite a favourite curtain-raiser with some strange companies. It is against this misrepresentation that "The Gael" protests as follows:

"W. B. Yeats' play, 'The Land of Heart's Desire,' was performed at the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York, as a curtain-raiser to Bevington's 'In a Hovel.' 'The Land of Heart's Desire' is a play of the same supposed yearning of the Irish peasantry to desert to a mystic region of which they know nothing. The unlimited power of the fairies seems to be an artificial belief, and the

Leader Dec 31

THE IRISH LITERARY THEATRE IN CORK.

I MUST confess that I often wished to have a chance of seeing the plays of Mr. Yeats and Co., as some irreverent person has called the precious crew. Now that some young men and women have been kind enough to bring them to Cork, acting them in their own persons, the least I may do is return them a word of thanks, and if in doing so I should say anything in the way of criticism, it must be taken as simply an enlargement of the thanks. I hope I am right in thinking that these active young men would prefer a few words of honest criticism to the "bordering on perfection" of the *Examiner*.

Of the dramas acted, I am not sure, but I think both have been written of previously in these columns. Mr. Yeats's "Pot of Broth" is altogether a pleasant little scene-raiser, it is not altogether original in the idea, as the playwright seems to hint. Its pleasing effect was mostly got by the very good acting of Miss Goulding—good I mean for this kind of play. Of the other drama "The Last Irish King," I think it was a very wise choice of the society to select such a play for a beginning, it being a very actable sort of play with nothing in it anyway abstruse or symbolic. I don't think I would care to have to read this drama, and I must confess that I think a drama should bear reading—yes, and re-reading for that matter; a drama should be, in fact, literature, and "The Last Irish King" is hardly that. Yet the author deserves praise for honestly attempting to make drama from Irish history; writing, I should say, with some decent amount of self-respect and love.

If it be possible I would wish the society to tackle the "Heather Field" of Mr. Martyn, and the "Castell Ni Uallachain" of Mr. Yeats, and after that, the possibility being again taken into account, to try and get some little plays written here in our own city about our own civic life in the past, but more preferably about our own civic life in the present. I was glad to see the author of "Croppies Lie Down" present at the second performance—the Society might do worse than requisition him for something out of ourselves for ourselves. There is also Canon Sheehan of Doneraile, who seems to have a feeling towards drama and who was not born so very far away either. To my mind, either of these two men could make dramas that would be, at the same time, literature. Of course I do not pretend to say that we have a right to ask these well-known writers to do anything for us; we would, for instance, have much more right to ask Mr. Newnes or Sir Alfred Harmsworth for some thousands to build a home for drivelling idiots; but we could ask drama from these two Irish writers as we ask prayers for the dead of strangers—"Of your charity." With these few remarks of thanks and interest in the Society, I pass on to consider some points that struck me in the acting and mounting.

About the former, I would ask the Society as to whether it thinks the acting it sees in our local theatre, professional acting, that is, the highest ideal possible to be made towards. That style of acting may be summed up in a phrase—"True to nature." Now to say that a piece of any artistic endeavour whatever is true to nature, is indeed very high praise, but the Greeks did not make their statues true to nature, yet their works in sculpture are admittedly the noblest man has seen. Therefore it would seem that things not altogether true to nature may also be very great. Again, the "man in the street" would say of a piece of land-

scape painting that it was true to nature, when anyone who had given much time to studying landscape and atmospheric effects would know it to be abominably false. The false landscape of the knowledgeable is here the true of the ignorant. Now if anyone should tell you that your acting is true to nature, how do you know but that its only ignorance is speaking your praise, for it is not easier to watch the passions, emotions, gestures of human life than it is to watch the gestures, emotions, passions, of clouds, and rivers and fields.

school Irish writers. House indelible character, religion, everything gives way before the weird will of the calling spirit. We must enter a mild protest against this—nullifying, as it does, all attempt at exercise of will power on the part of the unhappy mortal who is "called." Will some one write a play in which the mortal attends to his duties and the fairies are defeated?"

Of course there is one great advantage in writing about fairies, and good people, and spirit-rapping. It does not get on the horns of Mr. Wyndham and Lady Betty Balfour, and the rest of the aristocratic patrons of "Colts in the Twilight," or in anything else, except in Real Earnest about Getting Our Own Agents.

Mr. Spurling & Dramatic Jan 14

One can understand a man who despises criticism scorn- ing to take any measures to obtain it. He knows he is a genius, and if ignorant people do not recognise the (more or less loudly proclaimed) fact, that is, of course, their misfortune. What I cannot understand is the attitude of the person who, professing to despise criticism, eagerly seeks it—or somehow or other, for it is wonderful how these things get into the papers, has it sought for him—and then proclaims his bitter scorn for the opinions of anyone except himself and his friends. Mr. W. B. Yeats, perhaps not absolutely the most modest and retiring of created beings, is, it appears, very angry with Mr. A. B. WALKLEY for daring to approve of a play that the Irish National Theatre Society, of which Mr. Yeats is the head and front—or let us say in which he is, at any rate, prominent—had dared to produce in London. "An English critic," poor Mr. Walkley says, "even though his criticism resolves itself into eulogy, is, it seems, an 'enemy' whose praise should be no more regarded by good Irish patriots than his blame." Just so, but why bring the play to London? Why invite critics to see it? Why labour to induce friends to go to see it? The London critics with, "I do hope you are going to see it," this play which the Irish National Theatre Society is to produce at the Royalty. I know something about it, and can only say, &c., &c., &c. My own opinion of Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. George Moore is that, as advertising agents, they might make a great deal of money.

That dear Mr. Yeats! I am so sorry for him because he goes to the theatre—why he should go I do not understand, but he goes—and he finds these scenery; which, of course, distresses him very much, poor fellow! With a prophetic eye he sees the scenery of the future—when there will not be any. "It will probably range between, on the one hand, woodlands made out of recurring patterns, or painted like old religious pictures upon gold backgrounds, and, upon the other, the comparative realism of a Japanese print"—and then we shall enjoy ourselves at the play! Instead of a forest, with the trunks and branches defined, the verdant leaves and the shadows that fall on the greenward through the boughs, a recurring pattern—a conventional wall-paper, in fact. What an improvement! There is only one ideal beyond it, and that of course is the neutral-tinted cloth, bearing a placard asserting that "This is a wood!" You may not believe it, there is only Mr. Yeats' word and Mr. George Moore's word for it, but, then, if it be not a wood, what is it? As for acting, "The actors must move, for the most part, slowly and quietly, and not very much, and there should be something in their movements decorative and rhythmic, as if they were paintings on a frame." Hamlet must not become excited. He must kill King Claudius "slowly and quietly." Richard III. must not grow vehement and offer his kingdom for a horse; he must be "decorative and rhythmic." Shakespeare does not seem to have known it, but that is a detail, for Yeats knows.

Lady Gregory gave a party last week in Dublin to meet the actors of the Irish National Theatre. Lady Gregory is a distinguished Irish scholar, whose Celtic translations are full of grace. She is the widow of the late Sir William Gregory, of Coole Park, County Galway, 41st one Irish Governor of Ceylon.

And yet once again. Set two boys to perform similar tasks; one does his task gracefully and beautifully, the other, like the clown he is, to both are, of course, acting true to nature, that is, to their own natures. When you come to act some similar part, which way will you take as your model? Are you sure then that in all your actions on Monday night, 12th of December, you did that which was true to the nature of the beautiful in nature, true to the nature of the passionate (beautifully passionate) in nature. Or, on the other hand, were your gestures those that first came to your mind on first reading your part, or were they simply reminiscences of similar gestures seen on other stages? If you are going to work for the building of a national theatre (as well as for your own enjoyment, which no one begrudges you) with characteristics all its own, more beautiful, more deeply true, more artistic, than those of the theatre as often laid bare before our eyes, the sooner you begin thinking about these things the better. How such thinking would affect acting laid people time to think about such pleasant themes! How it would banish the "true to nature" of the people who, as regards nature, are hardly more than mythical!

Now regarding the mounting of our dramas. At the performance I was indeed very glad to see everything so simple. I hope it was the desire for simplicity and not the question of expense that kept things so. Personally I would reduce scenic effects in drama to the vanishing point. The only performance of a Shakespeare play that I ever really enjoyed more than reading the same play was an *ad fresco* performance of "As You Like It." I fancy that in English drama the scene painter has choked the life out of the dramatic artist. Reduce the scenery to the Chinese level, where I believe the word "Castle" hung before the audience does duty for the cumbersome paper things that we would build up—and presently people in a theatre will listen to the words—which are surely, after all, meant to be heard.

And another good effect of such mounting would be that a dramatic society would then be able to do quite a number of works in the course of a year, while the unfortunate "practise dramatic hands" would also be given a chance of doing something for their country without first having to amuse a small fortune.

Once again let me thank the men and women whom I saw acting on last Monday night, and with the hope of seeing them again soon, in the same and other dramas, let me write the finishing word. LEE.

U. I - Jan 7 -

An issue of *Sainika* commemorates the opening of the Abbey Theatre. It is admirably printed by Meers, Sealy, Bryces and Walker, and sold at one shilling. The number contains portraits of Mr. P. J. Fay as Cuchullain, and of Mr. J. M. Synge; an Irish play in English by Lady Gregory; the text of Mr. Synge's adaptation of the old Greek libel on woman-kind—"The Widow of Ephesus"—and three articles by Mr. Yeats—all interesting, but occasionally contradictory. We are glad to find that Mr. Yeats has come to recognise two truths which we pointed out—that the arts lose something of their sap when cut off from the people as a whole, and that if his theatre is to live, it must be moulded by the influences which are moulding the National life at present. There is, therefore, no longer any difference as to essentials between Mr. Yeats and ourselves, but it is evident that he still labours under misapprehensions.

Mr. Yeats writes that people have objected to Mr. Synge's play, "In the Shadow of the Glen," "because Irishwomen, being more chaste than those of England or Scotland, are a valuable part of our National argument. Mr. Synge should not, it is said by some, have chosen an exception for his play, for who knows but that the English may misunderstand him; some even deny that such a thing could happen

at all, while others that know the country better or remember the statistics, say that it could, but should never have been staged." We know nothing of the statistics who object to Mr. Synge's play because it may lead the English to misunderstand him—what the English think about any Irish writer should be a matter of indifference to him—and to his compatriots. We know nothing of statistics that go to prove Irish wives act as the Ephesian dame did—we do know that this play has no more title to be called Irish than a Chinaman would have if he printed "Patrick O'Brien" on his visiting-card. The story is 2000 years old—it was invented by the decadent Greeks—the reputation of woman-kind has suffered in every century from it. Mr. Synge heard the story; he called the Greek dame, Nora Burke; her husband, Dan Burke; her lover, Michael Dars; and the robber with whom in the original, she goes away while the Greek husband and the Greek lover remain "A Tramp." He calls Ephesus "a Wicklow Glen," and lo! the thing is staged and dubbed an Irish play. If changing the names of Greek characters and places into Irish ones can provide us with Irish plays, the converse should be true. "Diarmid and Grania," with as Hellenic lapses, should represent to the world Greek drama. If "In the Shadow of the Glen" had been allowed to go unchallenged, there was no reason why its author should not have constructed fifty "Irish" plays out of the Decameron, and the cry of "Obscurantist" be raised by a literary man with a chorus against any who protested they were libels on the women of Ireland.

Mr. Yeats is forgetful when he writes of Irish Nationalism as if we in Ireland were Whigs and Tories. He is deluded when he alleges Irish propagandists would have the dramatist make his characters personifications of averages. Ireland is Mr. Yeats' country as it is ours, and be, as much as we, is bound to serve it. The service is a hard one, and he who serves must give it all, as Mr. Yeats has himself written. The realisation of this truth by the few in past ages saved the nation from death—and ignoble death. Its realisation by the many—the object of the propagandists—will restore the nation to its place among the nations. Neither Irishman nor Irishwoman has the right to think of himself or of herself before thinking of Ireland. In the acceptance and realisation of this truth lies the national redemption. Greece was greater than the greatest of the Greeks—Ireland is greater than the greatest of her children. No Irishman may set up his spade or his lyre and say "This first." The spade finds its true work in delving for Ireland—the lyre its true voice in singing for Ireland.

Mr. Yeats values the criticism of his country's oppressors. We do not. We care as little about what Englishmen think about Irish writers as the writers of Hungary did about the opinions of the literary critics of Vienna. None of the literateurs who helped to free Hungary invited the opinions of Vienna on what they wrote. The Hungarian National Theatre had no room in it for the Austrian critic. It was founded to stand or fall by the opinion of Hungary. It stood—it stands. Mr. Yeats on another page suspects the motives of those who advise Irishmen of letters to turn their faces to England. Yet in this *Sainika* there is no single criticism quoted on any book or play of Mr. Yeats except an English opinion. It is as if Vorozharsky or Petofi or Jokai had ignored what Hungarian

critics had said about them, and circulated instead all the nice things their country's enemies had said, and on the strength of the compliments of these enemies claimed to be accepted as national.

Mr. Yeats' criticisms on the plays in Irish will not impress the reader acquainted with them. Mr. Yeats shares with the majority of his countrymen the misfortune of not understanding the Irish language, and his opinion, therefore, that "Seaghan na Squab" is remarkable for an unusual flatness of dialogue will not receive the same attention a similar opinion of his on a play written in English would command. Because we appraise at their full value the services Mr. Yeats has rendered and can render Ireland, we have referred to his articles in *Samhain* with a frankness he will not misunderstand. He has come to agree that what we insisted as the essential of the theatre—that it should be moulded by the influences which mould the national life—was wise and right. We trust he will come to agree with us that only by turning their backs on London can Irishmen of letters serve as reasonably, Ireland and their own souls. The art for art's sake—as reasonably, talk for talk's sake—interruption of a national artist's life seems to be ending, and for Art's sake as well as for Ireland's sake, we are glad.

A. J. Jan 29

Mr. Yeats writes to us—we owe him an apology for the delay in the insertion of the letter—a delay occasioned through the borough elections:

DEAR SIR—You say of Mr. Synge's "Shadow of the Glen" in one of your paragraphs on the performances at the Abbey Theatre: "The story is two thousand years old—it was invented by the decadent Greeks—the reputation of womanhood has suffered in every country from it." Mr. Synge heard the story, he called the Greek dame Nora Burke; her husband, Dan Burke; and the robber with whom in the original, she goes away, while the Greek husband and the Greek lover remain, "a tramp." He calls Ephesus, a Wicklow Glen and let the thing be staged and dubbed an Irish play. If the names have been changed from Greek to Irish, they have not been changed by him, but by the unknown Irish peasant who first told the story in Ireland. You will find the Irish form of the story in Mr. Synge's forthcoming book on the Aran Islands. You, yourself, once suggested that it was imported by the hedge schoolmasters. I do not, myself, see any evidence to prove what country it first arose in, or whether it may not have had an independent origin in half-a-dozen countries. The version of the Widow of Ephesus that I know differs from Mr. Synge's plot, and also from the Irish folk-story on which he has founded his play. I would be very much obliged if you would give me the reference to the story referred to by you in the paragraph I have quoted. I do not remember it in the "Decameron," which I have lately read. This story may, however, be exactly the same as some Greek or Italian story, and we be no nearer its origin.

Among the audience at the last performance of "On Bally Strand" there was a famous German scholar who had not called the old German version of the world-wide story of the king who fights with his own son. Yet no man can say whether that story came from Ireland to Germany or from Germany to Ireland, or whether to both countries from some common source.

There is certainly nothing in the accounts that travellers give of medieval Ireland or in Old Irish or Middle Irish literature to show that Ireland had a different sexual morality from the rest of Europe. And I can remember several Irish poems and stories in which the husband feigns death for jealousy the reason that he has done in Mr. Synge's play; one of them a very beautiful ballad found in the Aran Islands by Mr. Pounier.

But after all, if Mr. Synge had found the story in some Greek writer and had changed the names into Irish names, or even if he had found it in the "Decameron" itself, as you suggested, he would have precedents to encourage him. Shakespeare had the some of Cymbeline in his own country, but he based the story in the "Decameron."

I do not reply to the matters of opinion in dispute between us, for to do so would be to repeat what I have already written in my introduction to "A Book of Irish Verse," in the Irish part of "Ideas of Good and Evil," and in the last number of "Samhain." It is no bad thing that our two so different points of view should find full and logical expression, for at William Blake says: "All progress is by contraries." But differences that arise out of mistakes of fact are useless.

If Mr. Yeats' account of how Mr. Synge first came to hear the story of the Widow of Ephesus be correct, we are forced to believe Mr. Synge unacquainted with the classics and with modern French literature. It is indeed astonishing that Mr. Synge should have to journey from Paris to the Aran Islands to hear a story which is a stock one in the Quartier Latin, and which he could have purchased in the Palais Royal. We do not understand how Mr. Yeats came to think that we suggested a story which is 2,000 years old had been taken from the Decameron, and Mr. Yeats is mistaken in believing the story of the Ephesian Widow a folk-story. It

is a story invented by the wits of decadent Greece, and introduced, with amendments, into Latin literature by the most infamous of Roman writers, Petronius Arbitrator, the pandit of Nero. But Mr. Synge could not have ventured to produce Petronius' version on the stage of any civilised country. Unless it be in the lying pages of Giraldus Cambrensis, we are ignorant of any medieval writer who slanders the women of Ireland, and we know of nothing in old or middle Irish literature which would confirm Mr. Yeats' impression that the medieval Irishwoman was of the same class with the Ephesian Dame. Mr. Yeats does not say whether he considers taking a Greek story, dramatising it, and changing the names of the characters into Irish names constitutes Irish drama, but he says Mr. Synge has precedents, and instances Shakespeare's Cymbeline. Shakespeare's Cymbeline is an English national play—a work of English genius. Imogen is a glory, not a slander on her countrywomen. Mr. Synge's Nora Burke is not an Irish Nora Burke—his play is not a work of genius—Irish or otherwise—it is a foul echo from degenerate Greece. His absurd ignorance of the Irish peasant is shown in every line of the play. Mr. Yeats never heard an Irish tramp in Wicklow or elsewhere address a peasant-woman as "Lady of the House," nor did he, Mr. Synge or any other human being, ever meet in Ireland a peasant-woman of the type of Nora Burke—a woman void of all conception of morality, decency and religion. She is a Greek—a Greek of Greece's most debased period, and to dress her in an Irish costume and call her Irish is not only not art, but it is an insult to the women of Ireland.

A. J. Feb 4

Mr. Yeats writes:

Two or three weeks ago you wrote of Mr. Synge's "Shadow of the Glen." The story is two thousand years old—it was invented by the decadent Greeks—the reputation of womanhood has suffered in every country from it. Mr. Synge heard the story, he called the Greek dame Nora Burke; her husband, Dan Burke, and the robber with whom in the original, she goes away, while the Greek husband and the Greek lover remain, "a tramp." He calls Ephesus a Wicklow Glen, and let remain, "a tramp." He calls Ephesus a Wicklow Glen, and let remain, "a tramp." I wrote to you the thing is staged and dubbed an Irish play. I wrote to you that I would be very much obliged if you would give me the reference to the story referred to by you in the paragraph I have quoted. You replied, "Mr. Yeats is mistaken in supposing the story of the Ephesian widow a folk-story. It is a story invented by the wits of decadent Greece, and introduced, with amendments, into Latin literature by the most infamous of Roman writers, Petronius Arbitrator, the pandit of Nero. But Mr. Synge could not have ventured to produce Petronius' version on the stage of any civilised country."

You have wasted some of my time. There is no such story in Petronius, and I must again ask you for your reference. It does, indeed, tell the well-known story of the Ephesian widow. You will find a rather full paraphrase of the version in chapter 5 of Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living." It is an admirable fable. It has been described by a good scholar and masterly writer as "the very model of its kind, and without the perfection of ironic humour," but it is not Mr. Synge's story nor the story of your paragraph.

Here it is: "A widow mourning on the tomb of her husband surrenders to the love of a soldier who has been sent to watch over the hanged body of a robber. In the night the robber's friend steals his body away, and the widow hangs her husband's body in its place to save the life of the

THE ABBEY THEATRE,

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Production for the first time on any Stage of:—

THE WELL OF THE SAINTS, A PLAY IN THREE ACTS, BY J. M. SYNGE.

MARTIN DOUL, a blind man	W. G. Fay
MARY DOUL, his wife	Emma Vernon
TIMMY, a smith	George Roberts
MOLLY BYRNE	Sara Allgood
BRIDE	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
MAT SIMON	P. MacSiubhlaigh
A WANDERING FRIAR	F. J. Fay

Concluding with:—

A POT OF BROTH, A FARCE IN ONE ACT, BY W. B. YEATS

A BEGGARMAN	W. G. Fay
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soldier who had otherwise been executed for neglect of duty." This is a bare summary, and does no justice to a fabric that has gone through the whole world. It was not invented by the decadent Greeks, for you will find, if you look in Dunlop's "History of Fiction," that it is one of the oldest of Eastern tales. It is in that most ancient book of fables, "The Seven Wise Masters," and is extant in a very vivid form in old Chinese writings. Indeed, may, I think, claim all the glory of Mr. Synge's not less admirable tale. The only parallel I can remember at this moment to the husband who pretends to be dead that he may catch his wife and his wife's lover, are Irish parallels. One is in a ballad at the end of "The Love Songs of Connacht," and the other in a ballad taken down in Tory Island by Mr. Fournier.

In everything but the end of the play Mr. Synge has followed very closely the Aran story, which he has, I believe, sent to you; but it is precisely the end of the play that excites at once among most of critics. For this there is no parallel in any story that I know of. The sitting down together of the husband and the lover is certainly "the perfection of ironic humor."

It is not my business to dispute with you about the character of Petronius. I know little about him, but I do know that his identification with Arbiter Eleganticus is considered very uncertain by good scholars, and that little that is certain is known of either Petronius or Arbiter. Mr. Charles Whibley, a sound critic and as I learn always unclouded, a sound scholar, has said of Petronius, "One thing only is certain, he was a gentleman, and incomparably aristocratic."

The Aran story and the Ephesian story are alike stories of wrong-doing; but so, too, is Bluebeard, and we are none of us a penny the worse.

Mr. Yeats is wrangling his time, but he is doing so voluntarily. It is not at our request he indulges in log-rolling. If Mr. Yeats refers again to our reply to his question, Where he may procure the pruriest Greek story Mr. Synge has dubbed "In a Wicklow Glen," he will find the answer, In the Palais Royal. Mr. Yeats, who informs us there is no such story in Petronius, has never read Petronius. He has learned, however, from one Whibley that it is doubtful whether Petronius was Petronius, but that it is certain he was a gentleman and an aristocrat. We advise Mr. Yeats not to trust too implicitly in Mr. Whibley's scholarship and his definitions. If Mr. Yeats had read Petronius and his editors he would not have been put to the necessity of referring to Dunlop's History of Fiction, which takes equal rank for accuracy and learning with Chamber's Book of Days. He would have found that Petronius brought the story out of Greece, where it had been invented at the doebachon, and altered it. Mr. Yeats

likes to tell us who the "medieval travellers" were he spoke of in his last letter, who led him to believe that Irishwomen were of the same class with the Ephesian dame, and where in Old or in Middle Irish literature he found confirmation for the impression these "medieval travellers" made upon him. In future we advise him to catch his traveller before quoting him for we fear his imagination has carried him away in this matter as it did in America when he told his audacious the Castle lived in fear of his theatre and sent forty baton-bearing myrmidons down to its each performance. Mr. Synge forwards us a tale he states he took down in Aran, which is essentially different to the play he innocently calls "In a Wicklow Glen." In the Aran story the wife appears as a callous woman—in Mr. Synge's play the wife is a strumpet. In the interests of the National Theatre Society, we advise its writers to leave that kind of "drama" to the "Theatre of Commerce," where Mr. Synge's "genius" may entitle him to a seat beside the author of "Zaza."

THE ABBEY THEATRE.

THE FIRST SEASON'S SUCCESS.

The closing performance in connection with the first season of the Irish National Theatre Society at the Abbey Theatre took place last evening. There was a large audience, and the production of the play was most successful in every respect.

The pieces presented were "The Ball of the Strand," "In the Shadow of the Glen," and "Spreading the News." The parts were filled to admirable effect, and the plays were received with emphatic marks of favour.

"We are very well satisfied," replied Mr. W. G. Fay, the resourceful young actor-manager at the close of last night of the first short season of the Abbey Theatre when asked by an "Independent" representative how the enterprise had fared.

"We have done better," he added, "than we expected. The audiences were large and satisfactory. We found the audiences very attentive and kind."

Mr. Fay further stated that Miss Horan, who had placed the theatre at their disposal free, was exceedingly gratified at their disposal, was exceedingly gratified with the results of the inaugural season.

NEXT PROGRAMME.

It will be of interest to look ahead and see what the Irish National Theatre Society has in store for its public. In February the Society will produce in the Abbey Theatre a new three act play by Mr. J. M. Synge, entitled "The Well of the Saints." The piece will portray peasant life, which has been studied by the accomplished playwright in the Aran Islands.

In March Lady Gregory's new four act play, "Kinsera," will be performed in the Abbey Theatre. It is a striking study of the character of Brian Boru as a heroic man, in contrast to that of Malachi, as a practical statesman. The Society will probably give a series of performances in London this year.

don't differ in their controversy
seven pages further on.
any.

PLAYS AND PLAYERS.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

DISCUSSION AT THE CALAROGA CLUB.

SPEECH OF MR. W. B. YEATS.

Last night, Mr. J. W. Bacon, F.R.C.I., read a paper at the Calaroga Club House, on "Plays and Players," in the course of which he referred to the work of the Irish National Theatre Society and criticised some of its aims (though the position of the modern Irishman drama). Mr. W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory were amongst the audience, and Mr. Bacon's paper was frequently interrupted by the remarks of Mr. George Bernard Shaw on the points produced recently in Dublin under the auspices of the Society with which Mr. Yeats is so closely identified.

Mr. Bacon, who got a very cordial reception from the audience, described the modern English drama as decadent, and attributed its decline to the purely commercial basis on which it was both written and staged. He said that Mr. J. M. Barrie and Mr. George Bernard Shaw were the only dramatists of the present day in England who, in his opinion, were capable of producing a dramatic movement worthy the name. Mr. George Bernard Shaw did not take himself seriously enough hitherto, but there was every chance that in the course of time he would become a really great work. As for Mr. Barrie, his "Twelfth Night" as a dramatic effort was worth all the "Gay Lord Quexes" and all the "Wives without Sons" that could be thought of. The greatest rule of theatrical management in London was to secure a lavish expenditure in the production of a play in the hope that it would bring in extra profits. That was the standard now in vogue everywhere, by which the merits of a drama were measured. Hence the prevalence of financial comedy which apparently was the only form of entertainment on the stage that could at present cater to the popular tastes with any hope of being commercially successful. He criticised the methods of the British and Irish actors in the method of what were great exponents of the art of acting, like Sarah Bernhardt, Reizet, and Chaplin, studied repose on the stage, the British actors, with a few notable exceptions, were not actors, but merely clever, self-indulgent, and generally speaking, in a state of chronic snoring. He welcomed the advent of the Irish actors, and quoted some of the ideals set up for it in the name of "Cathleen" by Mr. W. B. Yeats, with some of which he agreed, but not with all. He repeated the work of the Irish Theatre Society as deserving of all possible sympathy and encouragement.

Mr. Smith, in moving a vote of thanks, said he was sorry that one of the best of the Irish Theatre Society was produced in Dublin Calaroga some years ago. He did not look upon Dublin Calaroga as a place in which genuine Irish art was encouraged. He also said that, in the picture drawn by Mr. Yeats of Cathleen in the new play scene, Mr. Yeats was undoubtedly a famous figure. But Mr. Yeats's play presented Cathleen in the guise of a very unattractive, old-fashioned creature. He also criticised Mr. Yeats's play "In the Shadow of the Glen," as giving, in an extreme, offence to Irish sentiment. And as regards the play by Lady Gregory, entitled "The Spreading of the News," he considered it was too much of an extravaganza.

Mr. Hinchman, in seconding the vote of thanks, referred to "The Shadowy Waters," a play by Mr. Yeats, which was produced in Dublin last year, as unlikely to help in creating a taste for the work of the Irish National Theatre Society, plays like "Cathleen in Houlahan" and "The Pot of Broth" were predominantly in every sense, and he hoped that the leaders of the new dramatic movement in Ireland would be able to produce other plays equally acceptable.

Mr. Yeats, who was received with applause, replied in more detail to the criticisms than he made. He said that the phrase "Art for Art's sake" which was one of the motives of the Irish National Theatre Society, and been widely misunderstood. He was not opposed to the composition plays, as were wanted in Irish. But he believed that unless the ideal of true art, the sincere expression of the emotions, was kept steadily in view, there would not be a drama that would live and take its place amongst the great ones of the world.

aided by Mr. Smith that he was also interesting the story in Lady Gregory's play was somewhat improbable. But the views put forward so consistently by Mr. Smith himself regarding the production of more drama on television, from one of the Society's plays, in Dublin Calaroga, rather, in the Vice-regal Lodge—showed that no story was so improbable for some people, among that the Irish National Theatre Society had nothing whatever to do with the incident. Mr. Smith complained of (laughter). He agreed with Mr. Hinchman's criticism of "The Shadowy Waters," but it should be remembered that that play was taken up by the Society and staged solely for the purpose of giving their players an opportunity of perfecting themselves in the proper reading of poetical drama. It should be remembered also that the writers for the Irish National Theatre had but first emerged from the study into the outer world. They could not by one effort attain the simple but which they were working towards. The best drama, in all ages, demanded some action or some person, but that was inevitable, when the art for which it was intended was sincere and true. In Ireland some people attributed to art a pagan sensuality (laughter). But he could assure them that he believed in the fundamental principles of religious belief. As regards the criticism of his treatment of "Cathleen," it should be said that he merely took up one incident in Cathleen's career, his imagination fixed itself on the episode of Cathleen's fight with her own soul, and of his death in a battle with the waves. It was possible that other aspects of the Cathleen legends would form the subject of a series of dramas at some future period, as he was not in any respect favourable to the heroic side of Cathleen's character. With regard to the commercial prospects of the new dramatic movement, his only ambition was to see the Society in a position to pay the leading actor, not £2,000 a year, as was done in London, but £200 a year, as was done in Christchurch, and to give the members of the Society gradually such encouragement as would enable them to devote all their time to the work of the Society (applause).

Mr. Frederick Ryan, as one of the writers for the Society, supported the vote of thanks. He pointed out that criticism was essential to the success of the movement, and agreed with Mr. Yeats that the expression of true art should be the fundamental idea for which the most work in the creation of a distinctive Irish drama. The vote of thanks was passed, and the proceedings ended.

Irish Players and Playwrights at the Abbey Theatre.



WILLIAM G. FAY

4.2 Feb 4
"Dunseachlin" writes:
I first saw Irish plays in a dingy hall in Clarendon-street, but, though Irish might be found with the accommodation, none could be found with the plays. "Dunseachlin" and "Kathleen Ni Houlahan" were performed that night, plays which formed our latent patriotism and sent us home tired with beautiful thoughts about Dark Rosalind.

Later I saw "Kathleen Ni Houlahan" and the "Laying of the Foundations." The latter may not be a play of high literary merit, but it cannot fail to interest anyone who has ever lived in Dublin. The third item on the programme was "The Pot of Broth," that delightful little farce which shows us the author of "The Courtesan Cathleen" in a new aspect.

With such memories as these, when I left Ireland I naturally read with deep interest everything I came across relating to the Irish National Theatre. Last week I paid a visit to the Abbey Theatre, and it appears to me the order of things have been reversed. Now it is the play, not the accommodation, that leaves something to be desired. I had read adverse criticisms of Mr. Synge's plays, but then I had read adverse criticisms of "The Courtesan Cathleen" and disagreed with them when I had read the play, and remembering this, it was with quite an unbiased mind I entered the Theatre. "The Pot of Broth" was as good as ever. W. G. Fay is, indeed, "a very gifted man," but otherwise I was greatly disappointed. I could not discover anything particularly Irish about "The Well of the Saints" and I did not carry home any pleasant recollections of it; it seemed to me an unworthy successor of "Kathleen Ni Houlahan," &c.

Of course I am not an authority on plays and players—I am merely one of the crowd; but, then, I presume the object of an Irish National Theatre Society is to interest Ireland in its own literature, to educate and educate us, that we may become worthier and more devoted children of Kathleen Ni Houlahan. In what way does "The Well of the Saints" advance its object?

Middlebury

Feb 4

THANE THE STUBBLES
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This evening the pretty and compact Abbey Theatre will again welcome the representation of two Irish national plays. One, "A Pot of Brath," by Mr. Yeats, is already well known and as well favoured.



but the other is an entirely new production from the pen of Mr. J. M. Synge, a play named "The Well of the Saints," and is in three acts.

Both plays will be presented each evening up to and including Saturday, February 11th.

Our pictures give Mr. W. B. Yeats, the heart and centre of the present Irish dramatic movement; and Mr. Synge, whose new play is being presented, "The Riders of the Sea" and "The Shadow of the Glen."



Author of Tonight's Play.



FRANK J. FAY.



MR. G. ROBERTS.



W. B. YEATS.

are works of such merit that to further introduction is necessary to the author of to-night's new play.

Mrs. Anne M. Horniman is the generous lady to whose munificence the present Abbey Theatre owes its existence.

The other illustrations present Miss Walker, who has won a splendid name for her natural and unconventional acting; Mr. Frank J. Fay, Mr. W. G. Fay, and Mr. G. Roberts, who, to show the versatility of his character, assumes the heavy part he plays with the still heavier work of the secretariatship of the Theatre Society.

By E. A. Baughan.

Mr. W. B. Yeats as Critic.

In the December number of "Sambain," an occasional review devoted to the stage of the Irish National Theatre, there is some interesting reading. We are told all about the gift of a theatre by Miss Horneiman—the first endowed theatre in Great Britain. The Irish National Theatre has the use of it free of charge for their performances and lectures. The cost of the productions, according to Mr. Yeats, is amazingly small, and the whole movement shows that can be done by a band of enthusiasts. And, what is more to the point, the Irish National Theatre has certainly discovered several new dramatists. Mr. J. M. Synge, for instance, is a new force in drama. Mr. Yeats himself seems to me a little out of sympathy by temperament and specific gifts with the Irish drama which has seemed to us Englishmen the most vital—at least, so I should judge by his essay in "Sambain." As a poet who finds expression in verse he is not in favour of realism. And in this essay he even goes so far as to plead for what artists call "conventional" treatment of scenery. With a good deal of truth he points out that "the moment an actor stands against your mountain or your forest, he will perceive that the landscape is not a flat surface." The kind of realism required would vary according to the different types of plays. "It will probably range," Mr. Yeats thinks, "between, on the one hand, woodlands made of recurring pattern, or painted like old religious pictures upon a gold background, on the other, the comparative realism of a Japanese print."

I certainly think that for plays of a symbolic and unrealistic character this conventional treatment is demanded. The fault of Bayreuth is that the scenery and mounting are much too real. But the first reform should be made in the matter of lighting. Here the ordinary stage, with its footlights, or what does duty for them nowadays, destroys all poetical suggestion.

Literature in Iran.

So far one can agree with Mr. Yratt, but I find myself in keen opposition to his views on the function of language in drama. He really wants to drift back to the old rhetoric of drama. Rhetoric was the fault of his own drama. "Where There is Nothing" and "The Tirade of the King". He does not seem to understand the gesture and vocal intonation which suggest the means of drama. "The utmost necessity," the most unbroken logic, give me at any rate," he confesses, "but an imperfect pleasure," if there is not a vivid and beautiful language. He then imitates Ibsen's "balance" of style. But is it bold? What does a dramatist set out to do? Does he wish to move and interest his audiences by his ideas and characters, or does he seek to impress them by high sounding and beautiful words?

Is the endnote of a sentence greater than the thought that gave it birth. The minor poet often thinks so, we all know.

Mr. Yeats does not sufficiently distinguish between the essentials of the different arts. Wagner in his own way made the same mistake. Each art has its own mode of expression. Music has a language of its own, painting its distinct appeal, and only the Philistine demands that it should be connected with literature, that it should tell a story; poetry its own medium. Drama, it is true, is carried on largely by speech, but it cannot be specialised speech. Poetry is without cutting out two other factors, nature and real information. The

passion, though his actors, a dramatist can lead us into the secret of a soul without any more words being uttered than are necessary, or he can even make us understand a thought when in actual opposition to the word uttered. And so with the actor's intonation. If the dramatic language is so highly specialised as that it gives little opportunity for the expression of these dramatic factors, the very strength of the stage is frittered away for the sake of mere beauty of language. An alien art is made the chief expression. When we should be interested in the souls of the characters, the actors are asked to admire the beauty of language in which they are expressed. That is what we admire in poetry, but we expect something closer to life, whether it be poetic or realistic life, on the stage. After all, life and men's feelings and thoughts about it are greater than literature. The paradox of the Wilde school is known to us to be but paradox. Drama is a great art because, although it may be less beautiful in its special expression, it is more so in its creative force. It will be made more of an art, but less, by grafting on to it the perfect expression of another art.

Domagala Tomasz Jan

THE ABBEY THEATRE, DUBLIN.

"A LITERARY NOT A NATIONAL
THEATRE"

The opening of the new Abbey Theatre might be said to mark a epoch in Irish literary effort. It opens up a sphere of enjoyment to millions tired of the lousiness of English stage and by placing healthy work Irish in sentiment and educative in character before the public will tend to popularise movements the ultimate end of which is to raise the self-esteem of the Irish race. 'O Baille's Strand' a play of Mr Yeates dealing with a domestic tragedy in the life of Cuchulainn is full of dramatic interest but has a rather ineffective finish. Mr Fay as Cuchulainn was exceptionally powerful and gave the house a display of really brilliant acting. In fact he redeemed the weak features of the play and made amends for a moment the incompleteness of the play by a splendid performance. To save to the imagination what which might be treated with dramatic point is a common observation with many poetic geniuses who have at one time or another written plays. 'Kathleen Ny Houlihan' is a sombre, powerful poem play that captivates the imagination and engages the attention of the audience to a degree that best shows how the work of the author is appreciated. Marie MacNablaigh as 'Kathleen Ny Houlihan' was the star of this production though indeed all the parts were capably filled. Comedy of course was a necessary after part to 'The Symbolism' and it was in comedy and not mere vulgar burlesque that the Abbey is the more reason to be truly thankful. Of Lady Gregory's play 'Spreading the News' we must say that for undistorted fact and cynical situations it is unsurpassed. The tension that the audience were kept in by the two previous productions might, in a sense, have been responsible for the uproarious applause and laughter with which it was received, but in any case it deserved as it earned success.

There is apparently an intention that the theatre should play a more agreeable feature than it is that it is more literary than national and can never hope to capture the support of the 'man in the street.'

DOGH KUADIL

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE

"THE WELL OF THE SAINTS," BY
MR. J. M. SYNGE

The Albany Theatre had a pleasantly mixed appearance on Saturday evening, when the National Theatre Society numbered in force to see a new play by one of their number, Mr. J. H. Strain. There was a fair gathering of outsiders also, but the house was by no means crowded. This perhaps might be accounted for, either whether, after all, in the choice of the Society's entertainments, they should not concede a little to the frailty of ordinary popular taste. But they may be charged with literary snobism and the quest of beauty and truth may be the noblest of aims, but to make the theatre a sterile loss with success, we rather fancy something more needed than the unshibbled literary and dramatic stock. It is, we know, hardy to suggest an element of the comic in the serious. That, it is said, would smother the attraction from the literary matter. But there were no signs of this in the performance of Saturday when a little attraction from the less-dreaded dangers would have been

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Irish National Theatre Society

"THE WELL OF THE SAINTS"

That the Irish National Theatre Society has settled down to its work, and that it is likely to be of enduring interest, few who have followed its career hitherto can have any doubt. The theatre is attracting attention, and the audience is steadily extending. This was demonstrated by the successful circumstances under which the new three-act play, "The Well of the Saints" was for the first time produced on Saturday night at what has now become, let us hope, the permanent home of the Society—the Abbey Theatre. "The Well of the Saints" is a gay, buoyant, and atmospheric Irish play. The book is written by the poetess, sprinkled with gleams of humour, enhanced as they appear to be by occasional. The scene of the play might have taken place any time within the past century, and might have been located at the foot of Croagh Patrick or in one of the bogs of Clare. There are seven characters introduced into the drama—Martin Deol, a blind man (Mr. W. G. Fay); Mary Deol, his wife (Miss Emma Vernon); Timmy, a smith (Mr. George Roberts); Molly Byrne (Miss Sara Allgood); Bridie (Miss M. Walker); Matt Simon (Mr. P. McNeill); and a free (Mr. F. J. Fay). Martin and his wife have never seen the light of day. They lived by plaiting rushes and by weaving such alms as they could get at the cross-roads. The pair conceived the idea that they were fairly handsome persons, and if they were only given light they could enjoy their mutual good looks and the beauties of nature just as they loved the singing of the birds, the rustle of the wind, the soft rain, and the gentle winds which appeared to their senses. The people told them that a tree in the neighbourhood possessed the power, by the instrumental of water from a certain holy well, of endowing them with eyes. The first came along, and having brought the couple one after the other into the church, Martin emerges gifted with sight. One of the first persons his eyes sight upon is Molly Byrne, a golden-haired, beautiful girl. He takes her to be his wife, and is delighted that his dream has not been untrue. Molly, in turn, sees him, and is surprised to find that the first glimpse of his face is a very bad one. He is a blind man, and she is a free. He is a blind man, and she is a free. He is a blind man, and she is a free.

AT THE ABBEY THEATRE

PRODUCTION OF "THE WELL OF THE SAINTS"

The Irish National Theatre Society opened its second season at the new Theatre in Abbey street on Saturday evening, when it produced Mr. Synge's new three-act play "The Well of the Saints." It is somewhat difficult accurately to "place" Mr. Synge's work in dramatic literature, for although it is cast in dramatic manner it is not a play in the accepted sense of the term. It lacks action and incident, and may more accurately be described as a story with a moral told from behind the footlights. The cast is as follows:—

Martin Deol, a blind man..... W. G. Fay
Mary Deol, his wife..... Miss Emma Vernon
Timmy, a smith..... Mr. George Roberts
Molly Byrne..... Miss Sara Allgood
Bridie..... Miss M. Walker
Matt Simon..... Mr. P. McNeill
A Wanderer..... F. J. Fay
Girls and Men..... F. J. Fay

Act I.—Scene first in lonely mountainous district in Ireland. Act II.—The outskirts of a village not far away. Act III.—Same as Act I. The scene takes place many years ago. The first act is in the autumn; the second act towards the end of winter; and the third at the beginning of spring.

When the play opens we discover Martin and Mary Deol—two blind and singularly unattractive beggars—sitting by the roadside plaiting rushes. Each thinks the other beautiful, and this belief has in each case been confirmed by the ironical corroborations of the neighbours. To Martin, Mary Deol is the beautiful dark woman,

The Wonder of the West.

To Mary, Martin Deol is the highest type of physical manhood. They are happy in their "darkness" and their illusions, until a peripatetic saint passes their way, and with a drip of miraculous water restores to them their sight. When they see each other they fall screaming like very drabs. Martin's sometime wonder of the West is an "old windy hag," and Martin in Mary's eyes is a "crumpled whelp." The conception of this scene is very powerful, but it is also intensely painful. The two Deols separate, Martin goes into the service of Timmy the Smith, and while there endeavours to subvert the smith's sweet-heart from her allegiance. She turns from him with loathing, till for his offence he is

Again Stricken With Blindness

and goes out along the road from the smith's forge, leaving behind him a heavy and terrible curse. The third act is laid at the gap where first we met the Deols. Mary Deol, upon whose eyes blindness has also fallen again, is discovered plaiting rushes and bewailing her loneliness. "God help me," she wails, "the blackness won't so black all the other time as it is this time, and its destroyed life be now, and hard not to get any living working alone, when it's few are passing and the winds are cold." Martin gropes his way in, inquiring misadventures on Mary for pretending that she was beautiful, on the point for giving him sight to discover her ugliness, on Timmy the Smith for killing him with hard work, and on Molly Byrne (Timmy's sweetheart), and 'the old windy hag' is hidden in all the women of the world."

In the result Mary and he recognise each other, and after some ironical banter receive the gift of sight when once again the saint passes by and offers to take the decision off them a

second time. That is the end of the play, it plays it may be called. I do not doubt that Mr. Synge

Intends to Convey some Lesson

through the medium of "The Well of the Saints," but what is the lesson? Are we asked to believe that when ignorance is like it is folly to be wise? and that the more tremendously we cling to illusion the more secure is our happiness? It seems to me, however, that it is hardly worth while analysing Mr. Synge's intentions for the simple reason that out of such intangible and fantastic material it will never be possible to build up a national Irish drama. Apart altogether from the labyrinthic key in which the story is pitched it has other blemishes. Martin Deol is a well-drawn story, but he is the only character in the play which grips the attention and compels interest in spite of the fact that through out the whole of the three Acts there is a singular dearth of action and incident. Those who are of the club may be able to hold on to the beauty which it is asserted has hidden in the story of Martin and Mary Deol, but those whose perception is less keen may be forgiven if they find it difficult to believe that by the production of trifles of this kind the National Theatre Society is doing what is best to help to produce an Irish Dramatic Renaissance.

As is usual

The Players were Extremely Good

As Martin Deol Mr. W. G. Fay was more than excellent, and Miss Vernon as Mary Deol was natural and convincing. The other parts, however, gave their exponents little to do, and call for no particular mention by the critic. The setting was simple and tasteful, particularly the "roadside with big pines" at the foot of the mountain, in which Acts I. and III. were played. The mountain, indeed, was a fine piece of suggestive scene painting, the lights being very capably handled. The programme concluded with Mr. Yeats's delightful farce, "A Pot of Broth."

B. M.

Mr. Synge's new work is a little hard to criticise, as the plot, although an excellent one, well-thought-out, lacks interest and emotion. The story is told partially in the past, and again, the blind man and his wife become somewhat interesting, and the interest is not sustained. The play opens in the autumn and Martin Deol and his wife, both blind beggars, are sitting on the roadside plaiting rushes, each under the belief that the other is beautiful. The play is a long one, and they remain in blindness and ignorance, and happy enough with the sympathetic Irish people along, and with some water from the fountain. "The Well of the Saints" is a play of the eyes of Martin and Mary, and immediately restores their sight. This is a powerful scene, and a very sad one. As their sight is given to them, and they behold each other in the first time, they are both made to see each other with loathing, and each turns from the other with curses and loathing. Martin then attempts to take the smith's sweet-heart away from him, and the smith's sweet-heart is a punishment. Act three opens with Mary Deol who has again become blind, groping her way along the road, and wishing she had never obtained her sight. Martin and she again meet, and are once more reconciled. They are again blind, and they are again together as they are together together in their own delusion.

The play was excellently performed, Mr. W. G. Fay and Miss Vernon were both good natural and convincing, and their acting reached a high level of artistry.

The New Irish Theatre in Dublin.

The Teller

Feb 8 - 1905



MR. F. J. FAY



MISS WALKER



MR. W. G. FAY (stage director)

[I would not be trying to form on Irish national theatre if I did not believe that there existed in Ireland, whether in the minds of a few people or of a great number I do not know, an energy of thought about life itself, a vivid awareness as to the reality of things, powerful enough to overcome all these phantasms of the night. One thing calls up its contrary, awakens calls up reality, and besides, life here has been anxiously perishing to make men think, I do not think it a national prejudice that makes me believe we are a harder, a more masterful, race than the comfortably English of our time, and that this comes from an essential nearness to reality of these two scattered people who have the right to call themselves the Irish race. It is only in the exceptions, in the few minds where the flame has burnt as it were pure, that one can see the permanent character of a race. If one remembers the men who have dominated Ireland for the last 150 years one understands that it is strength of personality, the individualising quality in a man, that sets Irish imagination most deeply in the soul. There is scarcely a man who has led the Irish people at any time who may not give some day to a great writer, precisely that symbol he may require for the expression of himself. . . . We must have a new kind of poetic art. I have been the advocate of the poetry as against the actor, but I am the advocate of the actor as against the poetry. Four times the last summer of the old platform disappeared and the proscenium grew into the frame of a picture the actors have been turned into a picturesque group in the foreground of a modern landscape painting. The background should be of as little importance as the background of a portrait group, and it should, when possible, be of one colour or of one tone that the persons on the stage wherever they stand may harmonise with it or contrast with it and emphasise our emotion.—MR. YEATS'S CREED.]

England—this much-traded England of ours—has been heaping coals of fire on the sinner country's head. Through her maniac representative, Miss A. E. F. Horsman of London (who is a daughter of the founder of the well-known firm of tea-merchants), she has given to Ireland a permanent home for the national literary drama, and now Mr. W. B. Yeats's airy something, after having long enjoyed a name, will have at last a local habitation. Thanks to the executive skill of that architectural expert and theatrical enthusiast, Mr. Joseph Huddoway, an

old discredited Dublin "music" hall has been adroitly transfigured into a charming little theatre, constructed so as to give plenty of elbow-room both before and behind, and capable of holding some 500 spectators. Notwithstanding Mr. Yeats's peculiar views as to *mise en scene* and theatrical adjuncts no serious

by the production of two virgin plays, *Ow Faide's Strand*, a legendary drama in one act and mostly in verse, by Mr. W. B. Yeats, and an ingenious little farce by Lady Gregory called *Spreading the News*. The latter is a veritable comedy of errors with a quaint imbrolio recalling the old cumulative tale of

"The Three Black Crosses." From a strictly dramatic and theatrical standpoint Mr. Yeats's little play is the best work that has yet come from his inspired pen. In telling in clear-cut and vigorous blank verse the old legend of Cuchulainn's combat with his unknown son, and his subsequent madness and death, Mr. Yeats has for once held in leash his perilous tendency towards cloudy symbolism, and the result is a tragedy of impressive dignity, at once poignant and inevitable. The poet has incidentally contrived to solve an old problem, for the theme lends itself to the employment of no female interest, and the absence of that hitherto indispensable quality causes no regrets and leaves no blanks.



THE NEW THEATRE

innovation has been attempted beyond the abolition of the orchestra. Even the much-abused footlights (so conspicuous by their absence in Milescow Hall) have been restored.

The opening of the new Abbey Theatre on Tuesday, December 27, was signalled

Although the National Theatre company has been recruited latterly by several promising volunteers the leading members remain the same as those seen in London at the Royal Theatre in April last. The two brothers Fay are still a tower of strength to the organisation, and Miss Walker (otherwise Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh) continues to evince her pristine charm and spirituality. It is satisfactory to learn that besides remaining principal comedian of the society Mr. W. G. Fay, with the help of an advisory committee, will act as business manager and stage director to the Irish National Theatre.



THE INTERIOR OF THE THEATRE

As almost all pecuniary responsibility for the new venture is taken by Miss Horsman the subsidised playhouse may now be considered to be on its trial. Much may be hoped for from a well-motivated scheme whereby the dramatist can at last give free play to his individuality and artistic conscience and appeal to the great public unhampered by necessity for compromise. It may be that Ireland—in bygone times the power of western Christianity, Ireland that preserved all that was vital in western paganism by flushing as it were with the new cult—may now have a new mission, the rejuvenation of the dying drama.

W. J. L.

"THE WELL OF THE SAINTS."

A NEW IRISH PLAY.

FROM AN IRISH CORRESPONDENT.

There was a good but not a crowded house in the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night, when the curtain rose on Mr. J. M. Synge's new play, "The Well of the Saints," which is the chief feature of the second monthy season of this remarkable theatrical enterprise. The play was looked forward to with much interest by those who have been following the movement, for Mr. Synge has been steadily pressing forward to the front place amongst our new Irish dramatists. Mr. Synge differs from Mr. Yeats in being a dramatist pure and simple. The latter seems never to be able to forget that he is a poet: it is one of the charming things about his dramas, Mr. Synge is dominated by the dramatic idea far more than Mr. Yeats is.

In "The Well of the Saints," he works on a conception which is new in its form, and yet very old in its relationships to the problems of humanity. The husband and wife, who are blind, and who have never seen each other, are given the light by a saint, who brings a holy and miraculous water from a well "in the West." The husband had believed, encouraged by the country folk, that his wife—an old and wizened hag—was the most beautiful woman in Leinster. When he gets his sight his revulsion of feeling changes his whole nature; the same thing occurs in the case of the wife. They separate. The husband, in the meantime, has met the ideal in the flesh which his wife was behind his closed eyes, and asks her to come away with him to the South, where there are flowers and singing birds. The proposition, of course, is absurd, from the girl's point of view, a "decent girl of the countryside."

Both husband and wife, however, lose their sight again, and there is a very touching and beautiful scene where they meet together again, blind, first upbraiding each other, and then agreeing to go through life again in the old way. The strong scene of the play, however, is at the finish, when the Saint is again going to restore their sight. The blind man suddenly jumps up and knocks the holy and wonder-working water out of the Saint's hand, and declares that it is better to be blind than to see the things that people see in this world.

This scene sailed very close to Catholic sentiment, and I shall not be surprised if there is a protest. But the play is unquestionably a very remarkable production, and the acting was admirable. How is it, by the way, that these Irish actors can speak under their breath and yet be heard all over the house?

Irish, and the language they use in straits is pure Whitechapel. The dialogue is most uneven, varying from passages of lyric beauty to violent eruptions of no real strength, the dialogue are lengthy, iterative, and apt to become wearisome. The imperfections of the play as a play are numerous, and it is dragged out to three times its natural length. A moment of possible fine tragedy when Martin Doul recovers his sight is overlooked by the author, and the blunder by which he confounds the loss of sight with the loss of imagination is so gross that even the "Theatre of Commerce" cannot produce its equal. One of the most amazing blunders which the author perpetrates is making his blind man immediately on recovering his sight recognise people by the colour of their hair. The atmosphere of the play is harsh, unsympathetic, and at the same time sensual. Its note of utter hopelessness evokes a feeling akin to compassion for the author. What

there is "Irish," "national," or "dramatic" about is even *Edipus* might fail to solve. How is it that the Irish National Theatre, which started so well, can now only alternate a decadent wall with a Calvinistic groan?

Mr. Yeats writes to us:

I don't see how we can go on with the controversy about the origin of the "Shadow of the Glen" until you have printed Mr. Synge's letter to you, with its enclosure giving the Irish original, and given me a more definite reference than "The Palms Royal." I must, however, contradict a statement you have made about myself. You say, "In America he told his audience the Castle lived in fear of his Theatre, and sent forty baton-bearing myrmidons down to its each performance." This is as true as the statement made to me by an American journalist that you were paid by the British Government to abuse the Irish party. I described in many of my American lectures the attack made upon the "Courtesan Cateleen" by Mr. F. H. O'Donnell and the *Nelson* newspaper. I have my exact words among my papers in London. This seems to be the origin of your extravagant charge, doubtless sent to you by some imaginative correspondent, or copied from some inaccurate newspaper. I mentioned neither Dublin Castle nor politics of any kind.

In deciding not to continue the controversy he began, we think Mr. Yeats is acting wisely. To remove the misapprehension Mr. Yeats' letter is calculated to create, we may say that this is the first intimation we had that Mr. Synge intended his letter for publication, and not for our personal enlightenment. Since we find we have erred, we submit it:

Stm—I beg to enclose the story of an unfaithful wife which was told to me by an old man on the Middle Island of Aran in 1892, and which I have since used in a modified form in "The Shadow of the Glen." It differs essentially from any version of the story of the "Widow of Ephesus" with which I am acquainted. As you will see, it was told to me in the first person, as not infrequently happens in folktales of this class.—Yours,

J. M. SYNKE.

Mr. Synge's story, which, as we said last week, depicts the wife as a callous woman, whilst his Ephesian play depicts her as a strumpet, is a regret to say, of insufficient merit to settle it as a place in our columns. We presume Mr. Yeats' "American journalist" is a blood relation of those "medieval travellers" from whom he learned that the medieval Irishwomen were akin to the Ephesian dame, and that we shall request his name from Mr. Yeats with the same ill-success we have requested the names of the medieval wanderers. The statement which Mr. Yeats contradicts is taken from one of those English papers which latterly Mr. Yeats delights to quote—the *Daily News*. Mr. Yeats will notice that it purports to give his exact words, and that, therefore, if untrue, it is a deliberate forgery. This is the paragraph:

Mr. W. B. Yeats has been lecturing in America upon the intellectual revival in Ireland under the auspices of the Irish Literary League of America. In the course of his remarks he said about the Irish National Theatre: "There is a deeper and bluffer tone in the new Irish literature than there ever was in the old Irish ballads. The Gaelic League has developed a passion where there was once apathy. Our dramatists now study what the people want, and then we give it to them in such form that thirty or forty police must stand stationed inside the theatre to prevent riots. You can do something more."

The Abbey Theatre re-opened on Saturday evening last with "The Well of the Saints," a new play in three acts by Mr. J. M. Synge. Martin Doul, and Mary, his wife—an ugly pair afflicted with blindness—are discovered living in a world of illusion with regard to each other's personal appearance; each believing the other extremely handsome. This fond belief has had its origin in the amiable untruths of the neighbours, and particularly of Timmy the Smith and his sweetheart Molly Byrne, who are introduced to inform the blind couple of the arrival of a holy man of God with miraculous water from the Well of the Saints. Martin and Mary willingly consent to be cured of their blindness, but on receiving the gift of sight, are disgusted with each other's plainness and fall into forcible invective and abuse. The note of disillusion is combined in the second act. Life has lost its beauty for the unfortunate couple, and Martin Doul at last proposes an elopement to pretty Molly Byrne, who calls on Timmy for protection. At that moment blindness falls again on Martin, and Mary Doul's sight falls her also; and the third act shows Martin and Mary on the way of arriving at a *modus vivendi* when the sound of the saint's bell is heard approaching. Their first instinct is to flee. Martin is obdurate; he refuses sight. His wife, however, yields to importunity; and would have received the fatal gift for a second time, but that Martin dashes the vessel containing the blessed water out of the saint's hands, and moves off cursing and being cursed by the crowd of angry peasants. Martin and Mary make their exit, and the curtain falls on the saint marshalling the people into church for the baptism of Timmy the Smith and Molly Byrne.

The story—a well-known one—has been treated in our own time by an English novelist. Mr. Synge's localisation of it is a failure, and his dramatisation disappointing. His peasants are not

That Mr. Yeats never mentioned Dublin Castle or politics of any kind in America is all the more wonderful in view of the fact that he delivered a public address to a Nationalist audience on Robert Emmet there. An address on Robert Emmet with all reference to the Castle and politics left out eclipses the record of the stage-manager who successfully produced "Hamlet" with the part of the Prince of Denmark omitted.

THE WELL OF THE SAINT

Express ————— Feb 11
(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

When one looks into the darkness there is always something there."

These words of Mr. W. B. Yount's might be taken as the key-note of the strange, striking play by Mr. Sprague, which we have just been seeing. It runs on a simple thread of plot, this story of the Mind man and his wife, who live contented in their mindness and their dreaming, and are happy because they believe they are beautiful. Then comes the recovery of sight, and the loss of dreams, the fierce struggle against reality, and at last the glad, deliberate return into the dream-world, the imaginative life, which the life-long dreamers have come to find the only one worth living.

Most of us are very tender with our dreams, those waking dreams that somehow connect the material with the sleeping dreams in which we find freedom, and are fuller of life. But we keep them to ourselves for the most part, for we have little hope that the world will "trend softly" because it trends on our dreams." But the dreams of Martin and Mary Dibel are dragged ruthlessly into the light of day, and ruthlessly the world tramples on them. They had never come to realize the difference between the dream-light and the light of common day, and so they were without defense.

What a strange touch it is, when the old man tells of the first thing his opened eyes had seen. The Saint's feet, soiled and bleeding, with the leaden words he had been teaching, "a precious blood," and the command to open his eyes on Martin there. The sightless man had realized the Saint in his suffering, and, in the glory and strength of it, had thought of men in the darkness, even as he thought of the Father in the light, and with the light of eternity transcending the perishable mortality of him. The opened eyes could only see the brief mortal pain, the rest of the working-day was dead. And yet the man had seen the Father in the suffering of his Son, the face of *misericordia* reveal God bleeding over the mortal ways, and in seeing only the glory, and forgetting the torn flesh, we do not see that Martin did in forgetting the glory and remembering this wounding. Who shall show us the via media, the safe way between the destruction and the reality? The saint, the desert hermit, the monk, the carpenter, the "best like ungodly" virgin, are none who shall lift us, we cannot escape from them and are lost in the idealization they bring, but the mystic alone could we draw the *Shadows* in close about us and be warm outside and comforted in them. It is not for the sense that the reaction ever will come, but the sense which glimpses the light from deep in things.

When Martin and Mary Dhood go wandering about hard-panned areas, to seek the warm, south-facing corners, where the flowers will bloom under foot, and the air be mild and soft, one wonders whether the new dreamers have not set themselves to waste, so quickly after the destruction of the old ones, will be the same old story of waiting, and whether there will be a lurking behindness, a sense of disillusion in their hearts always now. Most likely they will long their dream gardens closer than ever since then, and wear them warmer and softer and with looser colors than ever. We are very quick to do that, to cover our bare wraps with more and more, to lose our wraps, and the lot are always seen the most beautiful of all.

We see Marston still attempts to
throw a spear in the strange snow, cleaving
it off, perhaps, as the strange play between
himself and the ally of his enemy. He is
tossing it, he is trying to throw it, he is
tossing it. Mr. Farrier, the forest. We
the sacred power and fascination of the bare
dramatic, and his firm determination to be
a good sport. It was integral to the
his past, and he is not a man to be unduly
and drawn her. She is afraid of him, yet she
fascinates her. Now is angry, yet he makes
her. She is a woman who has been
she never did before. She cannot but
be proud of her power over him. It
is partly that pride that prompts her
to put the spear in the snow, and it is
perhaps, when the spell that holds her in spell
of herself is broken at last. One does not
nearly forget Marston. Don't's curse with
him, and he is a man who is a man of
terrors, it passes beyond the immediate object,
the obvious situation, and becomes the ma-
licious of the dreamers who know they dream,
in all ages, and in all places, and in all
dreams, the dream of the world's hope.

The point was in case that is pointing on many minds nowadays, this claim and counterclaim between the doers, who do in the strength of the dreamer, and walk, whether they will or no, in the light of the dreamer's vision, and the dreamer who is not walking along at all while it seems that their dream are shaped by it. Perhaps the full reconciliation of the dreaming and the doing would mean the finding out of something that we must needs be ignorant of, because that ignorance is the condition, another safety of our life. Here and now they may dream, either in the light of the bird battle, or in the darkness dreamed of, when the thought of life came to him.

That in a measure here is this play in
our midst, presenting the question in lan-
guage and under symbols peculiarly our own.
We must needs pause to look and think.
Of late it seems that the dreamers are growing
less in number, a sad condition of affairs
indeed. Their voices would
give her back to the dreams of her beautiful
childhood, and bid her rest in their awhile,
as in the Land of Youth, and be refreshed
and forget her sorrows for a little while.
And so resting and dreaming, it may be that
the strength and the beauty of her
childhood will be able to bear to the glad-
doring of our hearts. Let us listen to
the message, while we may.

The short season at the Abbey Theatre and the amateur theatricals at the Gaiety helped to brighten up a theatrical week which would have been a trifle dull otherwise.

Mr. Bryan's latest effort, "The Will of the Saints," does not seem to have secured a favourable judgment at the hands of the critics, and the work evidently leaves itself open to censure. A visit to the play, however, will convince anyone that, whatever may be said about the merit of the individual work itself, the author shows himself possessed of the qualifications to do much better things if he could only be brought to the attention of the public through less darkened places. Mr. Bryan need not feel discouraged if plays like the "Will of the Saints" are refused favour by those who long eagerly for a real Irish

James K. McKim wrote a real Irish story throbbing with the actual life of the people about whom he wrote. In this one he has a man who is a plain sailor and sets his pages on clearly out in his interior paritments as anything Dickens ever wrote. Tender pathos, ridiculing fun, the family life of the sailor, the sailor's life, all is pictured in the story with fidelity. Why does not someone write a play which would be a masterpiece of the kind? The possibility is the acting of it as "Kneecaps" does in the reading. In this way a true reform step would be taken toward the people of the world. The story of the Irish drawn free from caricature and gravity. At present it would seem that having seen the old stage plays, the people are likely to see the creation of another type almost certain to become an abjectness. The old stage plays allowed in many a case a distinct purpose.

ANOTHER UN-IRISH PLAY.

MORE CARICATURED RELIGION

Another of the "Irish National Dramatic" productions which the English lady, Miss Horniman, has generously provided with a theatre, has seen the footlights at Abbey Street, Dublin. Even from the would-be-admiring letter of a *Press* correspondent, from which we extract a brief description, it will puzzle a reader to discern anything "Irish," "National," or even "Dramatic" in the affair. Of course there is "a saint" and "holy water"; the principal use of which being, apparently, to make an unpleasant sort of husband abandon an unpleasant sort of wife, and then ask a decent Irish girl to run away with him. And that is "Irish National Drama"!

"There was a good but not a rowdy house in the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night, when the curtain rose on Mr. J. M. Synge's new play, 'The Well of the Saints,' which is the chief feature of the second monthly season of this theatrical enterprise. The play was looked forward to with much interest by those who have been following the movement, for Mr. Synge has been steadily pressing forward to the front place amongst our new Irish dramatists. Mr. Synge differs from Mr. Yeats in being a dramatist pure and simple. Mr. Synge is dominated by the dramatic idea far more than Mr. Yeats is.

"In 'The Well of Saints' he works on a conception which is new, and yet very old. The husband and wife, who are blind, and who have never seen each other, are given the light by a saint, who brings a holy and miraculous water from a well 'in the West.' The husband had believed, encouraged by the country folk, that his wife—an old and visioned hag—was the most beautiful woman in Leinster. When he gets his sight his revelation of feeling changes his whole nature; the same thing occurs in the case of the wife. They separate. The husband, in the meantime, has met the ideal in the flesh, which his wife was behind his closed eyes. He goes back to his wife, with him to the South, where there are flowers and singing birds. The proposition, of course, is absurd, from the girl's point of view, 'decent girl of the country-side.'

Both husband and wife, however, lose their sight again, and there is a very touching and beautiful scene where they meet together again, blind, first upbraiding each other, and then agreeing to go through life again in the old way. The strong scene of the play, however, is at the finish, when the saint is again going to restore their sight. The blind man suddenly jumps up and knocks the holy and wonder-working water out of the saint's hand, and declares that it is better to be blind than to see the things that people see in this world.

"This seems sailed very close to Catholic sentiment, and I shall not be surprised if there is a protest."

If this is "far more dramatic" than Mr. Yeats, we are sorry for Mr. Yeats.

We were present at a very interesting entertainment at the Loreto Convent School, Rathmines, on Friday last. The various entertainments reached a very high level, throughout, but we were specially interested in the performance of Dr. Douglas Hyde's Nativity Play—that is the play. It will be remembered, about the unparalleled performance of which there was some reasonable and bountiful interference at Kilkenny recently. The play was excellently staged, and the children spoke their parts with great distinctness. The performance of the Irish play was in every way creditable to those who took part in it, and particularly to the men, upon whose shoulders, we understood, the chief burden of responsibility for the production lay. All the other items on the programme reached a high standard, and the acting in *Bo-Peep*, the play in English, and the recitation in *Bo-Peep*, but to say that it was not been to many Convent school plays, and it may be that the general level is as high, or nearly as high, as that reached by the actors at the entertainments at the Loreto Convent School, Rathmines. We were more interested in the significance of the Irish play; we have not heard that there has yet been an Irish play at Cavendishrock of the Colleges Ave., or Clonsilla, or Belvedere; they are still in the state of being more or less "foreign" than Loreto Convent Schools, Rathmines. It is coming to reflect that some people do not take to Irish lore for the same reason that the Johnnies do not affect literature—they have not the brains. It is discouraging to see that Loreto Convent Schools, Rathmines, have staged an Irish play; it would be further encouraging to hear that every girl attending the school was being taught Irish (or at least one hour every day; but the men at Rathmines—God bless them—are not necessarily to be blamed if Irish is not so prominent in the curriculum as it ought to be—the parents have a voice in the matter, and some Westminster parents are no doubt Westminster parents, and that decides a lot of things. It is a satisfactory sign of the times that Irish play should have been staged at the Loreto schools in Charlotte Road; the play was a great success, and should encourage all the nuns, or if not all, those of the nuns who look at things from an Irish Irishland point of view, to further work in the Irish direction.

There was a great difference between the kindly atmosphere of the hall at the Loreto Convent, Rathmines, where a large Irish audience witnessed Dr. Hyde's Nativity Play on Friday evening last, and the rather unattractive and chilling atmosphere of the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night. "For the first time on any stage"—and in a few days, we should say, for the last—"What-is-it dubbed a 'Mr. J. M. Synge' was performed at the latter place before a rather poorly packed house, on Saturday night. The acting at the Abbey play, in English, "Bo-Peep," was, on the average, as good as that at the Abbey Theatre; and the school Irish play—was far more interesting than the *What-is-it* that we witnessed on Saturday night. Yet the former entertainment was only a mere school treat; the latter was nothing more of a play under the auspices of the "Irish National Theatre Society." Advertisement is at the bottom of it all; the object that revolves round that King of adjectives, W. B. Yeats, are, or should be, a lesson and strange as it may appear, a wholesome lesson—to our Irish brothers.

The notion that the *Irish Independent* was "got at" by the nationality twilight advertising ring on Saturday and a nicely paid lead of W. B. was the contrary piece in an illustrated part of the *What-is-it* that was to be heard. Wherever wrote the *What-is-it*, said

of the author of the best play, "The Riders of the Sea," and "The Shadow of the Glen," are words of much more than further introduction is necessary to the author of tonight's play." Well, we give full credit to the Yeats group for its advertising ability. It is unfortunate for them that advertisement, though a good deal, is not everything; after all, in addition to capacity for judicious advertising, one ought to have something of value to advertise.

We fear the National Theatre Society is not worth certifying in a widely-read paper; it would be more appropriately dealt with in a medium of restricted interest like a MS. journal. Those "National" people who flutter and twitter outside the head of the Irish people do not interest the people. On Saturday night, the first night, the night when the male and female social hostesses who like chatter and faded excitement, flock to these places; on Saturday night the house was only very partially filled. We almost feel for the poor "National" Theatre people when we picture the probable degree of emptiness during the remaining performance of this "National" *What-is-it*—advertisers growing small by degrees and beautifully so.

We do not think the play worth any particular notice. When we were writing down the third impromptu stage drive, we said, we think, less attention to the plays as plays than to the people who feel as such impromptu off. The play on Saturday night did not interest us, but some of the audience afforded us amusement. The acting at the play was middling. Mr. W. H. Fay was rather good; but the young lady who took the part of Molly Byrne was not very convincing. She might have been "an Irish Caliban" in an impromptu musical comedy. There was a "Caliban" in the piece, a creation of the fancy—we assume the "Sword" fancy of Mr. Synge; and there was not, however, the play, which will not interest the public, is not worth our wasting space upon. The "National" Theatre "Irish" gave sight to and look sight from a couple of laggards. Thank Heaven, we not only have sight to see the "National" Theatre people and their hangerson, but we would fain believe we have sight to see through them as well.

Some of the audience amused us. The "indefatigable" commando whose organ is the *Honour*, when that commando periodical foretells burning questions of British versus Irish nature, laying hands and such things and blossoms out into oral battles, or if not like it *Chatter*, foresees that the mouthpiece play of a *Catholic* *Chatter* was represented. When our eyes glared over the stalls, it warmed our Irish hearts to think that we had given so many of these present at one time or another, a well-deserved correction.

The *Catholic Chatter* was inaccurate between the acts. Manying Greys clustered to Rhythmic Twilights. For the play was principally at the other side of the footlights. There was no more between the acts, but who would be so poor and paltry of soul as to ask for music when he could feast his eye on the poetry of the nation of minor poets. It is not every day a *British* Twilight cracks jokes before your eyes with a Melancholy Grey. If some of the audience were not so and well seen by every one in the house, however, it was not their fault, nor was it from any lack of orientation, bustling about. Mr. Yeats and his friends may come of lake engorged, grey monotony and things of that sort, but they enjoy a little trouble before the public eye, even if it is only the little side of the public that flared some of the wails at Abbey Street on Saturday night. An amusing feature about this grey and twilight race is that they are so grey that they are quite unconscious that people have the "weight" of their and are laughing at their postings and their postings.

Typist: My place, Delhi.
February 8th, 1965.

the present, almost entire, the destruction of our old and the ever fresh new. Artful and tender feeling. Material more than that, but it is the contrast, as on things made visible: a white, cold, frozen, more beautiful the old divine alone. This gift is a rare one and only reached out, if at all, by other poets. The poem which gives rise to the volume has been quoted and printed too often to need repetition here. It is the prelude to the other poem: it is a breath laid deep in the quiet night. This I quote in another voice, and believe for a promise of breadth of lyrical range which spirit poem anticipated in a volume so carefully edited.

A SONG OF LOVE.

Love that is laid of happy hours
The glow is gone but the glow
Kiss the a bird in lady's bow,
Or gladden lovely eyes.

To seek, as proof, to love or high,
When that our love is cold,
Though love behest of the day
We can outlive that love.

The love, though he be loved, loves
The centre with such a glow,
That our of the world is known,
And wean a happy love.

My love, my love, if I could sing,
The poems would be,
The love that all the world would bring
Would not my duty love.

It is hard for us who are contemporaries of poets like this to realize the marvel of their achievement. . . . More they divided from us by death and made an unbridgeable as Loveless or Fletcher are, we must perhaps appreciate and value more that which could not be repeated and never improved.

It is hardly fair to name in full ten poems from any new book, but this book can afford it. As an example of constant over vocal sounds take this, a poem where the words lay as softly as incense with a second that echoes—

THE GHOST.

Stand thou thus
In the gray of the evening
Over the wet road.
A flock of stars
Nowly they wend
In the gray of the evening
Over the wet road
That wash through the town.
Kiss the rain,
And glancing white,
Vainly once
In the gray of the evening.
Ah, which moment
Long for a moment,
Gone for a moment,
And which once,
Off the white days
When we two together
Went in the evening

When the stars lay,
We see together
Wee with slow step
In the gray of the evening.
When the stars lay,
Wholly they given
For a moment, our vast
Away to the distance
Of several years.
Given for a moment
At white, and go fading
Away to the distance
Of several years.

I don't, because I cannot imagine, that anything more perfect of its kind has been or could be written. It is certainly a comfort to think that Ireland, who for centuries has contributed nothing, but a wall to the literature of Europe, has at last awarded a sweet and structural verse, a cluster, not a very, a note that seems to fall a more agreeable than the last yet would not agreeable.

OVERLOOKS.



SCENE FROM "SPREADING THE NEWS," BY LADY GREGORY.
Irish National Theatre Series.

Produced at the Abbey Theatre, December, 1904.

Irish Times

March 5

A NEW PLAY BY LADY GREGORY.

Lady Gregory has completed a new play in three acts, entitled, "Kincora," which will be produced by Irish National Theatre Society in the Abbey Theatre on Saturday evening next, 25th inst., at 8.15 p.m., and on every evening up to and including Saturday, 1st April. The new play is one of the best literary efforts of Lady Gregory, and it is sure to be warmly received. Still, reserved, will be in: 2d. April, reserved, 2s.; and pit, 1s. The box office is at Craner's, Westmoreland street.

Freeman March 2

JAMES O'CONNOR'S NEW PLAY.

PERFORMANCE AT THE ABBEY THEATRE.

Considerable interest is being taken in the production of the new play by Lady Gregory, entitled "Kincora," which will be placed on the stage for the first time on Saturday evening next at the Abbey Theatre. The play consists of a prologue and three acts, in prose, and deals with that most interesting period of Irish history connected with the reign of the great Brian. A drama by such a distinguished writer as Lady Gregory is bound to arouse a great deal of interest, and so doubt them will Saturday evening in the hands of Mr. and Mrs. O'Connell. The production has been entrusted to the splendid company of fine players who have achieved so much under the auspices of the production, and in London, the success of the Irish National Theatre.

The two central figures—Brian and Queen Guinevere—are in the hands of Mr. and Mrs. O'Connell. Miss Mairé Ní Ghobghaigh, Mr. Seamus O'Donoghue, Mr. George Roberts, Mr. P. MacDonagh, and Mr. W. G. Fay are also in the cast, which is a large one. Mr. B. G. Fay, the Society's stage manager, is responsible for the production, and the costumes and scenery have been designed by Mr. Robert Gregory.

Irish Times "KINCORA" March 25

LADY GREGORY'S NEW PLAY.

This evening the Irish National Theatre Society will produce the fourth new play which has been staged since the opening of the Abbey Theatre. The author, Lady Gregory, has already been responsible for one of them, the excellent and amusing farce called "Spreading the News." This time she has gone to medieval Irish history for her material, and the life and death of King Brian Boru is made the subject of a three-act tragedy. Brian is Ireland's most heroic figure of her history, the most historical of her heroes. The material at Lady Gregory's disposal is full of suggestion for thought and for passion. Her work on Irish legend has been, perhaps, a wider circle of readers, and greater praise from critics of reputation than any former attempt to deal with the same theme, and her present ambitious effort to reconstruct on the stage a novel stirring and interesting period of Irish history ought to excite a wide and keen interest.

The play, as we find from the many rehearsal which took place last night, is divided into three acts, with a short prologue, and the scenery and costumes are from the designs of Mr. Robert Gregory, who has worked on Mr. Yeats's conception that scenery should be decorative rather than realistic, and that "the best scenery is that which the audience does not see." In the prologue there is a forest scene which admirably realises this ideal, and shows with what perfect simplicity, yet with what beautiful effect the suggestion of a forest can be given. It is true, indeed, that one requires fine literary art to fill this fine and sustained pictorial art. With this kind of scenery the play must surely be the most beautiful scene. In the prologue there is a forest scene which admirably realises this ideal, and shows with what perfect simplicity, yet with what beautiful effect the suggestion of a forest can be given. It is true, indeed, that one requires fine literary art to fill this fine and sustained pictorial art. With this kind of scenery the play must surely be the most beautiful scene. In the prologue there is a forest scene which admirably realises this ideal, and shows with what perfect simplicity, yet with what beautiful effect the suggestion of a forest can be given. It is true, indeed, that one requires fine literary art to fill this fine and sustained pictorial art. With this kind of scenery the play must surely be the most beautiful scene.

March 2

Mr. Yeats in "Sambhuin" (Fisher Unwin, 1s.) has a spirited attack on those who blame the policy of the Irish National Theatre in withholding support from those who are one in aim, if not in race, with the movement. This number also has two admirable plays by Lady Gregory and Mr. J. M. Synge.

Great interest attaches to the production at the Abbey Theatre this evening of "Kincora," a new play by Lady Gregory. The work of such a distinguished writer would be bound to command attention. Its production will be in the hands of a fine company of Irish players, who have already won a high reputation both in Ireland and London, under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre, and it is with some degree of confidence that we anticipate a crowded audience to-night and during the week, when it will continue to occupy the boards.

The play, which consists of a prologue and three acts in prose, deals with that most interesting period of Irish history connected with the reign of the great Brian, and its merits are spoken highly of by such as have been afforded the opportunity of forming an opinion. This opportunity will be offered to the public to-morrow, when we expect they will be in a position to confirm the view that "Kinsara" is a drama in which the distinguished author may feel a pardonable pride. Mr. P. J. Fay and Miss Marie McShinnigh will appear in the two principal parts.

LADY GREGORY'S PLAY,
TO-NIGHT.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. W. B. YEATS.

To-night Lady Gregory's new play with prologue and in three acts, entitled "Kinvara," will be produced at the Abbey Theatre. From the commencement no pains or trouble have been spared by Lady Gregory, her son, Mr. Robert Gregory, Mr. Yeats, and the rest of those who are assisting to make the production of the play as complete as possible and also a satisfactory exposition of the novel principles of staging and costume which have been adopted. The present notice does not touch the plot; but in order to enable readers to appreciate the style of production it is necessary to mention that "Kinvara" is the name of Brian Boru's palace near Limerick and that the action leads down to the battle of Clontarf, which took place about A.D. 1015 and that all Irish and Danish costumes are to be looked for, and in designing these Mr. Robert Gregory has gone as far as possible to the usage of the period without sacrificing effect to mere archaeological detail. The cost treatment is practically a new departure here. It is merely decorative and suggestive—no realistic or spectacular at all. The object is to attract the attention of the audience from the words and action of the personages who take part in the drama. A more thoroughly artistic venture could not be conceived. Then as to the costumes, a certain scheme of color has been adhered to with the view of making dress and character accord with one another as much as possible. The background for the Prologue consists of hangings on which tree forms appear, thus suggesting a forest without painting a wood. The

the first will take place in an interior of Kinross Palace, a little more realistic than the scene which preceded it, but still keeping to the suggestive, and ignoring all attempts at pictorial representation. The third act is carried through a repetition of the wood scene, the interior of the palace, and a new scene which converts the outside of Brian Barr's tent at the battle. The plot brings four Irish boy-heroes, the sons of the chieftain, Brian Barr, King Malachy of Ireland, King Malmoire of Leinster, and Prince Murrugh, sons of Brian. The costumes of all these are similar—red with a grey cloak on the head, and a man or woman's tunic. The Irish colour on the sword, and the grey or plumed helmet with turreted crest amongst the Danes. The Danes are Queen Gormleith; and she wears a very bright orange dress ornamented with black and gold. The costume of the Danish warriors, who appear at the end of the play, is red tunic and yellow leggings. At play, it is to be observed, the palace are clad in green and brown on grey green. As already mentioned, all the costumes and the scenic backgrounds have been designed by Mr. Robert Griegory, and made and painted by the artist's assistants. Mr. May, as the producer of the piece. It is to be hoped that a crowded and appreciative audience to-night will be some reward to the assistance of "Kinross" for their enthusiasm when working.

Our representative had an interview with Mr. W. B. Yeats on the general scheme which the theatre was envisaged to carry out. Our representative asked Mr. Yeats to state from his own point of view some of the causes which brought about the establishment of the Abbey Theatre.

"In every English-speaking country," said Mr. Yeats, "and in Venezuela the theatre is becoming more and more controlled by commercial considerations. That is not so in other countries, because in those countries it is recognised that the standard of taste must be kept up by Government aid. The theatre is considered part of the national education. In the English-speaking countries and in Venezuela the theatre is governed by the multitude. In the case of the Abbey Theatre, private enterprise has stepped in because Mr. Hamilton has practically endowed the theatre, and it has given us a better theatre. This is, in fact, the first endowed theatre in the English-speaking countries."

Our Representative—That gives you a free hand to a great extent in creating a standard of taste?

"It disposes of the difficulty as to expense," said Mr. Yeats, "and it leaves us to work out our own ideas as to what National drama ought to be."

Our Representative.—And your hope is that the populace will ultimately be converted to socialism on that head?

Mr. Yeats—"It is only a question of time. Some of our plays are most successful now which were attended with very little success at first."

Our representative asked Mr. Yeats in what manner it was expected the National Theatre would affect the productions of authors.

world as it is.—We writers have a good deal to learn in our business. We have to master the technique of the stage. The writer has the English chance of mastering his business. The English dramatic writer puts his play in the hands of a stage manager, and he never saw before, and it is played by actors whom he does not know. But here the writer has a chance of keeping his hand on the play, and of supervising the acting and consulting with the fellow-writers. In fact, we have come to that of the condition of things which regard the Elizabethan playwright pleased with one writer, and others may not be either, but we do our best to produce what we believe to be good, and we cannot play that we believe to be good, and it is not ultimate men's temperaments. And that is our desire to produce what we believe to be good, and it is not ultimate men's temperaments, as the dramatic talent. One play may not be a success, another would, but in itself may make another play, and we produce it.

Our Representative—The idea permeating your scheme is, as I understand, to treat everything in the drama which is perfect of its kind?

Mr. Yeats—That is putting it in the exact words. We want to encourage our Irish writers. During the past two hundred years many Irish writers whose works have lived have gone to England and accepted the English dramatic tradition and have written about the English people. We believe we will change all that, and that a school of Irish dramatists will rise up who will create an Irish tradition, and who will write about the Irish people.

Our Representative—I assume that your intention is to extend your work to the provinces.

Mr. Yeats—Oh, yes. We have hear a company of actors who are technically amateurs, but who have as much practice as many professionals; and in the course of time we hope to bring this company into a

to form the company into a
PROFESSIONAL COMPANY,
which will tear through some of the towns in
the country, and return to Dublin for their
residence.

Our Representative—Of course you expect that the production of Lady Gregory's "Kincora" will be a success?

Mr. Yeats—I do. The Irish people have a passion for Irish history, and in this play Lady Gregory introduces Brian and Gormleith. It is a play that I believe will be popular in the country.

Our Representative also had an interview with Mr. Fay, who expressed himself well pleased at the patronage accorded to the Abbey Theatre by the public, irrespective of class.

Free man - ^{Mar 14 20}
KINCORA.

LADY GREGORY'S NEW PLAY.

PRODUCTION BY THE IRISH NATIONAL
THEATRE SOCIETY.

On Saturday evening the Irish National Theatre Society will put on the stage of the Abbey Theatre a new play in a prologue and three acts, entitled "Kincora," by Lady Gregory. This will be the fourth new play which the Society has produced since it commenced its work at the Abbey Theatre, and since Mr. W. G. Fay organized his company of Irish actors, now known as "The Irish National Theatre Society," eighteen new plays, exclusive of "Kincora," have been rehearsed by him and acted by them "for the first time on any stage" to use the language of the play-bill. These plays Lady Gregory has already performed two plays "Twenty-Five," first performed at the Mollsworth Hall, on March 14th, 1905, and on May 2nd, 1905, at the Queen's Gate Hall, London, and "Springing the News," the merry little country comedy that was so successful at the Society's opening performance at the Abbey Theatre. It is in the one-act play that an author learns to feed his feet under him, and Lady Gregory, like others of our Irish dramatists, has been humble enough to try to write a good play in a single act before trying her hand at "Kincora." "Kincora," with Brian Corneilish as its central character, is an ambitious attempt, and its production will be looked forward to with a great deal of interest. The cast includes Mr. Macdonagh (Macdonagh), Fay (Brian), S. B. Morris (Marmagh), N. Power (Malachi), G. B. Morris (Marmagh), P. Macdonagh (Sinner), Broder (Mr. P. Macdonagh), Bennett and Derrick, several of the Irish actors, several of the Irish actors, and several of the Irish actors.

the drama, live again to the modern imagination; and has done much to become the King's cause from some of the old-world associations which are not infrequently attached to it. The play unfolds itself in a prologue and three acts, each of which is full of a colorful and interesting picture of Irish life, the most famous of Irish Kings, forms a natural and appropriate theme for an Irish heroic drama. It is appropriate also, having regard to the period, that the opening scene should be laid in an unassuming room, where Eoin of the Grey Rock, the guardian spirit of the King's family, appears to the youthful Brian, and offers him paternal love and happiness if he will only turn aside from his service to Ireland, deserted by the spirit as a hard miscreant. He is also warned that his life of service would be one continued disappointment. To this warning he turns a deaf ear, and deliberately drove away Eoin of the Grey Rock with indignation. It is a heroic drama made in every generation by the great artists. The first act of the play describes scenes which take place many years later. Brian is now an old man, and has almost achieved his purpose. He has spent a long life in war, but always that he might leave the land at peace and prosperity. "When I was a young child, beautiful youth in the house of kings, beautiful children, well nourished, in every home. No meddling strangers within Ireland's borders; no outcry of God against God." Brian is almost a father, almost a war god. Malachy, his husband, does not know whether she is of mortal birth or outside the race of men. "She came up straight through other delight of the heart, but Malachy, the first of his name, he is the more victorious King, and finally betrays Brian, because the great peace he had dreamed of was then approaching. She promises herself in marriage secretly to each of the leaders of the Danes who were at the strand at Glendair. The same choice is then offered to Brian's son that was offered to Brian himself by the fairy woman, who appears again. But now the choice is more eager than that made by Brian. He knows that he has but an hour to live, and after that if he will but give up that one hour at battle, immortal love and immortal peace. He refuses. A change takes place; he is a "christened man," and the fairy spirit vanishes. The end shows the leaders of Brian and Malachy, kneeling over their death. The play is replete with lofty and beautiful pictures, full of heroic energy. It rushes on from scene to scene, creating a feeling among the audience that they are passing through the great periods of a bygone period. To say that the performance of the company was perfect would be to make an unrestrained use of flattery; but it may be stated, without misgiving, that apart from some slight defects, the production, as a first effort, it was creditable. All who took part in it. Mr. Frank Fay represented King Brian with notable fidelity and power. He has almost passed the middle stage, for he has played other parts as well as played this well, before audiences not always kind or sympathetic, and received from their recognition and warm appreciation. Miss Walker was stately and impressive as Queen Gormleith, and Miss Alford, as the good-looking Eoin, strode her lines with poetic feeling—perhaps, they were too long scenes—and made a striking stage figure. Miss Garvey depicted the old woman, the woman, as Moore in his song: "Rich and poor, and the great and the low. Two of the women, Deemans, played by Mr. J. J. Fay, were both quiet and humorous. Other characters were both quiet and humorous. The company filled their part with satisfaction. The play, however, was different in its style from that of any other company. The players appear to have trained themselves to achieve high types of character and to catch the sentiment of Irish legend. They move with little, subordinate picture to free speaking, something that in any play which gets part of its effect out of literature speech is of permanent importance. The performance was of the highest quality, and the aid of an excellent, but a gloomy party sang patriotic songs between the different acts—an innovation which may become popular some time. The stage setting, which was designed and painted by Mr. Robert Gregory, is rich in color, and the stage lighting framework for the play, as a whole, made to paint any scene naturally, the artist's art is evident.

being suggestion rather than action. The colors in the background contrast or harmonize effectively with the dress of the company.

At the close of the play the audience was loudly called for, and Lady Gregory, who had been sitting in the stalls, made her way to the stage, from which she bowed her acknowledgments to the enthusiastic audience. Kinross will be repeated during the present week, and later on it may be found wooing and winning popularity on another and more ambitious stage.

FREEMAN'S JOURNAL.

LADY GREGORY'S

"KINCORA."

— MARCH 27.

AT THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

"Kincora," the new Irish historical play by Lady Gregory, was produced by the players of the Irish National Theatre Society on Saturday evening. The performance had been looked forward to with great interest, and the house was more crowded than at any performance since the opening night of the Abbey Theatre. The interest was more than satisfied by the play, which roused the audience to great enthusiasm, and the applause when the curtain had fallen was sustained for several minutes, until the author bowed her acknowledgments. No play to which the new dramatic movement has given birth is so likely to achieve popularity. It has a high theme, adequately treated. The interest is historic; but the conflict of passion and character sustains and works out the plot, and there is dramatic contrast in the motives and sentiments of the two leading characters round whom the action moves. It is in three acts, with a prologue. The prologue forebodes the event. Young King Brian, already weary of fighting, is discovered sleeping in a wood. The vision of Aodhail, of the Grey Rock, the genius of his race appears to him, wooing him away from the fight for Ireland. "Those who serve Ireland take for their lot loving battles, lasting quarrels. They are building, and ever building; and ever and always ruin comes upon them before the house is built." But Brian is not to be dismayed. "He will never break faith with the swordheart he has chosen, nor turn from her service till she can lift up her head again in the sight of the whole world." When the play opens he seems to have accomplished his work. He has beaten down with his sword the enemies of Ireland's peace, and the High-King and Kings of Erin are gathered in Kincora to sign the treaty which is to fulfil his hope. "I fought for Ireland when young boys of my age were at the harling. I have done for her all that war can do. It is peace she is in want of now, to see her young men at the sickle in place of girls, and her strong men breaking the wild ground for seed." Brian throughout the play remains the soldier whose loftiest aspiration is to beat his sword into a ploughshare, or exchange the tent for the cell. The peace is ready; it only requires the signatures of Malachy and Brian, MacMoira, and Eoin, the leader of the Danes. But before Eoin, comes Gormleith, the evil spirit of strife, embodied in a high aspiring woman. From her entry Gormleith dominates the stage, and determines the story. The servants of the Kings are soon "a kind of fighting band," and the Kings themselves are seen sender.

"The sword in the hand and the sword in the door! That is a good sign, in a King's house! War is best, war is best! In the sword of kings goes rusty in the sheath, the bright of the sword will be over for the world." That is the word of Gormleith. The drama is the conflict of these two ideas, those two characters. The dramatic interest is two-sided: of love in the common sense; it is the music of a woman's ambition united more rather by a hint of the King of men. "I would like to see the king in the world, to see the white skin to the white skin in the world." That is the word of Gormleith. She is in the battle against Malachy and Brian and comes again to Kincora, but as a prisoner whose life is forfeit. Brian has now more reason for peace and warred exceedingly. "Faire peace is a great thing; but all peace is no better worth winning than the half of the living child the Jewish mothers were fighting for."

"I told you I will make no settlement that leaves any one of the provinces a nest and a brooding ground for the enemies and the ill-wishers of the rest of Ireland. It is certain that Ireland must be as free as God made her before she can be as happy as He saw her in the making." So MacMoira of Lonsdale and Eoin of the Danes have again felt the knot of the sword of Kincora. But Brian is magnanimous in power. "My people have called them wolves and foxes; and they have earned that name, for they have torn and reddened the white faces of Ireland. It was my heart's desire to meet that torn face, to put my hand on that wool; to wear it into a border as for the cloak of the King of Heaven. I made a peace. I thought to fill Ireland with joy; to make of her a brimming cup at the feast of the angels. That cup was overreached; that heavenly cloak and torn that peace was broken. It was broken by you." But he gives them their lives, and he gives Gormleith his crown. Final gift. The fierce Queen sinks of the peace with which Brian down his land, and she is at work again stirring up treachery against him. "You could have stopped me," she says when her treason is discovered. "I did you go out and conquer the world. You would not—you have listened to the monks too long for that—it was a pity." "King, men do not a right wife to show mercy to. A right wife will let a man break the peace of the world! You were asleep; I tried to wake you; you chose to stay in your sleep. You have chosen it, King. You have chosen it, not I." So she quits Kincora for Glendair. The last character to be introduced by figures beside this torch of baleful womanhood. She is the creation of the play, and beside her even King Brian seems off a fool. We had her the Helen of Irish drama.

To give such a role and character into a prose play would have seemed an impossibility. But Lady Gregory's power, in its best moments, offers new material to sustain the argument, that the distinction as to form between prose and poetry is an armed sword. "It is a right wife will let a man break the peace of the world! You were asleep; I tried to wake you; you chose to stay in your sleep. You have chosen it, King. You have chosen it, not I." So she quits Kincora for Glendair. The last character to be introduced by figures beside this torch of baleful womanhood. She is the creation of the play, and beside her even King Brian seems off a fool. We had her the Helen of Irish drama.

The play was well acted and staged with a simplicity that combined in a sense of new beauty. Miss Marie Nic Shuibhéal gave a rendering of Gormleith which, if slightly lacking in power, was certainly more convincing in its action. Miss M. J. Fay acted the part of King Brian with that dignity he can so well assume, though he could have used some more words if they were his to dispose of. Mr. Arthur Searles



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R. M.

...historic movement has given it as its duty to achieve popularity. It has a high theme, adequately treated. The interest is historical; but the conflict of passion and character sustains and works out the plot, and there is dramatic contrast in the motives and sentiments of the two leading characters round whom the action moves. It is in three acts, with a prologue.

The Prologue Foreshadows the Event.

Young King Brian, already weary of fighting, is discovered sleeping in a wood. The vision of Aithbhí, of the Grey Rock, the genius of his race appears to him, woeing him away from the fight for Ireland. "Those who serve Ireland take for their lot lasting battles, lasting quarrels. They are building, and ever building; and ever and always ruin comes upon them before the house is built." But Brian is not to be dismayed. "He will never break faith with the sweetheart he has chosen, nor turn from her service till she can lift up her head again in the sight of the whole world." When the play opens he seems to have accomplished his work. He has beaten down with his sword the enemies of Ireland's peace, and the High-King and Kings of Erin are gathered in Kincora to sign the treaty which is to fulfil his hope. "I fought for Ireland when young boys of my age were at the harling. I have done for her all that war can do. It is peace she is in want of now, to see her young men at the sickle in place of girls, and her strong men breaking the wild ground for seed."

Brian throughout the Play Remains the Soldier

whose loftiest aspiration is to beat his sword into a ploughshare, or exchange the tent for the cell. The peace is ready; it only requires the signatures of Malachi, and Brian, Maolmora, and Séitie, the leader of the Danes. But before Séitie, comes Gormleith, the evil spirit of strife, embodied in a high aspiring woman. From her entry Gormleith dominates the stage, and determines the story. The servants of the Kings are seen "a kennel of fighting hounds," and the Kings themselves are torn asunder. "The sword in the hand and the sheathe on the foot! That is a good sight in a King's house! War is best, war is best! When the crowds of kings grow rusty in the sheaths, the height of the sword will be over for the world!" Henceforward the story of the play is the conflict of these two ideals, these two characters. Its dramatic interest is intensified by the temporary union of the two as King and Queen in Kincora. It is no union of love in the common sense; it is the union of a woman's ambition made momentarily to a heroic King of men. "I would rather lay my life to a blue breastplate than to the whitest skin in the world." There again is Gormleith. She is in the battle against Malachi and Brian and enters again to Kincora, but at a grimmer winter life is forfeit. Brian has once more warned for peace and warned successfully. "Entire peace is a great thing; but a half peace is no better than death winning than the half of the living child the Jew's mother were fighting for." "I tell you I will make no settlement that leaves any one of the provinces a nest and a breeding ground for the enemies and the ill-wishers at the seat of Ireland. It is certain that Ireland Must be as Free as God made her before she can be as happy as He saw her in the making." So Maolmora of Loumar and Séitie at the Danes have again felt the keen edge of the sword of Kincora. But Brian is magnanimous in power. "My people have called them wolves and lions; and they have feared that name; for they have torn and redden the white deer of Ireland." It was my heart's desire to send that sword down, to gather up that ragged wood to weave it into a banner fit for the cloak of the King of Heaven. I made a

peace. I thought in my armour was poor to make of my harling cup at the feast of the angels. That cup was overladen; that heavenly cloak was torn; that peace was broken. It was broken by you." But he gives them their lives, and he gives Gormleith his crown. Fatal gift. The Brave Queen sickens of the peace with which Brian dowers his land, and again in a work against stirring up treachery against her King. "You would have stopped me," she says when her treason is discovered, "I did you not—yet and conquer the world. You would go—yet you have listened to the monks too long for that—it was a pity." "King, am I not a right wife to show mercy to? A right wife? Yet it is for you to break the peace of the world! You were asleep; I tried to wake you; you chose to stay in your sleep. You have chosen it, King. You have chosen it, not I." So the quiet Kincora for Clontarf. The other characters are somewhat by the wayside. There is a touch of balafut womanhood. She is the creation of the play, and beside her even King Brian seems only a fool. We hail her the Helen of Irish drama.

To fit such a story and character into a prose play would have seemed an impossibility. But Lady Gregory's prose, at such moments, exerts new material to sustain the argument, that the distinction as to form between prose and poetry is an unreal one. The play was

Well Acted and Staged

with a simplicity that culminated in a scene of rare beauty. My Maolmora of Loumar gave a rendering of Gormleith which, if slightly lacking in power, was entirely harmonious with the author's conception. Mr. F. J. Fay acted the part of King Brian with that dignity he can so well assume, though he could have used some more interest if they were his to dispose of. Mr. Arthur Scahill as Brennan and Mr. W. G. Fay as Derrick, servants of Brian, and Mr. George Roberts at Mourneagh, greatly enhanced reputations that are already established for fine and subtle acting. Miss Maire Ní Shíubhlaigh as Maize, and Miss Sara Allgood as Aithbhí, of the fiddle, were also effective. The part of Malachi was taken by Mr. A. Power, Mr. Fournes O'Sullivan was the Maolmora, and Mr. P. MacSábhlaigh Séitie.

The scenes and costumes were designed by Mr. Robert Gregory. Lady Gregory's son. The designs displayed a genius for the decoration of the stage required by the new drama. Only the simplest mechanism was used. But there was a richness of colouring without glaring lights and a harmony that lay upon the true artistic taste. When the curtain rose for the last scene before Brian's tent at Clontarf, the scene with its three characters reminded one of those old Italian triptychs, with their simple backgrounds and rare colour schemes, the secret of which is so seldom discovered in latter-day painters. It was a unique combination of talent, making remarkable and of great promise an occasion that marked another stage in the progress of the Irish National Theatre Society.

The play will be repeated during the week. The text, printed at the University Press and published at the Abbey Theatre, was on sale in the theatre, and stands the reading as well as the acting text.

for Telegraph 27

Lady Gregory's "Kincora."

AT THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

"Kincora," the new Irish historical play by Lady Gregory, was produced by the players of the Irish National Theatre Society on Saturday evening. The performance had been looked forward to with great interest, and the house was more crowded than at any performance since the opening night of the Abbey Theatre. The interest was more than satisfied by the play, which moved the audience to great enthusiasm, and the applause when the curtain had fallen was sustained for several minutes, and the actor bowed his acknowledgments. The play is written by the new dra-

as God made her before she can be as happy as He saw her in the making." So Maolmora of Loumar and Séitie at the Danes have again felt the keen edge of the sword of Kincora. But Brian is magnanimous in power. "My people have called them wolves and lions; and they have feared that name; for they have torn and redden the white deer of Ireland." It was my heart's desire to send that sword down, to gather up that ragged wood to weave it into a banner fit for the cloak of the King of Heaven. I made a

for Herald Tribune 27

"KINCORA."

LADY GREGORY'S NEW PLAY

"Kincora," Lady Gregory's new play, produced at the Abbey Theatre for the first time on Saturday night, is not only a great advance on her previous literary efforts at dramatic construction—"Twenty-Five"—and "Remember the Nine"—but in several respects the best play produced under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre Society. Such an advance requires justification.

Why are you Plagued
in Sent, in this a
Catholic County,
surely you know
when Sent is, &
that way Catholic &
Protestant keep it
as in H P (holies, but

Catholic by motto
when you can

In the one emotional scene, however, where Gormleith hesitates to sign the letters that betray Brian, I thought her less successful; she remained too much the tragedy queen, and did not let the woman show through. Mr. A. Power as Malachi, though he acted the more emotional scenes fairly well, was utterly lacking in dignity, and had not got his body under control.

It is a little hard to find a just standard of comparison for an historical play. Shakespeare first invented the method of stringing together a number of historical scenes, which have only a limited unity—a unity rather of character, or of results than of plot and incident. Judged by ordinary dramatic standards, the scenes of Lady Gregory's play might seem somewhat loosely connected. But compared with most of Shakespeare's historical works, they have a far greater coherence. It is not, of course, necessary to compare the merits of that dramatist with those of Lady Gregory, but I venture to think most Irishmen will find "Kincora" more interesting than Henry V., even if they are not actually repelled as I, I must confess, I am, by the latter play.

For King Brian is our own, and he lived and died in Ireland and for Ireland. If again we compare "Kincora" with such plays as "Becket" or "Paolo and Francesca" on the one hand and "Deirdre" on the other, we shall find that, at any rate, as an acting play, it is much superior. For the authoress has the dramatic instinct, and does not seek to make a poem do for a play. I think, therefore, we may congratulate the National Theatre Society on having at last scored a decided success after several failures.

CHANCELLER.

The Playhouse
MARCH 30, 1905.

Dublin Notes.

ABNEY THEATRE (LESSEE, Miss A. E. F. HORNIMAN; General Manager, Mr. W. G. Fay).—A new era has dawned in the annals of the Irish National Theatre with the production of Lady Gregory's new play in three acts, entitled "Kincora," which was given for the first time on Saturday, 25th inst., at this theatre. The play opens after the apparent subjugation of the Danish King, Sitric, and the completion of a peaceful treaty between Malachi, High King of Ireland, and Maelmora, King of Leinster, with Brian of the Tributes, King of Munster. Sitric arrives at the hall of Brian's house, accompanied by Murchugh, the son of Brian, who had gone east to meet him. Whilst awaiting the arrival of Brian and Malachi, the latter's wife, Queen Gormleith, sows the seed of discord in the minds of Sitric and Maelmora by dissuading them with their cowardice. When the terms of submission are put before them by Brian they draw back and refuse to sign the treaty. Swords are drawn and war is declared by Sitric and Maelmora against Brian. The movement of the second act takes place after the Battle of Glenmama. Sitric, Maelmora and Queen Gormleith, who had joined the Danes, had been taken prisoners and are brought before Brian and Malachi for trial. Malachi wishes for their death; Brian, to whom war is distasteful and with whom the sentence rests, gives them their lives and freedom. After a few words cease between Malachi and Brian, and a month's truce is made between the pair, during which time Malachi will raise his army and march against Brian. He returns, how-

ever, realising that no man will help him, and reluctantly submits by surrendering his crown and position as High King to Brian, at the same time giving Queen Gormleith to Brian for wife. The third act deals with the plotting of the Battle of Clontarf by Sitric, the Dane. Tired of the reign of peace which Brian has enjoyed, Queen Gormleith is eager for war again, and is asked by Sitric to sign letters to Sigward, Earl of Orkney and Broder, of the over and make war against Brian. The sense of her treachery, however, overwhelms her at last and she refuses. Brian receives proof of the

great peace existent in Ireland, and intimates his intention of breaking up the army. Queen Gormleith becomes enraged at what she considers to be a sign of weakness, and when Sitric again urges her to sign the letters, The Battle of Clontarf is fought in consequence, but in the moment of victory Brian is killed by Broder, who mistakes him for a priest praying in his tent. The play ends with the entrance of two of Brian's servants carrying the shield and banner of Murchugh, who has been slain in battle, and the discovery of Brian's body stretched dead in his tent. The part of Queen Gormleith, the much married

Pall Mall Gazette.

LADY GREGORY'S "KINCORA."

INTERESTING PRODUCTION IN DUBLIN.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

There was nothing wanting in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on Saturday night, when the curtain rose on Lady Gregory's new play, "Kincora," to mark on occasion a memorable one in the history of the Irish literary movement. The house was full; and dotted here and there, in the stalls, were men who helped to give distinction to the audience, such, for instance, as Sir Antony MacDonnell and Mr. George Moore. It was a trying ordeal for a comparatively new writer. Lady Gregory, however, greatly daring, has written an Irish historical play, and has thrown down the gauntlet to the critics. Has she succeeded? Time will tell. So far as Saturday's audience was concerned, it was an immense success.

Who is Gormleith—what is She?

Lady Gregory, when she wrote "Kincora," selected one of the most dramatic periods of Irish history, when the big crisis was appearing, as to whether the Gael or the Gail was to rule in Erin. The man who decided that question was Brian of Kincora, who, beginning life as a younger brother to the King of Munster, ultimately made himself King of all Ireland, and was murdered, in the moment of his great victory, in his tent at Clontarf. It is evident from the title of the play, and from the text of it, that Lady Gregory, when she started to write it, meant that Brian should be the leading character of the drama. But he is not. It is Gormleith who is the leading character. Who is Gormleith? Why, the most wonderful woman of her day in all northern Europe. She was the sister of Maelmora, the King of Leinster, and she married the Danish King of Dublin. He died, I think, at Lons, she then married Malachi, the High King of Ireland, who reigned at Tara. In the Norse Saga she is described as the fairest of all women, and best gifted in everything that was not in her own power, but it was the talk of men that she did all things ill over which she had any power. Malachi drove her out of a while she actually became the wife of Brian. In the course of time, however, Brian also got tired of her. She then went back to Dublin to her own son Sitric, and did her best to help the Danes to defeat the Irish. When Sigward, the Earl of Orkney, was asked by Sitric to help him to defeat Brian his conditions were the Crown of Ireland and Gormleith as his wife; when Brian, in the Isle of Man, was asked for his assistance, the terms were the same. I said to Lady Gregory, "Why didn't you call your play 'Gormleith'?" She smiled. "Gormleith," she said, "would mean some kind of woman problem, and 'Kincora' would be criticised as 'The Well of the Saints' was criticised." She then went on to say that although her idea was to make King Brian the leading character in the drama, she found Gormleith constantly emerging. And that is only natural.

A Tale of Elemental Passions.

In dealing with this story, Lady Gregory has well brought out the elemental human passions that sway the characters of her drama. Gormleith is a veritable creation. There is nothing about her in Lady Gregory's play that is not verifiable in the four masters and the Danish Sages, yet she comes in this play, even to a student of Irish history, as a revelation, a queen of women as of States, a beautiful, unscrupulous, cynical, daring woman, who all her life used kings for her own purposes as men use pawns on a chessboard. A very different character to play, it will be confessed; yet Miss Mairé ne Shuibhlaigh rose to the occasion. Mr. Fay is a fine actor, but it is Gormleith who is the play, and not Brian. The scenery and costumes, which were designed by Lady Gregory's son, Mr. Robert Gregory, were a lesson to theatrical designers in their simplicity and taste.

woman, was well supported by Miss M. Walker, who gave a very majestic and semi-goddess rendering of the character. One of the most natural pieces of acting was that of Mr. Arthur Sinclair, as Brennam, one of Brian's body servants. His upbraiding of his daughter Maire (Miss M. Garvey) on her return from the journey round the provinces was delightfully real, and was one of the best "lets" of the night. The Danish King, Selric, was capably given by Mr. P. Garvey, and gained well-deserved applause on several occasions. I cannot say, however, that Mr. F. J. Fay, realised my expectations in the character of Brian.

U. J. Cap 1

Hottingsham 29

"Kincora," Lady Gregory's new Irish historical play, was performed before a crowded audience at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on Saturday night, and had an enthusiastic reception.

Manchester Courier 29

The Irish National Theatre Society has achieved a decided success with "Kincora," a new play in three acts, by Lady Gregory, which has just been produced at the Abbey Theatre.

Standard 28

Lady Gregory's new play, "Kincora," was produced most successfully at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, last week under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre. The play is a drama in three acts and a prologue, and deals with the period of King Brian.

The Times March 28

The Irish National Theatre Society has achieved a decided success with Kincora, a new play in three acts, by Lady Gregory, which has just been produced at the Abbey Theatre. The play deals with the fortunes of Brian Boru and of his wife, Gormley, a Gormley, a Gormley, who is the evil genius of her husband and of Ireland. It ends with the death of Brian in his last act at Clontarf. The play is full of passion and of an interest that seldom flags, and it has found favour with all the critics. The principal parts are well played, after the well-known methods of the Theatre Society, by Mr. F. J. Fay and Miss Mary Walker.

All Ireland Review ap 8

KINCORA.

Like every one else who witnessed the performance of this fine historical drama, I was greatly pleased and delighted. It was clear, self-consistent, and immediately apprehensible all through; and, apart from its literary merits, affected the minds of the spectators as a fine dramatic presentation of great events and great personages in our History.

The part of Gormley was played very well by Miss Walker, and that of Brian Boru by Mr. J. Fay. Miss Walker conceived the character of Gormley as quite heroic; and, so conceiving it, acted her part admirably. Gormley, however, also represents the spirit of downright mischief and division, the Irish love of fighting and division for their own sweet sakes. Therefore, it is a complex character, of which there was no indication in Miss Walker's statuesque and imposing attitudes and sounding oratory.

"Kincora" is not a historical study, but a twentieth century Irish play with known historical personages as characters—a play that revolves around a known sequence of events. The actual history passed first through the moulding, forming, transforming and dramatising imagination of a bard, or of generations of bards, and then through that of the dramatist. So Brian Boru, in "Kincora," is, in fact, a creation of our own time. He is the ideal Irish king who longed and laboured for universal peace, who, through his courage and wisdom, did strike a universal peace, and enable beautiful young ladies, unguarded and wearing rich ornaments, to go through all the provinces undisturbed. Brian, by becoming what he styles himself in the Book of Armagh, *Imperator Sotorum*, not only did not create universal peace, but could not create universal peace. The nature of his Imperatorship and the constitution of society, built up, as it was, upon a base supplied by multitudes of topical autocracies, would not permit it.

This implies no censure of the play, but it is necessary to differentiate. The historical drama may assume either of two forms, and "Kincora" is cast in one form; a form lending itself, as here, to noble results; not in the other; a representation of the actual, which is extremely difficult, and in this case, owing to the paucity of records, almost impossible.

It has often occurred to me that that much-married lady, Gormley, might be herself only a symbol of sovereignty or of the hegemony of Ireland, as it passed from one warlike confederacy to another, or a woman indeed—more probably—but a woman who was the directing genius of the Danes and controlled the policy of the Danish power, and that her alliances were dramatised as marriages.

It is always a pleasure to go to Miss Horniman's Theatre, if for no other reason than to admire its complete and beautiful arrangement. On Saturday last "Kincora," a play by Lady Gregory, was produced there. Of all the plays which the Irish National Theatre Society has acted this is the most successful by reason of its interest and the spectacular effect. The subject of the play is the life of King Brian, and the time of action extends from his early boyhood to his aged death after victory at Clontarf. A prologue introduces a supernatural element. Aodh of the Grey Rock offers Brian a life of ease and luxury if he will forsake his policy of patriotism (there is a Grey Rock off Dana-street where even at the present day things like this occur). Brian refuses, and in his efforts to gain lasting peace for Ireland he enters into eternal repose. Two legends are attached to, but cannot be said to be incorporated with, the play: "Rich and Rare," the legend Moore has made familiar, and the legend of Murrngh, who refuses on the eve of the battle all that Aodh can offer him to forsake Ireland. Present amongst all, Miss Nic Salsburgh acted in a way that alone would have made the play a success. Acting like hers has had no precedent in the theatre. Roberts made a most difficult scene a success.

The play, on the whole, was interesting, and drew its audience from beginning to end. It is a play that so much of its construction depended on the supernatural. It was a little too far-fetched and unnatural, and this detracted from the human interest. The stage management was somewhat at fault, but the playing of the dappies between the acts added to the evening's entertainment.

Abbey Theatre

Cleverly written though the dialogue of "Kincora" undoubtedly is, it by no means atones for the lamentable lack of construction shown in the plot, and the whole piece appeals far too much to the sympathies of the gallery to be placed in the front rank of legitimate drama. The acting throughout was well up to the high standard which has always been shown by this excellent company. Mr. F. J. Fay being extremely good as Brian, and Mr. A. Power as convincing as possible in the part of Malachi, while the most acceptable character of the play, that of Derbh—Brian's servant, was capably interpreted by the irimitable W. G. Fay. Mr. George Roberts made the most of a rather thankless part. The audience on Saturday night was large and appreciative. The scenery and costumes were designed by Mr. Robert Gregory.

Everything was dramatised in those ages. They were times when men *hated* the bald, colourless statement of fact.

Brian, as presented by Lady Gregory, is a very noble and imposing character, and attracted the respect and sympathy of the spectators who were profoundly attentive and anxious not to miss a single word. So "Kincora" must be pronounced to be a signal success.

I did not much like the fooling of the henchmen as to whether their masters, the Kings, should get beef, or mutton, or "crubeens;" the absurdity of the thing being made worse by the poor little table at which the Kings were expected to banquet together.

I know the Irish romances often exhibit things of the kind, but this is only an explanation of the scene; not a justification.

"Kincora," in my poor opinion, is a very fine and moving Irish historical drama, and I regret much that I am unable to deal with it at greater length.—Ed.

Observer Apr 2

LADY GREGORY'S "KINCORA."

(FROM OUR DUBLIN CORRESPONDENT.)

The Irish National Theatre Society has scored another success in its latest play, which has been given nightly during the past week at the Abbey Theatre. Dramatically speaking, I do not think that Lady Gregory's *Kincora* is as fine a conception as Mr. Synge's *Wall of the Ruins*, played in February, and about which I wrote at the time in these columns. But that is not, perhaps, because Lady Gregory has not the dramatic faculty as fully developed as Mr. Synge, but because in the one case it was an idea that was dramatised, while in the other it is a series of historical events. What English historical play in our time has been a success? Yes, we may except *The Queen*, by Mr. John Davidson—but that is an adaptation from the French—and perhaps *Herod*, by Mr. Stephen Phillips. Lady Gregory, however, has attempted a feat which no British or Irish dramatist has succeeded in since the days of Shakespeare. She has attempted to picture an heroic age in the history of these islands, to put it into the form of drama, to bring out the salient facts of the epoch, and yet to leave it all, when finished, a piece of literature. We have plenty of historical Irish plays, but there is not one of them a judicious reader out of our national school would read. It would go to see them played because they would appeal to his Nationalist sentiments with as great a vehemence as his local "member" on the platform when put on the boards. They would leave nothing behind, however, but the exaltation of the momentary applause, which, in its turn, would die away out of the mind, beautifully but surely, like the echoes of Killarney. Lady Gregory has constructed a different kind of play—one full of the elemental passions of men and women. Not only that, but, like Shakespeare and Scott, she has recreated a civilisation which all the learning of our archaeologists and antiquaries has failed to realise to our minds. King Alfred is not as well known in England as he ought to be; yet he is known, and known as a great and good ruler, one of the greatest and best England has ever had. Brian—of an Irishman may say he—was a much greater man and did much greater things. Yet he is only known to the present generation of young Irishmen by the couplet—

"Brian Born, King of Munster,

Fixed a gun and shot a youngster."

That is what "national education" comes to in Ireland.

Into this sea of blank ignorance—which is common to all classes in Ireland—Lady Gregory suddenly bursts with an amazing story. Here, a century and a half before the Normans set foot on the east of Ireland, are palaces and prisons, ladies of high degree, disciplined armies, poetry, literature, learning, and art. "It was easy to believe all this, in a happy way, but what a revelation it is to see it in actual fact, as recorded, and brought to life again, by the genius of the author of 'Cuchullain of Muirthemne.'" That is the first and most lasting

impression the play gives—the recreation, for an hour or two, of a civilisation that has passed away. The next impression the play leaves on the mind is that of Gormleith, Brian's wife. She was the most wonderful woman of her time, at least in north-western Europe. The sister of the King of Leinster, she married the Danish King of Dublin. When he died she married the High King of Ireland. He drove her out in consequence of her political intrigues, and she then married the great Brian himself, the King of Munster, who ultimately made himself master of the whole island. Even at *Kincora* she could not stop intruding, and so Brian also got rid of her, the result being that she raised the whole Norse world, from the Orkneys to Denmark and Norway, against him. Still, her son, King of Dublin, with her consent, promised both Earl Sigard of Orkney, and Broder of Man, that if they came to her assistance their reward, in case of victory, would be Ireland as a kingdom, and Gormleith as a bride. She had no intention of fulfilling the contract in either case. Lady Gregory should have called her Gormleith, for Gormleith dominates the whole action from beginning to end. "The sword in the hand and the sheath on the floor!" she cries out delightedly when there is a falling out at *Kincora*. "That is a good sight in a king's house! War is best, war is best! When the swords of kings grow rusty in the sheath the height of the noon-tide will be over for the world!" When Brian asks the High King what it was that turned the Queen to be his enemy, and he answers that he never saw her, "unless she had some lover," Gormleith at once answers: "Some lover! The Dance could tell you I would rather lay my lips to a blue breastplate than to the whitest skin in the world." In the last act, again, when she is crying on her son and brother against Brian because he has brought peace to Ireland, she cries: "The heart is gone out from the young men of Ireland, and the blood from their bodies, and the daring from their lips, with their talk of peace and of learning. There is no praise now but for foolish messengers, and for monks and for saluts—old white-haired saints with palms and with fading. I am sick of this country of bells and churches—little walled-in churches. My churches are the hill-tops, blazing at the coming of the sun, the plains flaming with fire through the night time. I am for the gods that head great armies." "In peace," she says again, "the little men grow many, and the great men fewer, and the high bark beats slowly, and the trailer holds the way."

Lady Gregory, it will be seen, has created a memorable character in historical drama—one that should live. The acting, all round, was admirable. Gormleith is a difficult part to play, but Miss Marie McShinleigh, although in the last act she looked much too young, realised the character, especially as the scene from which I have quoted, where she denounced the peace of monks and churches. Mr. F. J. Fay's Brian was a competent piece of acting, and his make-up and general appearance suggested a Brian then which has never yet got into the imagination of the Irish people. The scenery and costumes, it should be mentioned, were designed by Mr. Robert Gregory, Lady Gregory's eldest young son. The acting was strictly in accordance with archaeological opinion as to the dress worn at the time, and the former was planned after the ideas so often put before the public by Mr. Teats. Nothing could be better. The wood at Clontarf in the last act is more suggested, on a screen. Yet it is a better wood than the most elaborate "set" wood some one sees every day in the commercial theatre. The Abbey Theatre has, I think, already fully justified its existence.

Caroline Herald March 31

A New Irish Play.

The Irish National Theatre Society has achieved a double success. By "*Kincora*," a new play in three acts, by Lady Gregory, which has just been produced at the Abbey Theatre. The play deals with the feelings of Brian Boru and of his wife Gormleith, a Norse Ancester, who is the evil genius of her husband and Ireland. It deals with the death of Brian in his last act at Clontarf. The play is full of passion and of so intense a force of action, and of so many fine scenes, with all the crises. The principal parts are well played, after the well-known methods of the Theatre Society. Mr. F. J. Fay and Miss Mary Walton.

THE NEW IRELAND REVIEW

JULY, 1905.

THE IRISH LITERARY REVIVAL: SOME LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES.¹

A BOOK has appeared in America, called, I believe (for I have not seen it), *William Butler Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival*. This suggests that someone considers the time appropriate to measure the achievement of literature in this country and its likelihood of progress. And, though I confess I do not agree with him, it is well to examine the credentials of a movement which, at least, has not been afflicted with an undeserved obscurity. No intellectual awakening could have been watched with greater interest; its slightest symptoms of development have been given a cosmic significance; and its leaders have, with some shew of plausibility, been privileged to claim the crown of martyrdom for one another. What more would you have to interest those delicate exotic young ladies who are pleased that *Cathleen ni Houlihan* is not a man: or the sympathetic reviewers who feel the weight of Ireland's woes and their own country's misdemeanours add authenticity to their utterances? The movement has, indeed, two classes of well-wishers. Some regard it as a charming piece of decoration on the sublime edifice of English Literature. They are responsible for its affectations. Others hope that it is the foundation of a distinctive edifice of Irish genius. Our folk-poetry has come to

¹ This article was written before the production of Mr. Colum's play, *The Land*.

the coteries of England and America as a new life. We do not grudge it to them: literature is the common heritage of humanity, but what is to them only the vehicle of a new sensation is to us as the chariot of Elias. Their praise is agreeable, but we should take it in a dignified manner: not like a child who tells everyone of its success, and wonders why it has been praised. We may admire such modesty even when we are suspicious of it; but we prefer to see approbation taken as the reward of real merit. When, therefore, the promoters of a theatre which has set forth on a herculean adventure speak of the praise which this or that critic has given to "our poor little company," we are inclined to say, "Damn you and your company: did such a craven heart ever succeed in a great adventure?"

I am sometimes forced to admit that circumstances justify the note of reconciled hopelessness in the work of Mr. Yeats and his associates, but if literature be the confession of a race, it should also be its resolution of amendment. There has come into the prose writings of Mr. Yeats—perhaps through has long contemplation of primitive minds—a note of apology, of naïveté, which in one so daring with his creative work, seems almost affectation. It has frequently prevented his work from receiving its due homage, though we can certainly appreciate it while being cognisant of such irrelevances. Again, while I admire the splendid friendship which has impelled him into his petulant defences of Mr. Synge, I am entitled to smile at his prophecies. Not at prophecy—it is the only godlike virtue the lowest of us is still permitted to exercise—but at the retributions which time is to thunder on Mr. Synge's critics. I hope that Mr. Synge is to have a European reputation, but I still await the evidences of it. So do many others. Are we too sceptical? Perhaps—but then Mr. Synge has been spoken of with Shakspeare, Aeschylus, and Heine, and it may be we have sought in his work some suspicion of an impossible synthesis. Then again, in a theatre which was to be art first, art second, and art third, we have heard heroic speeches very similar to the orations of the modern platform, and bagpipes between the acts to console us, I am certain, for the want of straw. We have seen a comedy (veritably a triumph of the obvious) belonging to that earlier tradition of Irish comedy which, we had supposed,

the Abbey Theatre came to abolish. However, we do not wish to press these points, for we recognise the difficulties attendant on a young movement; and we are by this time accustomed to the strange ways of "circles" in all countries. They have, not seldom, the unique power of dividing the world into two violent factions, one which is as proud of their personal idiosyncrasies as of their genius, and one which condemns both in the same category. Ireland seems to be at present so divided on the merits of Mr. Yeats and his companions—if indeed the opponents do not believe that indifference is a greater weapon than violence. There is room for a third party, yet, which shall welcome with a sane admiration all good literature. Such a party could, for instance, accept Mr. Yeats as a very great lyrical poet, without accepting him as a dramatist, a philosopher, or a leader in politics. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam!* It could admire the tales which Lady Gregory has so admirably laboured to popularise without, by that approval, sanctioning either her experiment in language, or a return to that primitive life! It could admire Mr. Synge's pulsing, beautiful dialogue, full of strange wandering lyricism, without thereby accepting Mr. Synge's views on matrimony or the saints. This surely is a plea for a most elementary sanity, but how few admit it! Those who do so are condemned for not accepting Mr. Synge's dramatic ventriloquism as the pure speech of the peasant. They are also condemned for praising in any way, a play which is not very mannerly or respectful to their beliefs. Yet it is with this central state of mind, sincere, critical, sympathetic, logical, definite, that the future of literature lies. The development of its authority will not only obtain an audience for the sincere artist: it will protect literature against irresponsible parodies of life. Aristophanes was applauded at Athens because he was sincere; he criticised out of a full life. In these modern plays there is no evidence of his wild exuberance. Their criticisms of life are too academic: they are not by men who have shared the struggle: they have but an external consciousness of Ireland's tragedy.

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would soil the purity of his art, but is not the capricious pessimism of the *Well of the Saints*—those three acts whose appeal is to the senses rather than to the intellect—propagandism? Are we to accept these as a dramatic vindication of pessimism? Goethe said the mark of genius is not originality but sincerity, and certainly great art should have a high seriousness. If art choose to deal with great things it must deal with them greatly. It has no especial privilege to trifle with hallowed things. Pessimism is as inadequately represented by Mr. Synge's blind couple as the poetic principle in life is by a poet whose symbol of revolt is his stomach. It is useless, therefore foolish, to ask a great artist to regulate his genius to the popular fashion, because Shakspeare unbent a little. "All original art," says Taine, "is self-regulated, and no original art can be regulated from without: it carries its own counterpoise, and does not receive it from elsewhere, it lives on its own blood." We do not ask our artists to change but we reserve our right to accept or reject them as they are. If they despise their audiences, they should not whine when the compliment is returned in kind. Sometimes they make unnecessary troubles for themselves. For instance, the substitution of the name, Abbey Theatre Company for Irish National Theatre Company (which is absurd), would make plain the way of drama here. To put the matter tersely: I do not understand what conception of honesty justifies Mr. Yeats in assuming the greatest Irish name it could bear for a theatre which is, at present, obnoxious to all but a handful of the Irish people. The establishment of a theatre in Dublin to play the masterpieces of all drama would be welcome. It would not be the National Theatre. The Abbey Theatre, at present, is doing something to stifle the dramatic impulse which a short time ago was apparent. The country is not yet ripe for a vagabond intellectualism, that menace of dialectic which Mr. Shaw and Mr. Chesterton, for instance, represent in England. This comes, not at the beginning, but at the end of a great literature. In a country where self-conscious literature is a new arrival it has, as it were, to prove its right to citizenship; it must shew that it is sincerely a part of the authentic business of life. Its own life depending on the intense inner life of the people, it should keep for that a seemly reverence and a respect. There is much to quarrel

with at present without tilting at the only phases in which ideals manifest themselves, at those beautiful "symbols in which the human conscience has sought for rest." There is, I am aware, too much aspersion cast on the work of Mr. Yeats and his colleagues without allowing to them their share of glory. Mr. Yeats, himself, has shown the importance of a people, and whatever be the fate of the Abbey Theatre, it will not be hard to establish his relationship with the coming literature in Ireland. Certainly, without him, literature in Gaelic would of necessity have been driven to the folk, but it is much that literature in English should work hand in hand with it in a two-fold revelation of the human conscience.

A country needs, for the creation of a literature, intellect and volition. It is not hard to see which has been lacking in Ireland. That volition has been killed by the political circumstances of the country, I can admit, even though I know the great German Renaissance of the eighteenth century arose in the time of internal chaos, and that the Italian Renaissance arose when little towns were bent on each other's destruction. These were civil wars, and civil war is frequently a war of ideas, a fight, not for existence, but for a wider liberation. It is, in fact, an evidence of virility. In Ireland the fight was for mere existence. It did not arise out of an intense national energy aroused towards a positive development of life. It was not the outcome of a superfluous virility, the overflowing of the will. It was a struggle for the minimum of liberty, desperate always because generations of monasticism had developed a race more intellectual than volitional. The only great civil war in the history of the country is the bloodless campaign of the Gaelic League. Rival clans certainly fought as did the mediaeval states in Italy, but it was the clash of pastoral peoples, among whom there was not the intense crowded life of the community to beget ideas. Were Ireland a nation of city states, in which the mind learns to epitomise everything, to cast off the wide lethargy of nature, it would probably have been politically and intellectually more successful. It took an Athens to beget a Phidias, a Socrates, a Pericles; a Florence to beget a Dante, a Leonardo, a Michael Angelo.

Yet political circumstances go but a little way to explain the astonishing spectacle of Ireland. An intel-

lilent nation is forced to rest, in the twentieth century, for its literary reputation on the quaint bizarre dreams of a nomadic age! What an absurd phenomenon! Certainly this literature is beautifully imaginative, but it is rarely intellectual. We take it as we take amusements, but it has no solace for the mind. We need in English authentic versions of these tales which will reproduce the epic qualities of the originals. That cannot be done through peasant speech, because such only gives an epic as the peasant mind conceives it—Cuchullain becomes a small farmer in County Galway. It is the twilight of the gods, we recall the fates which Heine meted out to these dethroned deities. Pope surely found a better medium for Homer than the dialect of William Barnes. Peasant speech among its native rocks has the strength of elemental things, but as the vehicle of a self-conscious literature, it is merely quaint and pleasant because of its freshness. It is like a young girl from the mountains who passes quietly, if awkwardly, in a breath of health and bloom, across the dull air of a city. We can imagine the coteries affecting her naïveté and her gaucheries for a period, but then—ah then!—she is forgotten, and like a wise girl she goes to a convent to learn her manners. There is, we must submit, a continual change taking place which is of the essence of life, even if it be not true progress.

Dialects have their place in literature as the direct expression of minds which habitually use them. They are, demonstrably, a success in lyrical poetry. They serve pre-eminently to express an emotional life, for their images are drawn from a world primarily connected with that: a world remote from the ken of a learned poetry. Passions which, though beautifully expressed, in this are often commonplace, become things of fire in that quaint intimate terminology. A dialect extends the terminology of passion, but it cannot do the work of a learned language. Language has grown out of dialects; it is still growing. It could do nothing else when left to itself. But it is absurd for those to whom Hiberno-English is no longer a natural medium of expression, a living speech, to express through it personal ideas or to narrate experience. Shall literature alone be content to deal with the narrow consciousness of the peasant in his own way, while science continues to reveal

to us wonders in the mental and physical world stranger than the fairy knowledge of Finn, or the amber hair of Mary Hynes?

It is accepted, I think, that we are an intellectual race. At present we seem to have volition. Consequently we are likely to create a literature at last. But what are to be its characteristics? Where its inspiration? We shall see the usual unconscious peasant poets, who will, however, go no farther than lyrical poetry. There may be a Barnes among them. We shall see, too, the conscious literary artist, poet, dramatist, or novelist, who will exploit the people. What is the people? We may, I think, divide it thus: Here is the Gael who sits at his fireside in the evening, crooning old battered songs that reconcile him with defeat, telling beautiful legends and stories of great queens: the pathetic, wistful secker in the unknown of whom we have heard. There is also the Gael, with his Aeschylean background of struggle and failure, facing the problems of modern life. Let us look for a moment at the fireside "Celt." He has already been expressed in literature. The pathos and wistfulness of his nature have come into page and page of the most varied writers, until the world's eyes grow moist by anticipation at his name. Fiona MacLeod bemoans him as she bemoans the setting sun, in sentences of corrugated brilliancy, and, at times, of foolishness. Mr. Yeats has revealed him more remotely as a being on visiting terms with the infinite. This Gael is not, we well know, quite "the baseless fabric of a vision," but he has been beautifully exaggerated. I have known these people of wonderful tales and legends and cures, which are only known to Biddy Early and other members of her wise profession. "As if," said Nietzsche, "there were a particular secret access unto knowledge which was obstructed for those who learn something, we believe in the folk and their wisdom." Is this type of "wise" peasant admirable? In tendency our later literature has held it up to veneration, and elevated it beyond those who have shed superstition and sought truth, day and night, through hard unresponsive ways. I admit its decorative value in literature, but in life it is futile, something which has been mesmerised into inaction by the grand spectacle of human development. Had it produced great idealism, great souls for which the unknown was a pure ideal to which all should be sacrificed,

we could not demur at the triumph of life over existence. But is it not true in Ireland that mean qualities, insincerity, selfishness, gossip, cowardice, lying, are most frequent among the most superstitious? The very part deceit plays in many of their tales is a symbol. The real idealist in Ireland, the real weaver of dreams, the seeker in the unknown, the wistful and faithful follower of desperate causes, is most frequently he who has ceased to look for fairies with money bags, and, at handgrips with modern life, has enriched religion with his imagination, and "loved the cause that never dies." Is it not something more than the consciousness of a remote economic benefit which impels the Dublin artisan to give his time and money to procure a Land Bill? Is it not something more than a thing of mere existence? Literature will be greatest when it rises from a deep stream of life, but the notion that in Ireland this life is restricted to the folk is absurd. The peasant of the *Celtic Twilight* has an especial value because he is an anachronism. He is picturesque; his speech is like spring water among the mountains; his ideas enable us to visualise a remote age. But is not the peasant awakening to new ideas, and looking with wide curious eyes over the large vistas of modern life, the nobler type, the more effective force, the real stuff of literature. Literature must be vitally concerned with human life: and human life, as it is something other than factories, etc., is also something other than ignorant beliefs and decayed superstitions. Yet, for their very quaintness, it will be interesting that some writers should continue to interest themselves with these. The main body, if it is to be effective, must take its place in the grand procession of the world's thought. With its feet well-bedded in its own age, it will assimilate all the past has to give, and enrich the ensuing race with whatever of truth its own labours can discover.

The development of the Catholic layman will be the most interesting phase in the future of literature. The Irish Literary Revival, as at present spoken of, connotes the work of A. E., Mr. Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Mr. Synge chiefly. Not one of them has been reared in Catholic tradition, and although Renan said genius does in a day the work of centuries, it is not clear that it can overcome in one the prejudices of many generations. These writers have broken with their

own tradition. Some of them are Nationalists. A.E., too, has laboured for the material welfare of the country. For all this, generations will hold them in esteem which yet cannot recall them unreservedly as masters. It is, perhaps, humanly impossible that their work should have all that sympathy which is necessary to a complete understanding of Ireland's soul. When they seek to express it in terms of their own consciousness they fail. They are not the light, but they have come to bear witness to the light. A fire has been kindled somewhere in Ireland of which we are conscious in the intense efforts towards expression which we meet everywhere. That is the real literary revival in Ireland—a great silence breaking slowly into a rumble as of distant guns.

What an age it is! What a time for a great naturalistic movement in literature in which naturalism shall not connote grossness. Is it the last effort of the Gael before he dies, or is it the restlessness which precedes creation? It matters little to the value of the age for literature. It takes nothing from the sublime dramatic spectacle that Ireland, in its widest struggle, presents at present. For myself, I believe that the awakening of ideas is the surest enemy to emigration, that the development of a literature intense with the problems of life will create a country worth living in. Let us judge the past by its results. The achievement of Babylon, Greece, and Rome is the moment we live in. Does it justify pessimism? Perhaps, but pessimism has its duties as well as its grumbles. The belief that no good can come of it all does not absolve us from the imperative of our ideals. It merely renders us less effective citizens than our optimistic brothers. But whatever be the final verdict on life, is not a new revelation of truth and beauty, a new incarnation of the divine, worth many centuries?

Here is a country, three-fourths of which believes in a religion full of appeal to the imagination—a great positive impulse in life. It is a child in literature. All the achievements of other peoples are as virgin soil for its intellect to work upon. Greece has been that it might be. It is, fortunately, encumbered with problems towards the solution of which all that knowledge can be employed. All the interrogations of life are coming to it

with the freshness and fascination of youth. With its deep consciousness of the infinite, it can stand, almost with the gods, on the threshold of eternity, and survey time. If it then continue to atrophy its existence in a pathetic, lethargic, reminiscence of ages that have served their purpose, it must again fail. This would be to ignore human life. The great literature of thought is the sincere arraignment by the human conscience of the forces which in each succeeding age determine the character of life.

MAURICE JOY.

The Lady Ap 6

Yeats, Borniman "Irish Theatre"
Again.

LADY GREGORY WRITES A PLAY.
AN UP-TO-DATE WOMAN AT KINCORA.

The theatre which the English lady, Miss Horniman, built for Mr. Yeats's company, produced last Saturday another play which we Irish historians regard as a masterpiece of modern conceptions. The play is called "The King of the Tents," and it professes to deal with the life of the great King Brian of Boru, but it is the evil wife, Gormlaith, the authoress, calls it. King Brian who is the real person, we get a picture of hearts and being made the toy of a fascinating woman, quite in the finest spirit of modern problem play. Anybody who has read the story of the Tribute man to be the hero has got to learn that the traitor and traitorous wife was the real hero of interest in the chivalrous and romantic Ireland that conquered the conquerors of the Danes.

is quite the style of the Yeatsian theatre all through. Since the actress Cathleen "showed us an Irish soul for gold, and since the noble legend of Diarmuid and Grania made by Messrs. Yeats and Moore "a Palmyra Royal play," as Mr. S. B. Yeats says, it is quite natural that not only the Yeatsian but the much-diverted Gorman should be the heroine of Cleopatra. THE CASTLE SOCIETY IN THE STALLS. An admiring correspondent of the "Pall Mall Gazette" records that there was the "most distinguished" audience of those days.

There is something wanting in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on Saturday night, when the curtain rose on Lady Gregory's new play, "Kincora," to make the occasion a memorable one in the history of the Irish literary movement. The house was full; and here and there in the stalls, were men who helped to give distinction to the audience, such, for instance, as Sir Antony MacDonnell and Mr. George Moore.

The correspondent frankly owns that King Brian was meant to be the hero, but the ex-Queen of Brian turned out to be quite too, too, interesting not to take first place.

Lady Gregory, when she wrote "Kineora," selected one of the most dramatic periods of Irish history, when the big crisis was approaching, and she made the God of the Gael come to the rescue in Erin. The man who decided that question was Brian of Kineora, who, beginning life as a younger brother to the King of Munster, ultimately became King of all Ireland. He was murdered, in the moment of his great victory, on his tent at Clontarf. It is evident from the title of the play, and from the text of it, that Lady Gregory, who wrote "Kineora," meant to make Brian should be the leading character of the drama. But he is not. It is Gormleith who is the leading character. Who is Gormleith? Brian was the master of the Kingdom of Leinster and she married the Danish King of Dublin. He died, I think, at Inna. She then married Malachi, the High King of Ireland, who resigned. The King Malachi drove her back to a while, she actually became the wife of Brian. In the course of time, however, Brian also got tired of her. She then went back to Dublin to her own father, and she was to help the Danes to defeat the Irish, but she helped the

I said to Lady Gregory, "Why didn't you call your play 'Gormleith'?" She smiled. "Gormleith," she said, "would mean some kind of woman problem, and 'Kinsora' would be criticised as 'The Well of the Saints' was criticised." She then went on to say that although her idea was to make King Brian the leading character of the drama, she found Gormleith constantly emerging. And that is only natural.

So then you have it. Those Casanova and Moore minstrels in the stalls would doubtless have yawned over an Irish hero who drove the foreigner into the sea, suggesting similar treatments for other foreigners perhaps; but a real, nice, exciting drama about an up-to-date lady of many husbands, who played with kings as with pawns on a "chessboard," is ever so much more modern, and no more dangerous to the foreign rule in Ireland than "The Gay Lord Quesix" or "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray."

It is to be supposed now that somebody will write a Yeats-Horniman play, called "The Norman Invasion," which will be all about the love affairs of O'Rourke's runaway spouse, or called "After Ben-burb," which will show that it was the blue eyes of a lady with a past brought Cromwell to Ireland. That is the way to have a "National Theatre" which will draw "the upper circles" of Kingstown and Rathfriland.

Lady. Pictorial
G. 8

[illegible]

Tablet Apr 15

At a meeting of the Catholic University Society, Mr. W. B. Yeats was at pains "the Irish peasant is not a monster of tendred with much eloquence that "the passion, or virtue which had not at s rolled the earth in Ireland."

The Abbey Theatre, which has recently been built for the production of Irish plays, has been well patronized during the week, as many people being anxious to see "Kincora," the new play written by Lady Gregory, who is one of the principal movers in this Irish literary movement. On the opening night of her play Lady Gregory held a series of private conversations with her guests included Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Anson and Lady MacDonnell, Miss MacDonald, Countess of Marleville, Mrs. Baileys, Miss Butler, Miss Strathfield, Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. Coffey, and others. The play, which has been previously performed at the Lyric Theatre, was so successful that arrangements are now being made for an orchestra to accompany the singing and dancing scenes. In the absence of the theatre, films and post-songs were sung behind the scenes.

The amateur theatricals, which were to have taken place last week, are postponed until next week, owing to the fact that the Panchang Club, having been disappointed in their first week's engagements, will fill Panchang's week to overflowing.

The parties begin with a race meeting at Phoenix Park on Saturday, the 8th, when their Excellencies are expected to be present. Lord and Lady Salisbury will also be present on Sunday afternoon, and a few days later, who are at present absent, will return to the city.

An extensive large house-party at the Castle for the next fortnight.

Ladies Field *Apr 8*

LADY GREGORY produced her play, "Kincora," in the Abbey Theatre on Saturday, the 25th ult., and it was continued during the whole of the past week.

The Abbey Theatre was lately opened, chiefly for the production of Irish plays or plays by Irish authors. It is a very pretty little building, very small and there is no provision made for an orchestra. The Irish plays do without any orchestral accompaniment, but in "Kincora" gleees or part-songs are sung behind the scenes. Lady Gregory entertained a number of friends after the opening performance on the last Saturday night, viz Sir Anthony and Lady MacDonnell, Count and Countess Markevitz, Miss Butler, Miss MacDonnell, Mrs. Bailey, and Mr. Martin were present among others. The play was well received, and the scenery painted by Mr. Gregory, was much admired. The audiences during the week have been representative.

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College Library demonstrate that virtue." He con- was not any sin, se time or other

new part into an Irish play, wrote in the local language, would not make him a little more national in spirit, even though a more or less wrote in the English language, Irish, Gaelic, or the writer (hear, hear). The artist's freedom must be free from the tyranny of the laws of one kind or another, and still they got some true standard of criticism, simply by judging acts from their relation to what they would never have a home in Ireland, there the art of literature could grow properly (applause).

The vote of thanks was passed unanimously.

Mr. Kettle having been moved to the second bar.

Mr. Richard Glynn moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Russell, Mr. Yeats, and Mr. Colton. Mr. Little seconded the vote of thanks, which was carried unanimously.

The vote having been acknowledged, the proceedings terminated.

IRISH THEATRE SOCIETY. 1917

THE GALLERY OF MODERN ART.

On Saturday evening in the Abbey Theatre a large and very fashionable and appreciative audience attended the special performance given by the members of the Irish National Theatre Society. The proceeds will be devoted to the new Gallery of Modern Art, and the occasion was under Vice-regal patronage, and also under the patronage of the Chief Secretary. The plays chosen were three that have already become well known, and which have secured a notable success. The first was "The Hour Glass" (A Morality), by W. B. Yeats. The cast was as follows:—A Wine Man, F. J. Fay; His Wife, Mairé Ni Shuibhlaigh; His Children, Eithne Ni Shuibhlaigh and Padraig Ni Shuibhlaigh; His Pupils, P. Mac Scathlaigh, L. Wright, and A. Sinclair; An Angel, Mairé Ni Shuibhlaigh; A Fool, George Roberts. The second piece was "A Pot of Broth," a farce in one act, by W. B. Yeats, and the cast was:—A Beggarman, W. G. Fay; Bibby, Mairé Ni Shuibhlaigh; John (her husband), George Roberts. The programme concluded with Lady Gregory's charming one-act comedy, "Spreading the News," in which the cast was as follows:—Barley, Fallon, W. G. Fay; Mrs. Fallon, Sara Algood; Mrs. Todd, Emma Vernon; Mrs. Tarper, Mairé Ni Shuibhlaigh; Sharna Early, J. H. Dunne; Tim Casey, George Roberts; James Ryan, Arthur Sinclair; Jack Smith, P. Mac Scathlaigh; a Policeman, E. S. Nash; a Remonstrating Magistrate, F. J. Fay.

To those who had not previously had the good fortune to be present at these performances the occasion must have been particularly interesting and instructive. Many who had formed preconceived notions as to the quality of the work of the new department to the advantage of the new department.

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Sphere May 13

One of the charms of Dublin in my opinion is to be found in the facility with which it attracts the interesting people. There are many circles in the literary world as against the dozen or more that may be found in London—there is the circle

of Trinity College and the circle of the Gaelic movement. It is more than an occasion to be associated with Trinity College, my friend, Professor Dowden; the circle of the Gaelic movement. It was my privilege to meet Dr. Samuel Beckett, the president of the Gaelic League; Mr. W. B. Yeats; Dr. Sigerson, the president of the National Literary Society; Mr. W. B. Robinson; Mr. George Russell, perhaps better known as "A. E."; and a number of others, not forgetting Mr. W. F. Bailey, one of the three Irish Land Commissioners, who has hopeful things to report concerning recent sales of land to the people. Mr. Bailey is a universal favourite in the literary circles of both England and Ireland.

I must not forget in connection a visit to one of the Irish plays. It will be remembered that Dublin now boasts an Irish National Theatre Society and a theatre known as the Abbey Theatre. One night while I was in Ireland, *Kincora*, by Lady Gregory, was played at this theatre; and the evening that I was present *The King's Threshold*, by Mr. Yeats, and *The Building Fund*, by Mr. William Joyce, were performed. Both were singularly interesting plays of quite different character, the one representing the Ireland of Dreamland, the other the genuine realism. But I have no space here to pursue this matter further or to give my readers who know nothing of Dublin the slightest idea of the interesting manner in which that city is able to enjoy an intellectual life of its own.

Notes, 1917

It baoglae nāp tuigean : sceapc an ghoia to rpsiomamg peactham o pou : oiaoe "Kincora," nō b'porep gup pinn pēan nāp tuig an tuigpāp : sceapc. "Se an tēis bameamg ap poeub spēce to bi pān tēpām gupb' i an tēamap sonao-cannarōce thaopeactham to pēp nūpāp an tēpām. Tā a pōp as an tēam nāp' i. Act amhūmgo go oucūan "Ri na tēamap" ap ām. Rīs ēpāmāp ap pēp : tēpāp cap ēp tēamap to eūmām. tēpāmēp "The Hour-Glass" 7 tēpām ēte an tēpām po gab tēpām.

Times Apr 12

Speaking at a discussion by members of the Rowan Colburn University College Literary Society on the subject of the new school of literature and drama in Ireland, Mr. W. B. Yeats said that the battle of that movement was going to be fought around Mr. Synge. If Mr. Synge lived another 25 years he would have a European reputation. Any man in Ireland, there was not any sin, passion, or virtue which had not at some time or other walked the streets of Ireland. If Mr. Synge created a piece of self-sufficient Irish life, set it in an Irish village, and made it speak with an authentic Irish voice, they might be sure that if that passion or virtue was not existing there yesterday, it would be to-morrow. It was not true that the Irish peasant was a monster of virtue. They must leave a man to get into drama, poetry, and stories, the imagination which was inside his ribs. All that the founders of the Irish theatre could do was to give a stage and see that a good play was refined performance. There, the man must be done by their country. Refusing to a speaker the objection to the fact that the piece which was accorded



SCENE FROM "SPREADING THE NEWS" BY LADY GREGORY.

pressed by its serious motive. It was excellently acted by Mr. F. J. Fay, Mr. George Roberts, and Miss Mary MacGowry, and Miss Mary Walker, the first-named much enhancing the reputation he has already achieved under the sign of the Shells. The same actress's "A Pot of Broth," which is an avowed farce, and was equally well acted by Mr. W. G. Fay, Miss MacGowry, and Mr. George Roberts. Finally Lady Gregory's bright and interesting little work "Spreading the News," with its lively caricature of incident, was well presented by the full forces of the company—Mr. W. G. Fay, Mr. F. J. Fay, Mr. Geo. Roberts, Miss Hanly, Miss Emma Vernon, Miss MacGowry, Mr. J. H. Dunne, Mr. Arthur Sinclair, Mr. P. Walker, and Mr. E. S. Nash. The comic effect was as long as we saw, and the art absorption of the audience was not unshared by either thought or vehicle.

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Friday & Saturday
evening*

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at 8-15.

THE KING'S THRESHOLD, by
W. B. Yeats, and THE BUILD-
ING FUND, by William Boyle, on
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From a Special Portrait

LADY GREGORY.

(By Councillor, Dublin.

When play, "Kincora," was successfully produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, during the early days of the present month.

John Kennedy afterwards pointed out, had been known to appear in the Palais Royal leading a lobster by a piece of blue string. Mr. T. M. Kettle, following, made the problem more definite when he said that he could never understand what the word symbolism meant, since all literature is founded on symbols. In a sense this is true.

Any logician will tell you that "a word" is the symbol of an idea, and, of course, so likewise is the metaphor, such as "fire" to represent the idea of "love"; save that the metaphor "fire" is a less symbol than the word "love." In the case of very hackneyed metaphors, such as that of fire for love, the metaphor is in truth but little less common than the word. Now, since all literature is made up of words and illuminated with metaphors, it is evidently not the presence of "symbols" that makes a writing symbolic. "Symbolism" probably means that symbols or metaphors are used which convey no clear and easily understood ideas.

Now a metaphor may convey no idea, either because we cannot understand the metaphor, or because we cannot understand the idea represented by it. The idea behind "Mystical Rose," "Ark of the Covenant," or "Tower of Ivory," in the Litany, is quite clear, but the symbols, though of exquisite beauty, are unusual, and were it not for the context, would be hard to understand. As it is, they are a proof that the employment of unusual symbols and metaphors may be quite justified, and you will find abundant instances of this in the Psalms. In all such cases, however, the darkness is in the symbol and not in the idea. Symbolism becomes utterly condemnable when the idea behind is indefinite, as if one were to use "mystical rose" for the pleasure of the words without knowing what he meant by it.

"Mysticism" is another word much misunderstood. It is commonly thought of as connected with indefiniteness, mist and symbolism, that is not to be understood. In any proper sense, however, it has no reference to any of these. "Mysticism" means arriving at ideas, otherwise than by an exercise of the reason, as, for instance, we arrive at certain religious ideas. It has very often reference to those ideas of the good and the beautiful which we arrive at otherwise than by mere reasoning. Now, it seems to me that, if a "symbolic" poem be also "mystic," in the true sense, it must, as far as its "ideas" are concerned, treat of things

easily understandable. For though there are many trains of metaphysical reasoning which the ordinary man—"the enemy," as Mr. Yeats referred to him—cannot hope to appreciate, yet as regards "mystic" ideas—ideas that we do not arrive at by reason—even the least instructed mind can attain to them. And so we find it in religion. Hence, we see that the mystic, if he is to be a "symbolist," must necessarily be clear in his ideas, and can at most be obscure in his unusual metaphors.

Now, personally, I must say that I prefer literature that uses clear and easily understood symbols and metaphors, though I equally recognise that there is a place for the other. But when it comes to drama, I think the case different. There the art is essentially a popular one, the very purpose of a play is to reach an audience of common men—an audience that, perhaps, does not read very much. If so, there is no place in it for obscure and unusual language, or for symbols that cannot be easily understood. A phrase such as "mystical rose" would be out of place in a dramatic production. Still less, of course, must the idea be obscure. The new Irish dramatists have produced four really good plays—"The Heather Field," "The Binding of the Bough," "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," and "Kincora Bough," "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," and "Kincora Bough." In all of these the language has been clear and simple, and the ideas easy to understand; and, in addition, they have possessed the character of "action," which is really the essential quality of a play.

Mr. Yeats, in defending himself, delivered a clever and witty speech, quite devoid of mystery. The audience kindly enjoyed his tussle with Mr. J. Kennedy over the question, whether *Bismarck* is meaningless or

THE LEADER. APRIL 15, 1905.

THE SYMBOLISTS AT THE COLLEGE.

SOME two hundred persons spent a very agreeable evening last Saturday. The scene was the assembled tenements of the mere grinding establishment in Stephen's Green, and the occasion Mr. Cruise O'Brien's paper on the "New School of Literature and Drama" in Ireland. Mr. O'Brien is the coming man of the college, and his paper was a remarkable achievement.

As for me only at the beginning of his student career; indeed, one's chief criticism would be that it displayed too open a mind, an undue capacity for harbouring intellectual positions necessarily in themselves opposed. The subject of the debate was practically the merits of our Dublin Symbolists, and by a happy thought Mr. O'Brien invited Mr. Yeats and Mr. Colum to come and defend themselves before that college from whose loins issued of old the stern race that of a night assembled to explode the Countess Cathleen.

Mr. O'Brien's youth and modesty lead him, as I have said, to a position, which is not a position, but a position.

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BY THE

Irish National Theatre Society

OF

"The Hour Glass."

"A Pot of Broth."

... AND ...

"Spreading the News."

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ON

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By W. B. YEATS.

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His Wife	-	-	-	MAIRE NI GHARDAIGH
His Children	-	-	-	(KITHIE NI SHIOBHLAIGH & PAERGAEL NI SHIOBHLAIGH
His Pupils	-	-	-	(P. MAC SHIOBHLAIGH, U. WRIGHT, & A. SINCLAIR,
As Angel	-	-	-	MAIRE NI SHIOBHLAIGH
A Fool	-	-	-	GEORGE ROBERTS



"A POT OF BROTH."

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

By W. B. YEATS.

A Beggarman	-	-	-	W. G. FAY
Sibby	-	-	-	MAIRE NI GHARDAIGH
John, her husband	-	-	-	GEORGE ROBERTS



"Spreading the News."

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

By LADY GREGORY

Bartley Fallon	-	-	-	W. G. FAY
Mrs. Fallon	-	-	-	SARA ALWOOD
Mrs. Tully	-	-	-	EMMA VERNON
Mrs. Tarpey	-	-	-	MAIRE NI GHARDAIGH
Shawn Early	-	-	-	J. H. DUNNE
Tim Casey	-	-	-	GEORGE ROBERTS
James Ryan	-	-	-	ARTHUR SINCLAIR
Jack Smith	-	-	-	P. MAC SHIOBHLAIGH
A Policeman	-	-	-	H. E. NASH
A Removable Magistrate	-	-	-	F. J. FAY

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meaningful. I believe it is understood that "symbolism" will be one of the leading issues in the coming election for authorship. I certainly cannot agree with Mr. Yeats in his idea that it does not matter what an author's views are, whether they be right or wrong. This idea, which I understand does correspond to the idea of the modern English school, as Professor J. J. Thomson, as to the sacred truth, will, I trust, never be abandoned. I do not think Mr. Yeats and others can gain much by proving that beauty is a conservative and conventional, merely

dependent on the fashion of the age or the art of the moment. Unless beauty, truth and virtue, are real things, Art is, and the poet is but akin to the barrel-organ.

The most surprising feature of the evening was "E's" banishment of the idea of nationality. Mr. O'Brien pointed out that "E's" poems were in no sense national, and "E" replied by saying that the ideals of Art were higher than those of Nationality and often opposed to them, and referred to Shelley as an example. Now, there are, of course, many, especially socialists, who hold these views. But the man who holds them has no right

to style himself "Nationalist," sober or otherwise, and has no place, except from reasons of his personal convenience, among the founders of a National Theatre. Such a declaration in favour of cosmopolitanism as against nationality will render Mr. Russell's views easier to understand, and make his intellectual standpoint more rational and consistent than it has hitherto been.

CHANCELLER.

Freeman Ap 15

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

THE GALLERY OF MODERN ART.

On Saturday evening in the Abbey Theatre a large and very fashionable and appreciative audience attended the special performance given by the members of the Irish National Theatre Society. The proceeds will be devoted to the new Gallery of Modern Art, and the occasion was under Vieregal patronage, and also under the patronage of the Chief Secretary. The plays chosen were three that have already become well known, and which have secured a notable success. The first was "The Hour Glass" (A Morality), by W. B. Yeats. The cast was as follows:—A Wise Man, P. J. Fay; His Wife, Maize N. Gharbigh; His Children, Ethne N. Gharbigh and Padraig; His Servants, R. P. Mac Gharbigh, U. Wright, and A. Smead; An Angel, Maize N. Gharbigh; A Fool, George Roberts. The second piece was "A Pot of Broth," a farce in one act, by W. B. Yeats, and the cast was—A Beggarman, W. G. Fay; Sibby, Maize N. Gharbigh; John O'Connell, George Roberts. The programme concluded with Lady Gregory's charming comic comedy, "Spreading the News," in which the cast was as follows:—Hartley Fallon, W. G. Fay; Mrs. Fallon, Sara Algood; Mrs. Tilly, Emma Vernon; Mrs. Tarpey, Maize N. Gharbigh; Shawny Eady, J. H. Dunne; Tim Casey, George Roberts; John Ryan, Arthur Sinclair; Jack Smith, P. Mac Gharbigh; a Policeman, R. S. Nash; a Resolute Magistrate, P. J. Fay.

To those who had not previously had the good fortune to be present at these performances the occasion must have been particularly interesting and instructive. Many who had formed preconceived notions not altogether to the advantage of the new departure in the methods of composition and presentation of these little dramas were sure to find that these have had their minds freed

from a dominating attitude of such prejudice. A practical experience of worth any amount of reading is secondhand opinion on this matter, and no one who personally attends and studies the plays can very well fail to be impressed with the subjects, the natural, simple dialogue, clearly indicating the characters of character, and the really effective way in which the attention of the audience is concentrated upon the personages of the plays and what they say and do. The performances were, in every respect, most interesting, and much applauded, all the society being called before the curtain at the close of each sketch.

Centleman Ap 29

A very interesting performance took place at the National Theatre last week, when a triple bill was presented. The items were Mr. Yeats' "The Hour Glass" (a morality fragment), "A Pot of Broth," by the same author, and Lady Gregory's delightful little play, "Spreading the News," which brought the whole company to the number of ten on the stage. The main ideas in the National Theatre is that the plays shall be thoroughly Irish in style, sentiment, and surroundings, that no fictitious aids of scenery or costumes shall be utilized to heighten the effects, but that art in its dramatic role shall speak for itself. So far, I understand, the performers have generously given their services, and no fees have been charged for performing any of the plays.

The Lady Ap 29

Lady MacDonnell it was who arranged the performance at the Abbey Theatre in aid of the National Art Gallery of Ireland, which it is hoped will soon be founded. The plays selected were two of Mr. Yeats', "The Pot of Broth" and "The Hour Glass," both of which had been played before by the Irish National Theatre, and Lady Gregory's bright little work, "Spreading the News." The actors all belonged to the Irish National Theatre, with Mr. F. J. Fay at their head. The theatre was full, many representative people being present. Lord Mayo, in his lecture on "Art in Ireland" in a Monday evening, at 6, Stephen's Green, spoke of this theatre, which was built through the generosity of Miss Horniman; it also touched on the proposed Gallery of Modern Art, in which the Prince and Princess of Wales have subscribed by the presentation of pictures. The arts and crafts of Ireland have in great measure been fostered by Lord Mayo himself, and he stated that during the past year several other enterprises have been started, including the Tate Gallery Company and the Dux Ems Publishing Company. Lord Mayo's lecture was attentively listened to by a large number of the members of the National Literary Society and their friends.

Ladies Field Ap 29

LADY MACDONNELL organized a performance in the Abbey Theatre a few nights ago, the proceeds being in aid of the proposed art gallery for Ireland. The bill presented was a triple one, two pieces being from the pen of Mr. Yeats, "The Hour Glass" and "A Pot of Broth," and "Spreading the News," an interesting little play by Lady Gregory. The theatre was well filled, and the pieces were cordially received, notwithstanding that the mounting was meagre and that there was no orchestra, both items, music and scenery, being dispensed with by the Irish Literary Theatre. The usual connection connected with the theatre, under the management of Mr. Fay, played in each piece, and the dramatic interest was so well sustained throughout the evening that the absence of elaborate scenery was not much noticeable. The proceeds must needs be a help towards Mr. Lane's ardent desire to furnish an art gallery; he has already received marked support, and the presentation of pictures by the Prince and Princess of Wales and Lady Pembroke, with several gifts from Irish people themselves, has given a substantial start to the project.

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

During Easter week the Irish National Theatre Society have decided to produce again Lady Gregory's very historical play "Kathleen" which had such a great success a few weeks ago when it was played for the first time on any stage by the Society at the Abbey Theatre. Three performances of "Kathleen" will be given, the first on Easter Monday night, which will give visitors in Dublin an opportunity of seeing a remarkable Irish play. The cast will be the same as before.

On Easter Tuesday the Society will produce for the first time on any stage another very good play the Irish new play that they have produced this season. This is a little art comedy in the style of "The Building Fund," the author of which is Mr. William Doyle, the Secretary of the Irish Literary Society of London. Along with "The Building Fund," Mr. Yeats' play, in verse, "The King's Threshold," will be acted for the first time on any stage. Three performances will also be given of "The Building Fund" and "The King's Threshold."

1905

Our notice of last Saturday night's performance of the Irish National Theatre Society announced erroneously that "the occasion was under Vieregal patronage and also under the patronage of the Chief Secretary." The performance was organised by the Ladies' Theatre Society in aid of the establishment of a Modern Art Gallery in Dublin, and if any of the Vieregal party were there it was simply because they paid their money at the doors like any other.

To mail

Ap 22



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MURROUGH, his son.	George Roberts
MALACHI, High King of Ireland.	A. Power
GORMLEITH, his wife, afterwards wife of Brian.	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
SITRIC, her son by Olaf of the Danes.	Proinsias MacSiubhlaigh
MAELMORA, her brother, King of Leinster.	Seumas O'Sullivan
BRENNAIN } DERRICK }	Brian's servants { Arthur Sinclair W. G. Fay
RURY, Malachi's servant.	J. H. Dunne
PHELAN, Maelmora's servant.	U. Wright
MAIRE, Brennain's daughter.	Maire Ni Gharbhaigh
AOIBHELL, a woman of the Sidhe.	Sara Allgood
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Explan June 8

THE ABBEY THEATRE.

On Friday evening, 8th June, the Irish National Theatre Society will produce a new play at the Abbey Theatre. This play, which is by Mr. P. Coler, is entitled "The Land," and is in three acts. The scene is laid in the Irish midlands. It will be remembered that last year Mr. Coler's play, "Broken Soil," was produced by the Society at the Metropolitan Hall, and afterwards at the Abbey Theatre. Indeed, when the Society paid a visit to the English metropolis, and players who remember the scenes shown in "Broken Soil" will look forward with interest to seeing Mr. Coler's new play, and noting the progress made by this young dramatist. Along with Mr. Coler's play the Society will stage Mr. Yeats' beautiful morality, "The Hour Glass," about which Mr. Walsley, the leading English dramatic critic, wrote so enthusiastically when the Irish National Theatre Society paid its first visit to London.

Explan June 10

THE IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.

NEW PLAY: "THE LAND."

Although this is hardly theatre-going weather, there was an excellent and enthusiastic house at the Abbey Theatre last night to witness the National Theatre Society's performance. There were two pieces on the bill—"The Hour Glass," by W. R. Yeats, and "The Land," a new three-act play by Padraic Coler.

Mr. Yeats's beautiful little "morality" is too well-known to Dublin audiences to call for detailed notice. A few alterations have been made in it, but they are trifling, and not, we think, all for the better. Mr. F. J. Fay, as the Wise Man, rose above even the high level we expect from him. The part of the Fool was filled by Mr. George Roberts, and that of the Angel by Miss Mairé Ní Shuibhéal.

But the chief interest of the evening was, of course, "The Land." It is an ambitious title, but it was the only title possible. Everything in the play springs out of the land, and the mind of every actor in it is coloured by love or hatred of the land. It is not surprising that Mr. Coler's title should happen to be a translation from M. Zola. Nowhere has the psychology of those who live on the land been so exhaustively studied as in France. There is hardly a year in which a couple of the best novels do not handle what is essentially Mr. Coler's problem, the revolt of the new generation against the grey drudgery of agriculture and their streaming flight to the cities. The most remarkable of such studies is, perhaps, M. René Bazin's "Terre au Moulin." And isn't it a life altogether different from the life that we have been longing for? says one of a chorus of emigrants in "The Land." "To be doing other work and to be meeting strange people. And instead of bare roads and market towns, to be seeing streets, crowds and theatres." Mr. Coler liked to be right with almost as good warrant have adopted a title from "Terre au Moulin," and called his play "Fathers and Sons." For, from another point of view, it is a conflict of generation with generation. The old generation, being the land as M. Zola

said like an incubator, obeying the whims and fancies of the land as actually, as extravagantly as an Oriental Ruler, is served, stands on the one side, flanked by all of patriarchal tradition. The family, the family name married indissolubly to this or that district, the atmosphere of stability, these are its social orthodoxy. "How could he go," says the father, "and be the last of the name?" For the son had said, "I'm not here of the name, but that won't keep me here." On the other side stands the new, uprooted, restless generation. It has broken away from the despotism of the land and of tradition; it has discovered individuality, and it has discovered cities.

It must not be supposed from what we have said that "The Land" is a mere staging of sociological problems. It is more a cutting beyond dispute in Mr. Coler's work it is his power of creating individuals. All his characters are drawn with a clear, firm hand. But he has created individuals that are at the same time types; and it is in this way, and in this way alone, that the theatre can be a criticism of life. The characters of "The Land" are Martin Douras, a farmer, "a hard, strong man"; his son, Matt; his daughter, Sally; Martin Douras, a neighboring farmer, a refined, scholarly man, but somewhat unequal to the business of the world; his daughter, Ellen, a schoolmistress, just out of the training college; and his son, Cornelius. Matt is in love with Ellen; and the struggle in his soul between love for her and love for the land and the amplitudes from which she would tear him, is the central motive of the play. The plot exhibits the culmination of the struggle to its crisis, and the decision. Martin Douras is a harsh, masterful man. He has grown up in that social system in which the family was everything, and had room in it for only one individuality—added to it his head. These patriarchal ideas, added to a native hardness, have driven away from him all his son except Matt. Matt is a deep, patient nature; he has put his work into the land and loves it. As he says himself: "I was always shy of crowds. I'm simple after all, Ellen, and have no thought beyond the land." He has borne a long time with his father's hardness; but when Martin comes between him and Ellen, and contemptuously refuses to accept for a daughter-in-law the penniless child of Martin Douras, Matt rises in revolt. The play shows him breaking away from the land, waving back to it, and at last flinging it aside for ever, and sailing to America to make a home for Ellen, who secures a school and waits on him for a year.

The characters are drawn with firmness, and an absolute loyalty to fact. Martin Douras, Matt, Martin Douras, Sally, Cornelius, we have all met in actual contemporary life. We confess to a little doubt about Ellen. It was necessary to make her the protagonist of revolt, and naturally to idealize her character, say so the less amiable elements of her character. But she remains, on the whole, an unsympathetic, and hardly justified even to her own mind. Mr. Coler's dialogue is admirable. It lives, which is everything. It is strong, colorful, and when it comes into lyricism, as when Martin rejoices over the redeemed land, or Ellen asks Matt for the sights of cities, as in the song a man offers towns to his sweetheart. The play too has a curious social consciousness. It was written in the early days of the war, the whole action being compressed into something less than two hours.

Miss Ní Gharbháigh, as Ellen Douras, had a very exciting role, and on the whole she filled it admirably. But admirably, it was hardly as unobtrusive or abrupt as one would imagine the part, and at times she was on the borderline of melodrama. As Matt Cosgrove, Mr. Mac Shuibhéal was almost perfect. He was strong, showed a keen eye and a quickening; and Mr. F. J. Fay's Martin Douras is one of the most careful and convincing studies we have ever had from him. Mr. W. G. Fay, as Martin Cosgrove, seemed to be unobtrusive, misinterpreted by the audience. He has made his reputation as a humorous parts, and his very appearance on the stage seems to create a prima facie case for laughter. As a result of this, his Marty Cosgrove seems to be taken too much too lightly, and the deep irony, the essential

tragedy of the part, were hardly appreciated. Corcoran was played delightfully by Mr. Arthur Sinclair; and Sally, by Miss Sarah Alford. Both parts are broadly humorous—that must be granted; but humor is little more than a point of view; and when one changes the point of view and considered the relative social "size" of the two who go from the land, and of the two who stay, and remembered certain human statistics, one began to see grave things behind the laughter.

No play yet produced in the Abbey Theatre has so gripped and held captive an audience. There have been fuller houses, but never more enthusiastic. What we have been waiting for was a play that should be at once good and popular. Mr. Yeats has proved a little too abstract, and Mr. Synge a little too lazaré to get fully down to the hearts of the people. What distinguishes "The Land" and gives it a special value in the development of the Abbey Theatre is the spirit and subject. Mr. Coler has caught up his play out of the mainstream of actual Irish life. He has built it around that problem which will be in his in history that to some people it has seemed: if Ireland had no other history. And he has kept himself loyal to the same plane as his characters. He sees things from their point of view, and puts their sorrows sympathetically on the stage. With a security beyond praise he has exhibited the psychology of one of the largest facts of Irish life. "The Land" is a human, actual play; it stands in a definite, luminous relation to the Ireland in which we all live and move; but if the unusually warm reception which it had last night means anything, it means that the Abbey Theatre has at last given its audience the sort of play that they want. It is the type of play

that will make the theatre popular and powerful.

At the fall of the curtain the author was called on the stage, and received a tremendous ovation. In response to impetuous demands for a speech, he bled out a few words, and said that, to his mind, the function of the theatre was to put before the people strong, great types, and so contribute to the evolution in Ireland of a great democracy.

The programme will be repeated on Friday night, June 16th.

Explan June 10

THE LAND HUNGER

NEW IRISH PLAY.

"The Land," a play in three acts, was presented for the first time last night in the Abbey Theatre, Lower Abbey street. It is the work of Mr. Padraic Coler, a young writer who has found in the Irish National Theatre Society the means of enabling the public to become acquainted with his powers as a playwright. If the title be expressed to indicate the scope of the play, the name be allowed might have been "The Land Hunger," rather than "The Land." It is much more a play of passion than of action. But both passion and action arise wholly from that extraordinary land hunger—that desire among the peasantry for possession of the soil which has been the cause of so much social unrest in the country. The "Land" reveals truths of immensity, that possibly will disappear in later efforts of the author. It is most instructive in the third act, where, after some inarticulate wailing, lament of the class which one would anticipate are treated to an anti-drama that is genuinely disappointing. The first great merit of the play is that it is distinctly original. The dramatic material is taken from what has in

source. "The second great merit of the play is that it is honest."

Mr. Francis Walker, as Matt, and Mr. Arthur...



SCENE FROM "THE HOUR GLASS," BY W. R. YEATS.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

(Photo by Chamberlain)

it meant to be a moving invocation, and yet is as like what might be said by a man of Matt's class and in his position, that one cannot take exception to it. The strongest character of the play is Muriagh Cooger. His heart and soul are wrapped up in the soil. He has toiled on it by day and dreamt of it by night. He has slave-driven his children on the land, with the belief that all of them

would, and that apply it with effect in portraying some phases of rural life. As the title implies, "The Land" relates to the land question, and especially to recent agrarian legislation which enables the occupier to become owner of the soil. The scene is laid in an Irish Midland county, where a party consisting of tenant farmers assemble at the house of Muriagh Cooger to confer and arrange the terms upon which they should purchase their respective holdings. The scene which this meeting presents is perfectly natural, and indicates close acquaintance on the part of the author with the method adopted by the peasantry in many parts of the country to negotiate the terms under which they propose to become owners of the soil. The meeting shows very clearly the almost insatiable desire of the peasantry for possession of the land, and the importance they attach to the old homesteads. In striking contrast to this scene is the party of emigrants introduced in the second act, and representing a younger generation whose ideas differ from those of their fathers as to the value of land, and lead them to prefer trying their fortune in other countries and under other conditions than those which bound the life of the ordinary Irish farmer. There is some home-making running through the story, which helps to brighten it and divert the mind from the more serious incidents in which it abounds. Some of the characters are strongly drawn, particularly Muriagh Cooger, Martin Doonan, and Ellen, his daughter, to whom Cooger's son, Matt, offers his hand in marriage, but his suit is rejected on the ground that she objects to become the wife of a farmer. The part of Muriagh Cooger is taken by Mr. W. G. Fay, an actor possessing ability which should lead to his success in plays of a class which would appeal to, and attract, larger audiences. Mr. F. J. Fay has studied the character of Martin Doonan with excellent effect, and his impersonation of the old farmer was natural and true to the author's conception. Barn Allgood did ample justice to the role of Sally, Muriagh Cooger's daughter, and Arthur Macdonagh played the part of Cornelius Doonan very carefully, helping the play along satisfactorily to its successful close. As Ellen Doonan Maire Ni Gharrbhagh acquitted herself admirably. The role gave scope for the expression of mingled feelings of love and passion, and she met the demand which it made upon her with true dramatic skill and power. Matt Cooger was adequately represented by P. J. MacDonagh and groups of men and boys and girls—farmers bent on purchasing their farms and the emigration party strengthened and completed the company. At the close of last night's performance, 10 farmers, with

One of the charms of Dublin in my eyes is to be found in the facility with which one meets the interesting people. There are practically only two circles in the literary world as against the dozen or more that may be found in London—there is the circle of Trinity College and the circle of what may be called the Gaelic movement. It has been my privilege on more than one occasion to be the guest of the circle associated with Trinity College, notably of my friend, Professor Dowden; this time I rather came across the enthusiasts of the Irish Gaelic movement. It was my privilege to meet Dr. Douglas Hyde, the president of the Gaelic League; Mr. W. B. Yeats, Dr. Sigerson, the president of the National Literary Society; Mr. W. B. Rolleston; Mr. George Russell, perhaps better known as "A. E."; and a number of others, not forgetting Mr. W. F. Bailey, one of the three Irish Land Commissioners, who has hopeful things to report concerning recent sales of land to the people. Mr. Bailey is a universal favorite in the literary circles of both England and Ireland. *Saturday May '05*

I must not forget in this connection a visit to one of the Irish plays. It will be remembered that Dublin now boasts an Irish National Theatre Society and a theatre known as the Abbey Theatre. One night while I was in Ireland *Kilvoona*, by Lady Gregory, was played at this theatre; and the evening that I was present *The King's Threshold*, by Mr. Yeats, and *The Building Fund*, by Mr. William Boyle, were performed. Both were singularly interesting plays of quite different character, the one representing the Ireland of Dreamland, the other the grimiest realism. But I have no space here to pursue this matter further or to give my readers who know nothing of Dublin the slightest idea of the interesting manner in which that city is able to enjoy an intellectual life of its own.

to him, acted with a power and...

the poet born on a sheep farm in Oregon. The second great merit of the play is that it is intensely natural. Even in the arid climate, with which it concludes, one has to admit that the probabilities are that the marriage between Billy Cogan and Corinella Duane would be the ultimate result of a similar set of circumstances in real life. The dialogue displays the most intimate acquaintance with the speech of the peasantry in the Midlands of Ireland. It is even more natural than the incidents. And this fact sometimes leads to curious effects. As an example of this I may refer to the explanation of Matt Cogan, the son of the well-to-do farmer Murrath Cogan, who has fallen in love with Ellen Duane, the daughter of a poor tenant farmer. Matt explains to his father, who does not consider Ellen a suitable match, how when he shows signs of relenting, and of desiring to return to his father, Ellen turns on him furiously and upbraids him. He protests in quite a tragic fashion, and in the midst of his protest he exclaims: "My God, am I to be treated evermore like a better strayed into a patch of oats?" The simile, amusing in itself, seems out of place in what it meant to be a moving invocation, and yet it is so like what might be said by a man of Matt's class and in his position, that one cannot take exception to it. The strongest character in the play is the strange character of Ellen. Her heart and soul are wrapped up in the soil. He has loved on it by day and dreamt of it by night. He has alive-driven his children on the land, with the result that all of them, save his youngest son and daughter, have joined in the rush of the young to America. The newly-brother, land hanging instinct that his own between him and the elder children is the cause of his quarrels with them, and his remaining son, Matt, and Matt's weakness in returning to his father so that he may not lose all the labour which he has expended on the land, are the result of a rift between him and his sweetheart. The thought of losing his land has remained more too much for the old man, and at the same time the thought of the girl who has been proposed marriage. But his girl comes to him. Ellen, who as a girl with noetics, has had a real awakening. She has reconsidered her position, and she has decided that she will never go into a farmer's house. Much as she loves Matt, she would prefer to retain her freedom rather than be himself down. She has decided to go to America, and she turns upon her father in a fit of mingled bad temper and despair, and Murrath philosophically tells her that she is free to go, and thus leaving his daughter Billy to Corinella Duane and giving them the land, and thus bringing about the anti-climax already predicted. The play is a masterpiece of a pool of excellent comedy, based on contemporary developments in reference to the wearing of the land. Purchase Act, and the various other conditions which are entertained by a considerable section of the peasantry. The play

the purpose of the low comedy part. Mr. Francis Walker, as Matt, and Mr. Arthur Kennedy, as Cornelius, were also good. Some of the "sopors" were a little wooden, but outside the "Comedie Francaise" the wooden "sopors" is an almost universal institution. At the conclusion of the play there was a good talk for the audience, and a reference to the "sopors" appeared on the stage and made a brief speech, in which he referred in terms of appreciation to Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. W. G. Fay and his brother, Mr. F. J. Fay, for their efforts in rendering possible the development of an Irish dramatic movement. Prior to the performance of "The Sopors" was a grand representation of Mr. W. B. Yeats' morality play, "The Bear Glass."

CONCISE

HINES NATIONAL THEATRE

the pen of Mr. W. B. Yeats. The author's theme here is the work of Mr. Patrick Cavan, a young author, who appears to possess the dramatic instinct, and can apply it with effect in portraying some phases of rural life. As the title implies, the *Land* relates to the land question, and especially to the agrarian legislation which enchains the occupiers of the poorer of the soil. The scenes are laid in an Irish tenement farmers' slum, where a party consisting of Michael, a young man, and a woman, of Michael's mother, are gathered together. Michael compares to under and arranges the topics which they should purchase their respective interests. The scenes which this meeting gives rise to are particularly well described, and acquaintance on the part of the author with the method adopted by the peasantry in the matter of the land question is apparent in the terms under which they propose to negotiate the ownership of the soil. The meeting shows very clearly the almost insupportable desire of the peasantry to possess the land, and the importance they attach to the old homestead.

[illegible]

Independence June 10

Fellman - by F. Fay

A NEW PLAY: "THE LAND"

sat round a table placed in front of a sofa and to see the quiet of that group, engaged in a pointed argument, was more finely artistic than any grouping I had seen on the stage for a long time. There was none of that feeling of unnecessary crowding to and fro to break up the scene—such sensation that there was movement only because the actors felt that they were tiring their audience by remaining too long in the same attitude—and when the scene at last rose from the table, it was the dramatic breaking up of that particular episode. The value of quiet and stillness can never be sufficiently appreciated or entered by stage-managers. . . . Restlessness on the stage is one of the most distracting elements to the attention of the public."

The new play to be given on Friday evening is by Mr. Colm, and is in three acts. Mr. Colm's play portrays life in the Irish Midlands, and he has called it "The Land." Remembering the promise shown by his last play, "Broken Soil," produced by the Society at the Mollsworth Hall last year, and afterwards given by them at the Haymarket Theatre, London, the production of "The Land" will be looked forward to with interest. The cast includes—Miss Marie, Mr. Gharibagh, Miss Sam Allgood, Miss Emma Vernon, Mr. J. Sinclair, Mr. F. J. Fay, and Mr. W. G. Fay. Mr. Yeats' Morality, "The Hour Glass," will be acted along with Mr. Colm's play.

Matt June 10

"THE LAND."

MR. COLUM'S PLAY AT THE ABBEY THEATRE

In our respect the Great Unacted of Dublin are infinitely more fortunate than their fellows of London: If their dramatic talent be of all above the average a stage and a public await them. Therefore it is possible for clever young writers like Mr. Colm to secure a hearing for their work almost before the ink on the last page is dry instead of waiting innumerable stamps in vain efforts to elicit the sympathy of flinty-hearted and extremely commercial actor-managers. This is all to the advantage of the drama generally and of the playwright in particular, for the weaknesses and the weaknesses of a play are more obvious on the stage than in the study.

A little band of Irish playwrights are at present going to school, so to speak, at the Abbey Theatre, and as I have seen practically every play which has been produced by the National Theatre Society since it began the labours in the modest hall in Queen's street I may be entitled to express the belief

that the most promising dramatist which the Society possesses is Mr. Colm. "The Land" is not a play of action; it is really an analysis of the sentiments and the emotions of a group of typical Irish peasants, but it is full of life, and throbs with deep human interest. Mr. Colm has woven two fine incidents into the texture of his play, but the central figure in the two Irish "heroines" is Muriel O'Connell, the warm farmer, whose heart is granite and whose soul is as steady as the clock which he has been turning all his life. His farm is his world, and beyond the bounds of the afternoon ditch the world holds nothing for him except the market place where he sells his stock. His loneliness is as acute and as insupportable as the miser's hunger for gold. He looks on his daughters and his ploughlands with glittering

on nothing else in his life even upon his own children. To them he has been as a leprosy, and yet by one they have left him and sought a peace and more congenial life on the other side of the Atlantic. One aim, Matt—a poor-spirited, half-brooding type of humanity—alone remains beneath the paternal roof. He is in love with Ellen Deane, and it is this tenderness for the daughter of a man who does not touch Muriel O'Connell's standard of propriety, which causes the quarrel between father and son. Ellen, too, has her ambitions, but they do not lean towards the land. She is for the streets, the shops, and the theatre, her eyes danger for "the sights of great towns, and the fine manners and the fine life."

Therefore when Matt, having quarrelled with his father and left the paternal threshold with bitter words on his lips and bitter thoughts in his heart, weakly returns to his slavery, her desire for emancipation from the land overcomes her love. A farmer's roof is not high enough for her, nor will a labourer's love recompense her for the disruption of her dreams. In an outbreak of furious but pathetic rage she breaks from Matt, and he failing to alter her decision even when strengthened by his father's consent to the marriage, follows the boys to America, and leaves the house of O'Connell and Deane to be united in the person of Sally and Cornelius. The ending of the play is weak, but it is not at all improbable.

Mr. Colm has chosen his types well and has written his play with care. The characters are excellently drawn, and the language when they speak is simple, forcible, and remarkably natural. Indeed, all through the performance last night one hardly realised—except during the weary waits between the acts—that one was in a theatre. The impression created was that the audience was taking surreptitious glances into two Irish kitchens and eaves-dropping on the occupants.

I have watched the development of the histrionic power of the Society's players for now a couple of years, and each performance reaches a higher standard of excellence. We have known Mr. W. G. Fay chiefly as a comedian, and his brother Mr. F. J. Fay as a player of poetic parts. Last night, in the parts of Muriel O'Connell and Matt Deane, they gave us two consistent and wonderfully well conceived character studies. Miss M'Carthy's interpretation of the role of Ellen was extremely good, particularly in the chief scene with Matt O'Connell. The Society possesses a very clever little comedienne in Miss Allgood. Her Sally was very amusing and she never allowed face to push comedy off the stage into the wings. Mr. Walter's Matt and Mr. Sinclair's Cornelius were sufficiently good, but none care might be taken with advantage of the facial make-up of some of the name characters.

Before the presentation of "The Land" the Society's programme gave a very interesting reading of Mr. Yeats' morality play "The Hour Glass."

R. M.

U.S. June 17

The intervention of a holiday necessarily interferes with the arrangements of a weekly journal, and we are, therefore, unable this week to deal with Padraic Colum's play, "The Land," which is being produced nightly at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. It is nightly the first and best of the plays produced in the Abbey—the work of a man of real dramatic genius, and one who knows the people of whom he writes. In our next issue we shall deal at length with a play which places its author head-and-shoulders above all the dramatists of the theatre with which he is connected.

The Times

A NEW IRISH PLAY.

(FROM OUR DUBLIN CORRESPONDENT.)

DUBLIN, Saturday.

Last night the Irish Literary Theatre produced, at its headquarters, the Abbey Theatre, a new play, entitled, *The Land*, by Padraic Colum. The theatre has, during the season, produced four or five new plays, and all the time kept up a very high standard of excellence. The Land might not, perhaps, be considered by English people to be the point of full appreciation; but to the mind of an intelligent Irishman it is a wonderfully true picture of Irish rural life as it is lived in the present day. The motif of the play is the terrible barrenness clinging to the soil, on the one side, on the part of the old people, and the wild and irresponsible desire of their children to get away from the dull life of the country to the streets and lights and glories of the cities of America. One would not have thought that a drama could so vividly illustrate a social problem. But here, really, stand accuracy and definiteness—perhaps for the first time—was the last agrarian question, from an inside point of view. As a light on that question it was worth all the special meals in recent years by members of the Irish Literary Society, or even by Mr. Balfour and Mr. George Wyndham. But, above all, *The Land* is an admirable play, well constructed, full of excellent character-drawing, and packed full with the essential elements of a good drama, human that is not nature and tragedy that is not nature.

JUNE 21, 1905.

TO-DAY.

Padraic Colum's New Play.

MR. PADRAIC COLUM'S new three-act play, "The Land," which was produced last week in Dublin by the Irish National Theatre Society, has been accepted by the people with an enthusiasm more general than has been accorded to any other modern Irish drama. Mr. Colum, indeed, has accomplished a strong and illuminating piece of dramatic work, which is all the more to be praised because it expresses a definite and personal point of view. "The Land" is the work of an artist, but of an artist who loves the smell of ploughed earth and the falling of rain, and balances this love exquisitely with the love of spiritual things. The motive passions of the play are the especially Irish passion for owning and working a piece of land, the more modern passion which sets a country girl dreaming of the "streets and crowds and theatres" of town, and the terrible passion of a young man to leave his father's roof and tread his own path in the world. There is tragedy here, the bitter tragedy of the conflict with ideals, and Mr. Colum has used his material with knowledge and sympathy, with great technical skill, and with that hint of poetic exuberance which is the breath of true art. His characters—the desolate, land-loving father; the town-sprung girl, Ellen; her despairing liberty-craving lover; her make-shift father, who has been in jail for the cause; and the rest—are all distinctly and imaginatively drawn. Mr. Colum deserved all the cheers which were showered on him, and which ultimately drew from him a wise speech on the function of the theatre. The acting of the play was interpretative and beyond praise.



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	Padragain Nic Shiubhlaigh
	P. Mac Shiubhlaigh
HIS PUPILS	U. Wright
	A. Sinclair
AN ANGEL	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
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MATT, his son	Proinsias Mac Shiubhlaigh
SALLY, his daughter	Sara Allgood
MARTIN DOURAS, a farmer	F. J. Fay
CORNELIUS, his son	Arthur Sinclair
ELLEN, his daughter	Maire Ni Gharbhaigh

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
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Leader June 17-

A PLAY THAT ONE CAN STAND—AND UNDERSTAND.

I THINK I once excited somebody's displeasure, and roused the spirit of sarcasm, by suggesting that what Ireland wanted was a novelist who knew how to express her. Perhaps I said "a great novelist," or something of that sort, but it does not matter; I was given to understand that whatever it was I pleaded for was out of the question—in the present stage of our development, at least. Yet here has come something rather like the very thing I wanted, only it comes as a play, not as a novel. No matter about that. Every real art-work is welcome to me, no matter what the form it takes. I pass no judgment as to whether Mr. Colum is actually a great playwright or not; I welcome anybody who can write a play on Irish life that a sane man can not only sit out, but enjoy, and want to see done again.

The new play is quite a short one, though in three acts. But though short in measure it is long in meaning; there is a great deal in it, and it is alive throughout. There are no flabby bits in it; no dead passages, padding, or reminiscences of somebody else. The dialogue is so natural, so full of rural Anglo-Irish idiom and turn of phrase, that there is not a false note in it anywhere; it is like reading "Knocknagow"—only, of course, a "Knocknagow" brought down to date. Mind, it does not "recall" "Knocknagow," or anything else, for that matter; what I say is that it is just as natural, and gives us the genuine Anglo-Irish idiom just as faithfully. This play, in fact, is like a bit of Irish life, snatched up, and put upon the stage; it does not feel like a written play at all, but just like life, speaking for itself. Whoever thinks that Irish life is so bare and poor a thing that no play or novel could be made out of it should just come and see "The Land."

A play can always be made out of men and women with natural passions in them, and our country people have just as much nature and passion in them as other people. Mr. Colum, knowing this, has given us a play, and not a fakement of old clichés. The very title of the play is apposite, and yet the play itself contradicts all the expectations which such a title would have raised some years ago. Here are no crinoline scenes, no sheriffs, land-agents, bailiffs, redcoats, R.I.C. men, and all the things that used to be indispensable; nothing but the people themselves, as the people, and not as anti-Garrismists. As for "the upper classes" and their parasites, they don't come in anywhere, and one relishes the play from beginning to end, without any of that diversion of mind or feeling inevitable where class is posed or pitted against class. Anglo-Irish Ireland is shown as an organism with a vitality of its own, and not as something merely anti-this or anti-that.

The story may be told in a word. All the characters are either farmers, or farmers' sons and daughters. Murtagh Cogar and Martin Douras, both old men, have each a son and daughter. Sally Cogar and Cornelius Douras, without any elaborate love-making, pair off quite naturally, and give nobody any trouble. These two admirable characters, both quite genuine, are full of humour which never dawns on themselves, but which gives the audience many a droll moment. The trouble is with the other son and daughter, Matt Cogar and Ellen Douras. They are engaged; have been for years. Ellen is getting impatient. She is a trained school-teacher, and has just got an offer of a school. Matt cannot give her a home just yet, for his father, "a hard man to deal with," is not only very much alive, but is set against Ellen Douras, the fortuneless school-teacher, as a wife for his son. The old man and the young man quarrel over it, and the first act ends with Matt leaving his father's house, as good as determined to go to America with Ellen Douras. In the second act he tells Ellen what has happened. She wants him to leave all, and go to America with her. Matt has cooled down a

little by this time, and says that the very sort of life that Ellen longs for—crowds and excitement—is one he is not fitted for. This does not please Ellen, who flames out into a passion of scorn on learning that Matt's father has spoken depreciatorily of the Douras family, of whose "economic sense" and "efficiency" he has a rather poor opinion. The America fever, too, rises in her with her rising passion; she will not be a farmer's wife, nor a schoolmistress! To America she will go. Quarrelling with Matt because of his father's opinion of her family, and Matt's own hesitation about flinging everything to the winds for her sake, and flying to America with her, she orders him out of her father's house. So ends the second act. Matt goes home again. The old man, dreading to lose his son, has given way, and is willing to let the marriage take place. He does not announce his concession very gushingly, but he is quiet and sincere. Old Martin Douras is in the house at the time—a quiet, peace-loving old man, never without a newspaper. Ellen comes to the door looking for her father, and Murtagh Cogar bids her come in, and renews his offer in her presence. But she is wound up to an heroic pitch of crankiness and America fever, and she declines the offer, on the grounds of her antipathy to be a farmer's wife, and her desire for a different sort of life in another country. She leaves the house, and Matt, after a few moments of gloom, resolves to go to America with a large party of emigrants from the neighbourhood. Making the best of a bad situation, the two old men strike up a match between their two remaining children, Cornelius and Sally, and the play ends with the arrival and betrothal of the pair, and one of Cornelius's triumphs of unconsciously humorous eloquence.

And is that all? No, nor half all. In the first act of the play all our sympathy is on the side of Matt and his sweetheart, and we dislike Matt's father for being "such a hard man." In the second act we realize that our sympathy is thrown away on one of the parties, and that Miss Ellen, the school-teacher, is not really worthy of Matt; that she loves nothing so much as herself, except her own way, and that she is a bit of a shrew, to boot. Matt, too, we find to be a rather weak man, as likely to be the slave of this shrew as he had been of his father. Sidelights show us his defects. His father complains of having had to get up at some unearthly hour to drive cattle out of some place they had strayed into. He has to bid the son go and do something he might well have thought of by himself. The son seems rather like hands without a head, or else a head filled too much with Ellen Douras, on the inexperienced and slack farming methods of whose family old Murtagh Cogar comments in very direct terms. Somehow we begin to disavow the young people, and to respect the old man. We see that he has some grit and ability, and knows his own mind. Moreover, a party of the emigrants who make a call at the Douras's and are entertained with tea, rather lower our opinion of America fever as a form of enthusiasm, and throw

Murtagh Cogar, "the hard man," who sticks to the land, and has no craving for crowds and excitement in America, into highly flattering relief. Everything that happens heightens this relief, and Miss Ellen Douras, who won't take a school that the P.P. was getting her, and won't take a husband who can only offer her a farm of land, and not a new life in America, puts the cap on the matter, and confirms us on the side of the "hard man," making us feel that it would take a long time to say all that could be said for him. His reasonable willingness to give way, rather than lose his son, puts us on better terms with him, and the fatality of his concession makes us feel as if he were right all along. We realize that Ellen Douras, with her "notions" and her flights, is a rather selfish shrew, and that Matt is going to waste his life on her, and that he will find out too late that love is as great a lottery as marriage, and that Miss Ellen is not one of the prizes.

respect for the old man heights, reaching its climax when he and Martin Douras put the best face they can on things by a match between their two remaining children. Somehow, all the good sense in this play, as well as all the cheerful nonsense, belongs to the people who want—or are willing—to stick to the land. All the tightness, weakness, irrational selfishness and want of ballast, seems to belong to the enthusiastic emigrants. I am not suggesting that Mr. Colum had any set intention of evoking this result; I simply say that it is the result that offers itself, and it suggests the thought that the Irish problem is not to be settled by running away from Ireland.

The play, let me add, is replete with humorous touches, and is a thoroughly entertaining one all through. The dialogue, while strictly natural, is perfectly up to date, and the action is so brisk that we are carried along to the end, almost before we know it. Mr. Colum has written a comedy at once natural in manner, and masterly in technique, and I think we may count safely on its frequent re-appearance.

The acting and mounting of the play were admirable. Whoever "designed the dresses" hit the mark in the very centre. The "sleeved-waistcoats" of the men, the big skirts of old Martin Douras's country-tailored coat, the hard hat (half-high) and leggings of the District Councillor, the make of each individual man's clothes and the differentiation of his head-gear—all were admirable. And the acting corresponded. I may have seen greater acting, but not more natural. Mr. W. G. Fay as Murtagh Cogar was the very man he ought to have been, voice and all. His slight change in manner after Matt leaves him, his touch of softness and anxiety could hardly have been better. Mr. MacSinnhaigh gave a very natural rendering of the part of Matt Cogar, while Miss Sara Allgood as Sally Cogar was actuality itself. Mr. F. J. Fay had not a very difficult part in Martin Douras, but he made the most of it, in the artistic sense. Mr. Arthur Sinclair made a good Cornelius Douras, while Miss Maire Ni Gharbhagh played Ellen Douras, and, on the whole, she made the best of a somewhat unnatural character. In the more natural parts of Ellen's character Miss Ni Gharbhagh never touched falsetto. The land purchasers and the emigrants were all well done, some to the very life.

Well, Mr. Colum has done his part, and the Messrs. Fay and their associates have done theirs. It only remains with the Irish public now not to let a good thing die.

IMAA.

THE IRISH HOMESTEAD.

AN IRISH AGRARIAN TRAGEDY.

Mr. Colum's new play, whose cycle of seven first performances has just been given in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin is the present talk of the literary group which help to make the Irish metropolis a pleasant place for men of a social and cultivated intelligence. But it is a great deal more than this. It is not the first of these seven-day wonders which the Abbey Theatre has launched upon the stream of urbane talk which ebbs and flows continually in Dublin, nor will it be the last. But it marks a new and important epoch in the history of the "Irish Literary Theatre"—the movement which Mr. W. B. Yeats' *Countess Kathleen* and Mr. Edward Martyn's *Heather Field*, set going towards the close of the nineties. The *Land* is the first real peasant drama which this movement has produced. There have been poem plays and "folk" plays, and farces, and the beautiful of mythical play *Deirdre*, and the finely conceived psychology of *Heather Field*; but it has remained for Mr. Colum, who has lived with the peasants, and knows them all his life, to go beyond the interesting folk studies of those who, like Lady Gregory, for instance, come to the peasant as a rare and captivating person whose idioms and manners are a welcome relief from the complexities of self-conscious city life. Studies in the Kiltaran dialect and folk psychology of a grim sardonic type, like Mr. Synge's *Widow Wines*, are very well. Such work is important and interesting, and is a welcome, but Mr. Colum's is different; it goes deeper, and to the true revelation of the Irish peasant heart, and grows from within. The story of "The Land" is very stirring, and yet it needs acting, and good sympathetic acting, such as that of the Messrs. Fay, Miss Allgood, Mr. MacSinnhaigh, and Mr. Sinclair gave it to bring out the full meaning of its tragedy.

Two farmers' families are involved in the Murtagh Cogar has been a "hard," self-contained man all his sixty odd years of life, and has prospered. He and his neighbours are negotiating for the purchase of their land under the recent Act, and the ambitions of his eldest daughter he seems likely to realise all his mind, but he keeps it locked up in his own heart—all his children save these two have left him for the glamorous attractions of American life. Martin Douras has not been so fortunate as his neighbour. He is more refined and sensitive, but less force, and though he was in prison for "the cause" in the days of agrarian strife, he is not one of those who can avail himself of (Cornelius) and a daughter (Ellen). What strength of character however, restless, imaginative, and, like her father, sensitive, and is not happy in the life around her. Ellen is privately

engaged to Matt, the son of Murtagh Cogar, who is something of a dreamer too, but with a big dash of his father's determination. The folk to this couple are Cornelius Douras, who is weak-minded, with a feeling for rhetoric and an incapacity to distinguish between the value of high-sounding words and any real capability in action, and Sally, Matt's sister, a person of active disposition but harelained and incompetent. It is in the union of these two couples that the tragedy is latent. When Murtagh Cogar discovers that his son wants to marry Martin Douras' daughter he vetoes the marriage. Murtagh Cogar seizes Ellen for a daughter-in-law, and Matt defies his father, though not without a temporary hesitancy which leads to a short estrangement from Ellen. Matt's heart is her's, but the land—his father's land and his—holds him for just long enough to weaken Ellen's fondness for him.

In the height of this crisis the fever for emigration, which is the last and greatest of the ills of Ireland, is rife in the district, and Ellen, who has waited long for Matt, and sees no result of her waiting, is infected by it. In vain the prospect of a school in a neighbouring county for which she has been trained is held out to her. She must go, and in an interview full of repressed reproach she takes leave of Matt at the very moment that his father consents to the marriage. Dazed and furious, Matt turns on the father who has rejected too late.

The curtain descends upon an incident so poignantly if humorously sarcastic, that one can only think of Ibsen's work for parallels. Cornelius, the son of the smaller farmer, whose energies have all turned to verbiage and the cultivation of oratorical platitude, is speaking to his father just as the men who are negotiating for the purchase of their holdings are returning successful in their bargain, and just as the two active and able people of the play, Cornelius's sister and her lover, have arranged to spend their life together in America—

"CORNELIUS—'Aren't they foolish to be going away like that at the mouth of the good time?' The men will soon be coming in, and you might say a few words." (*Martin shakes his head.*)
MURTAGH and SALLY try to restrain CORNELIUS.
"Men of Ballykilduff, you might say, 'Stay on the land and you'll be saved body and soul; you'll be saved in the sea and in the nation.' The nation! Men of Ballykilduff, do you ever think of it at

all? Do you ever think of the Irish nation that is waiting all this time to be born?' (*He becomes more excited. He is seen to be struggling with words.*) CURTAIN."

"The nation that is waiting to be born." That is the sad irony of life in Ireland to-day. The men who should be the fathers and mothers of the New Ireland are leaving us, and the Corneliuses and the Sallys, the unfit, the talkers, and the old, remain behind, and take into their unskilled hands the shaping of the nation's destiny. If other forces were not also at work in Ireland, in the Gaelic League, the co-operative movement, and the literary movement, trying to build it up from within, one would despair of the future of the country. One of these builders is Mr. Colum himself. He is a very young man, and, though his genius is undeniable, he can scarcely yet be said to have reached to the heights of great drama. But he has written a fine play with scarcely any great drama. It has been written as it should be re-written, and he has produced in scarcely form, a piece of life, real, tragical, poignant, written alike out of the fullness of the heart, and out of the clear vision of a swift and active brain. The dialogue is powerful and compact, the characterisation deft, clean, definite, and subtle; the idiom is just as it should be: never "precious," never strained, never stilted; and the conception is broad, human, and one might add, profound.

I shall be surprised if the future does not prove that Ireland has found in Mr. Colum a great interpreter of her sad and silent life—the life of the people who cling to the land and their kin are walled upon by their cravings for a wider kind of experience—the pathos of all simple self-conscious creatures thrown into the light of a larger, if not a wiser, intelligence and a fiercer and more poignant life begins to burn within them.

EDITHA.

"An Talam": psojais
Colm do reinfob.



Níl aon faoi ar isiribeadt d'air sair
 n-éil nó'n tóir an rreac agur anam
 aicme doime éom éirinn víreac léir
 an tóirín. Áirín víreacéit, f'ean-
 ríreac víreacéit na nó agur na tóir,
 na-ríreac víreacéit na nuinnéiré fén,
 ir fíor go gcuiréann ríar nó go léir
 i gcóir tóirín beafa na nóime, acé
 ní áir a éiré a tóirac agur tóirac
 an tóirín.

‘Se bpiḡ an rḡeil gupb i nāpūn
atā aḡ eipḡiḡe ḡap eip ḡeip-tean-
hante cḡpḡiḡe beipḡeḡiḡe na ḡpḡm-
anḡa mḡpā : nī pḡiḡap ḡ’aon ḡpḡam
ḡaone obapḡ bḡiḡḡmḡp ḡ’e’n cḡpḡe
pḡ ā ḡḡanḡm mḡnḡp ḡḡlḡḡḡ ḡiḡ
cḡpḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡ mḡnḡ ḡḡḡ ḡiḡḡ an
ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ cḡpḡḡ ap ḡeipḡ ap an
mḡpḡḡ ḡ ap an cḡpḡḡ.

17 ann fin nwar atá fíat ag cast-
 eam a nroépacra le n-a mór-ghiom-
 acúab a dúp i gceip. 17 ann fin
 raobruigean fíat na brámannna
 bpiogmar. Mar fin ve, fear atá ag
 fíogabab bráma caipró pé fuim tar
 blep a dúp pa mbacabab uile pa
 mbpóm ? pa luéúgá, pa brúac ? pa
 ngáú; caipró pé anam na bráome
 no gneamúgá ? no dúipnín ar fáb,
 uip fear ? ag, uip ípéal ? uapal,
 caipró pé i éapbeain uáinn gan
 taba a dúp léice, gan taba a baime
 uáici, ? pá veipe caipró pé brúgáú
 dúige péin, corp mullacáú no-
 gneitce a dúp ar a anam péin dúm
 gan focal ar uile a dúp ípceac i
 mbéi tuime na mbéab úpreamac
 peileamác no'n tuime fin.

[illegible]

móp cãp an leshap go ap na replohad
i mDeapla, dip baint nã páipc nã
aige le Deapla nó le Soltoact;
Saorhalac 'reac é ó cãp go veipe.

Tarpeianam pē pasctanap na hoitpe
agur mēlan na hoitpe acā le tēdnam
g Conqarō na Šavēlšas ap fuv na
hišpeann uile, paol pās ap gurp
ēigin vo'n buacatit impecctamail.
Euaite peo a ōpāma Alunn a pcpūbār
i Saep-Dēapla 7 ē cōm Šavōbalc 7
tā pē—Šavōbalc o'n gcnām go vci
an rmōpē.

Baineann fé leif an tOidhain 7 an
fgeál acla le inneacat aige baineann
fé leif an tOidhain éireann. 'Sé an
fean-fgeál tóim é—an tfean-
fhallacé. Tá na fean-baineann ann—
na fean-baineann na baint a gceir
allur 7 na éirí a gceir feola go
fáilpíng fíneacat leif an tOidhain
fin na fíneacat, 7 san de fíne
acla ann, gan de fíneacat acla acla
an tOidhain.

An bfuil aca aca ar an dealmáin
an fear-a-éirí beirnean fíad' uol'
calamh n' p'óirín é' é' é' n' n' n'
fíneimige ná map aca pé le páisil ra
nóimá reo, óp a n-a-éirí amac
aca na daoine óga. Cuiseann fíad-
ran fíneim pp'ir ra dealmáin é'quar
leo á bfuil an oisean póla 7 allur
leo péin píeáa' áic, áic n' máir leo
7 n' calam n'á cigeapna oppa. Tá
uol' aca-fén 7 neitib eile na é, tá
uol' aca fa égneann 7 fa éspáil, tá
uol' é'páirce aca 7'na c'páicab
lómnaea éap leao á bfuil na daoine
óga 7 na daoine uairé c'om lómnap
lómnaea 7 an beaia c'om beoabá
7 beaialp an óp 7 an ap'p'io, nap leo,
ap' áic aon nap.

Tógann an gairí iriseach le iad a
cúppaigh 7 'fe' cphoc an rseil 50
deirdeann an beirt a gairí rpsac 7
sur ionnta cap opum na pean-mapa
san páigáil fa mbaile ag na pean-
naomh leir an deilam rpsa a
cábaire deir ac beirt leat-amatán

Iy b'pōnāc an rḡēāl ē 7 an rēap
atā 5ā atēpū tūḡēann rē ō tūp 5ō
vērpe bōḡ an b'pōm. Tā an cōmāḡō.

uile dom fimplíobh le cainte daonm
 tuairce 7 é ap an am cearta dom
 binn beo-bán, bpiogshap, le anhn nóp
 le sean-uán. Marib le na daonm
 ná coirpige beauidh ní féarfaó pé
 gan ian a sholós zap domm ; ní ipciú
 i "oCeapne" ní cú 7 cú as éirceac
 leo ácc i sceap-láp éirimeac
 peiméapa fearcap clor i longpoc
 Uí feargaile.

Sé Lom-clár na pleana go brúil
 plog "órámaicéir" ar n-a cairbéine
 ra veipne "náp meárg" i gce linn péim
 ó áoiseann ná gáiseoiseann. I gca
 an tá a bhrú na ceipéineoiré ag epláir
 an an veipne acá gá pearsa le
 ciannóiré ar pon eolman na
 héipeann : acé té an eipne péim acá
 gá n-áiré acá, ní hé anam na
 eáiseáil. Sé a bí ag ceapáil
 uainne ceipéineoiréineac a ceipé-
 peat i gceáil uáinn an e-anam ro.
 Seo ágainn é fá veipne, ná cuipmíir
 pailíre ann.

seosam ó niall

our people for the old Irish bachelors, residing in the city, when he and Martin Doucass put the best face they can on things by a match between their two remaining children. Somehow, all the good wives in this play, as well as all the cheerful housewives, belongs to the people who are willing—to stick to the land. All the flightiness, weakness, irrational selfishness and want of balance, seems to belong to the enthusiastic emigrants. I am not suggesting that Mr. O'Sullivan had any intention of evoking this result; I simply say that it is the result that offers itself, and it suggests the thought that the Irish problem is not to be settled by running away from Ireland.

The acting and mounting of the play were admirable. Whoever "dressed the dresses" but the mark in the very centre. The "sleered ridiculous" of the men, the blue shirts of old Martin Devereux's country-soldiers, the hard hat (black) and leggings of the Divisional Constable, the make of each individual man's clothes and the differentiation of his head-gear—all were admirable. And the acting corresponded. I may have seen greater acting, but not more natural. Mr. W. G. Fay as Murrhead Goss was the very man he ought to have been, voice and all. His slight change in manner after Murrhead's death, his touch of softness and anxiety could hardly have been better. Mr. Mac-Sinbligh gave a very natural rendering of the part of Matt O'Sullivan, while Miss Sara Allgood as Sally Cogswar was actually itself. Mr. F. J. Fay had not a very different part in Martin Devereux, but he made the most of it, in the artistic sense. Mr. Arthur Sheehar made a good Ceradeth Devereux, while Miss Maize Sin Bligh played Ellen Downes, and, on the whole, she made the best of a somewhat unnatural character. In the more natural parts of Ellen's character, Miss Sin Bligh's never touched falsehood. The hard part—the one that the emigrants were all well done, some to the very life.

Well, Mr. Quinn has done his part, and the Messrs. Fay and their associates have done their parts. It only remains with the Irish public now not to be good friends with the

THE

THE IRISH HOMESTEAD.

[illegible]

The *Examiner*'s analysis are involved by it. Mr. Mayhew's story has been a hard, self-contained, man all his life, all years of his life for his preparation. He and his neighbors are in sympathy with the purchase of their land under Adams and in sympathy with the abolition and one daughter he seems almost Ad, and all united, but he is of his class. There is one grief, to realize all children are to change is looked up in his heart, all as his class of Americans. He has to go to the phenomenon of all as his neighbor. He is a person refined and sensitive, but because of agricultural struggle he is not one of those who can exist himself of the settlement to purchase (John). What strength of character there is in the Deane family (John). He too has a son, and is not happy in the life around her. Ellen is friendly, sensitive, engaged to Matt, the son of Mr. Mayhew's neighbor, who is something of a dissolute too, but with a big dash of his father's determination. The father in this couple are Coralline Deane, who is in sympathy with the abolition, and with a feeling for rhetoric and so hesitantly to distinguish between the value of high-sounding words and any real disposition in action, and Sally, Matt's sister, a person of active disposition in action, and intelligent. It is in Mr. Mayhew's *Examiner* discovers that he was married to Mary Deane, daughter he seems the mother of Mr. Mayhew's neighbor, though not without a temporary hesitancy which leads to a third arrangement from Ellen. Matt's heart is her's, but the land—his father's hand and his—holds him for just long enough to

The reason descends upon an incident so poignantly humorous, so revealing, that one can only think of Thoreau's work for parallel. Wendell, the son of the smaller farmer, whose energies have all turned to vegetable and the cultivation of naturalized plants, is speaking to his father just as the men who are negotiating for the purchase of their holdings are returning, successful in their bargain, and just as the two actors and solo people of the play, Wendell's sister and her lover, have arranged to spend their litigiousness in America.

“Conquerors—Ah, my little Fiesolen to be going away this time at the month of the good times? The men will soon be eating us, and you might say a few words.” (*Maria's father his head.*)
“Morning and Salty try to return to Carmelita.”
“Men of Body-killid?”
“You might say.”
“Stay on the sand and you'll be saved; body and soul you'll be saved in the sand and in the water.”
The father: “Men of Hand-killid, do you ever think of it as all?”
“Do you ever think of the Arab nation that is waiting at this time to be born?” (*He becomes more excited.*)
“He is aware of the different world, my dear.”
“XAVIER.”

[illegible]

I should be surprised if the future does not prove that *Intelligence* has found in Mr. Cullen a great intelligence of her sort and almost like the life of the people whom eloquently to the hand and about him are wanted upon by their country for a wider kind of expression—the practice of all people an self-emancipatory resolute person—the light of a target, if not a clear, intelligence and a direct and more persistent life-signs to learn within them.

"THE LAND."

The Irish National Theatre Society has ended its first season well by the production of Mr. Colm's new play, "The Land." Though very great audiences did not crowd the house, the play was enthusiastically received. We have heard a great deal in this country of contempt for crowds and the opinion of the public. In this play for once the elect and the despised rabblement have been allowed to enjoy their mutual humanity. I imagine they have done the same in the case of a few not unimportant men like Shakespeare and the demi-gods of Greece. The truth is, that the most obvious incident in life has two appeals, one as a superficial fact, and one as the outcome of irrefragable laws. The ordinary mind understands and enjoys "Hamlet" as a play of eight violent deaths, not to speak of adultery, a ghost, a mad woman, and a fight in the grave. The same mind understands Mr. Colm's play as a broad comedy on the lines of Mr. Boyle's "Building Fund."

The Cosgars and the Douras are two families living in the Midlands of Ireland. When the play opens, we learn that the whole neighbourhood is anxiously awaiting the settlement of terms of purchase under the new Land Act. We learn, too, that Martin Douras, a gentle, kindly, but inefficient old man has let the opportunity pass. Not so, Murtagh Cosgar. He "has come out of a little house by the roadside, and built his house on a hill." To him the tenants about to purchase come for the final advice. His worldly success has cost him dearly, however. His ways have driven all but two of his children to America. One of them, Matt Cosgar, is in love with Ellen Douras, and old Martin Douras dreams of their marriage. He blurts out his dream to Murtagh, and Murtagh humiliates him with savage irony. Not only that, he calls Matt to him immediately. Then father and son quarrel over Ellen Douras.

In the second act, we are in the house of Martin Douras. We are, in its beginning, given more light on the character of Ellen Douras, and also of Cornelius Douras and Sally Cosgar. Cornelius and Sally are drawn in a broadly humorous way. They give relief to the tragedy which constantly hovers about the other characters. They are garrulous and ponderous. But the scene between them, and the visit of some boys and girls who are going to America, only prepare the way for a great scene between Ellen Douras and Matt. Matt tells of his quarrel with his father and Ellen praises him. Then she endeavours to urge on Matt. They have been lovers for a long time and he has never offered her anything. "In the song," she says, "a man offers towns to his sweetheart." She implores Matt to leave this tyrannical father, this miserable life on the land, to seek out the sights of great cities. Matt refuses, because he loves the land, and he is the last of his name. Ellen upbraids him, and they part in anger.

In the third act we are back again in Murtagh Cosgar's house. Murtagh and Martin Douras are alone. To them comes Sally with the news that Matt is coming back. Here, we notice the first unending in the character of Murtagh Cosgar. He is evidently in fear that Matt will go. "Sure he couldn't go," he says, "and he is the last of them." And again, "make the place tidy for him. He'll have no harsh words from me."

Matt comes in sullenly, and after a fine scene Murtagh slowly and stubbornly gives way. He agrees to the marriage of Matt and Ellen Douras. For a moment all seems well, but then Ellen Douras appears. She declares that she will never enter a farmer's house. She wants her freedom. In vain Murtagh offers her a new house. She goes out. Matt Cosgar remains for a few minutes, and then he

follows her. The two young people of spirit are gone. Only the old men remain belied with Sally and Cornelius. Murtagh Cosgar takes the debacle with philosophical irony. He marries Sally to Cornelius, and the curtain falls when Cornelius is rehearsing a great rhetorical effort.

Such, in brief outline, are the incidents of the play. I propose now to analyse the characters and forces which produce them.

As we have seen, the characters divide themselves into two sections. Ethically, of course, the whole play is tragedy: the foolishness of Sally, the inefficiency of Cornelius, are as tragic as the overthrow of Murtagh Cosgar, and the loss to the country of its efficient youth. But dramatically we may take it that Martin Douras, Cornelius Douras, and Sally Cosgar are comedy types. They are introduced mainly to show in relief the tragic struggles of Ellen Douras, Matt Cosgar and Murtagh Cosgar. With these the real dramas lie.

We may in the first place interpret the play in terms of the land, and of the two generations. To the older generation the land is everything. To Murtagh Cosgar it is the symbol not only of his triumph but of his hopes. He remembers when it was strangled and bound. He cuts its bonds, he nurses it, strengthened it. Its degradation was his own degradation. Now that it was to be liberated, he, too, would be liberated. No longer need he bow to the "landlord or the landlord's dog-boy." The fruits of his slaving, of his tyranny over his children were at hand. He could now plant "a name in flesh and blood, a name for generations." To Matt, the land is something into which his own flesh and blood have gone. He, too, has worked on it until each part of it is as familiar to him as the face of the woman he loved. He does not fully understand why it calls him, yet for a time its attraction is stronger than the love of Ellen Douras. To her the land is degrading. It restricts her life. It is a symbol of monotony. The terrible dullness of country life weighs down on her. That she never loved the farmer's life we can believe for has she not become a school-teacher? And all these feelings have reached a crisis at the moment when the departure of more emigrants for America is at hand.

Murtagh Cosgar, for all his strength and tyranny, has the pathos of dreams. His ambition is, after all, a grand one. It is not merely a greed for possession. He is the flower of the struggle for existence. Centuries of wrong and hardship have moulded him. He feels their chains still clanking in the dim distance. We can imagine him waking at times from his sleep restlessly, thinking that all this new outlook was

only something which he had dreamt. He likes to repeat to himself that his troubles are now over; he is glad to be assured of it even by Martin Douras. For all his strong irony, his bitter humour, he has generous moments. He has a feeling, too, for a poetry which he has never realised. Sometimes it breaks forth in a picturesque phrase as when he says to Matt "Sure the wild raven on the tree has thought for its young." He is a dreamer, but his dreams are bounded by this world. He is a fine piece of humanity, but he has seen no visions but those which could be interpreted in terms of existence. In the third act he feels, perhaps, that he has missed something in life. A new revelation has come which divides him against himself. That is the end of his tyranny. He begins to feel that the Martin Dourases, the men of vague dreams who "have been in jail for the cause," catch hold of something in life which he has never reached. In fact, the character of Murtagh Cosgar makes the conflict not one of good and evil, but of one phase of good with another.

Martin Douras is a man "who would be sitting by the fire reading his newspaper, and the clouds above his potatoes and the cows trampling his cats." He is weak and inefficient in the world's ways. His feeling is more for scholarship than for farming. He has dreamt much, but he has never

railed on dreams. His mind is a powerful strategy. His dreams, unfortunately, have never been expressed in action. And thus they have passed on to a son who is but his own attenuated shadow, and to a daughter in whose soul they walk restlessly impudently to escape. They needed some outward circumstances to give them direction, and it came in the disguise of those *maléfiques*.

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Thank heavens I have got time to deal with the excellent tumour which is also in the drama. I saw the first of the *Three* at the Theatre Royal, and, as such as "Eton" exit with the book in her hand and the representation of the cross to Sally. These borders on the melodramatic. The acting was good. Mr. P. J. Fay, Mr. Soudair, and Mr. McNeilligan were excellent. Miss Ní Gharrbháid and Mr. W. G. Fay improved wonderfully at the latter part. But Miss Sarah Allgood as Sally could not possibly have been improved upon. She has a manner for comedy.

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The productions of the Leeds Literary Theatre were attracting a good deal of attention at the Albert-square Theatre in Dublin are based on very different artistic principles from those on which the Leeds Theatre of Music is conducted. The latter is a purely dramatic organization, and the members of the Leeds would probably soon find the result of a popular success. We have seen it stated that the name of Bourgeois is quite singularly and pleasantly obnoxious to them. The laurets of their productions was a piece called "The Land," and its theme was the contrast between the degradation of the Irish peasant to the land and the desire of the younger generation for a fuller and gayier life. The author's name was given on the programme as "G. K. Stans," and the play which preceded it was entitled "The numbers." Both "The Land" and "The numbers" were given three weeks ago were very earnest attempts to depict certain phases of Irish life. The use of the two equivalents of the grammarian and mathematician, the "Land" and "The numbers," was a very good idea, and the author, Mr. Bourgeois, who was of course, the very capable to represent them in person, and would probably have depicted a play which, however effective its result, was not a kind of libel at the time of Leeds, the Leeds Theatre, a "G. K. Stans" right of comedy.

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LE

RÉVEIL DE L'ÂME CELTIQUE

Le mouvement dont je vais parler date d'une quinzaine d'années. On le fait remonter à la mort de Parnell et à ce schisme mémorable à la suite duquel le parti nationaliste irlandais n'a jamais retrouvé son unité, sa cohésion, sa fermeté des grands jours. La lutte s'est transportée sur un autre terrain ; la « haine à l'Anglais » a pris une autre forme. A l'exemple de quelques-uns de mes confrères (je citerai entre autres M. Maurice Durroq, qui publiait sur ce sujet, le mois dernier, dans la *Revue du Sud-Est*, un article copieux et intéressant), j'avais, depuis longtemps, le désir d'étudier cette curieuse transformation d'un mouvement politique, — disons agraire, — en un mouvement littéraire et, plus particulièrement, poétique. Mais j'hésitais parce que je n'étais pas sûr de comprendre et j'avoue que j'aime à comprendre un peu les choses dont je parle ! Mon chemin de Damas a été la lecture d'un article sur la rennaissance littéraire de l'Irlande publié par Miss Ethel Wheeler dans les colonnes d'*East and West*. Les lecteurs du *Journal des Débats* connaissent le nom de cette revue, fondée à Bombay vers la fin de 1901 par le Behramji M. Malabari. Elle a pour but, comme l'indique clairement son titre, d'expliquer l'Orient à l'Occident, l'Occident à l'Orient, et nul doute qu'en parlant à ses lecteurs asiatiques des tristesses et des aspirations de l'Irlande, Miss Wheeler n'ait éveillé en eux la conscience des affinités naturelles et des ressemblances historiques qui rapprochent à la fois le caractère et la destinée des deux races.

Quant à moi, j'ai appris beaucoup dans ces quelques pages. Ce n'est pas que j'y aie trouvé beaucoup de noms, de dates et de faits ; mais j'y ai trouvé — ce qui vaut infiniment mieux — le sens et l'âme du mouvement. Pourquoi ? Parce que Miss Wheeler est Irlandaise, parce qu'elle porte en elle, par une heureuse combinaison de facultés rares, l'esprit critique et le

don de l'émotion. Elle analyse ces choses comme si elles lui étaient étrangères et les exprime comme siennes ; elle donne, tour à tour, la sensation du dedans et celle du dehors. Je l'ai donc prise pour guide et m'en suis bien trouvé.

Comme le mouvement irlandais a plusieurs buts, il a aussi plusieurs foyers. A Londres, son quartier général est l'*Irish Literary Society*, où j'ai déjà conduit mes lecteurs. Les écrivains irlandais qui habitent la grande cité s'y retrouvent dans quelques chambres aériennes, situées à l'étage supérieur d'une maison de Hanover Square. On a, de là, une vue étrange et pittoresque sur les toits de Londres. Et quelle admirable bibliothèque pour ceux qui veulent étudier les choses d'Irlande ! Lorsque la Société se réunit pour une *conversazione*, un concert ou une conférence, lorsqu'elle reçoit ses nombreux amis, elle émigre dans une des salles que met à sa disposition, au premier

ou au second étage, cette vaste maison, véritable rendez-vous de clubs. Certains jours sont réservés à la vieille musique nationale ; d'autres à la poésie nouvelle ; d'autres enfin à des conférences portant sur des points obscurs de l'histoire d'Irlande et suivies d'intéressantes discussions.

La Société est en relations avec d'autres Sociétés analogues, par exemple l'*Irish Folk-Song Society*, qui recueille les chants populaires du pays et l'*Irish Text Society*, qui a mis au jour une foule de précieux documents et qui prépare en ce moment un dictionnaire de la langue Erse, destiné à rendre de grands services. La Société a contribué à la fondation de l'*Irish national Theatre* qui a donné, à Londres, sous ses auspices, de brillantes représentations. Ce théâtre est lui-même un des traits les plus remarquables du mouvement. Au lieu d'un directeur, il a pour président M. W.-B. Yeats qui paraît être reconnu de tous comme le Victor Hugo de la pléiade irlandaise. C'est un singulier théâtre qui ressemble beaucoup à celui où s'est faite d'abord la réputation de Maeterlinck, avant que le grand public entendit parler de lui. Les auteurs ne touchent pas de droits, ni les acteurs de salaires. Au fur et à mesure des créations nouvelles, on conserve dans le magasin des accessoires les costumes qui correspondent aux diverses catégories sociales afin de mieux rappeler aux auteurs qu'ils doivent mettre en scène non des individus, mais des

types. Longtemps nomade, le théâtre national irlandais vient d'être pourvu d'un domicile et mis dans ses meubles par une généreuse bienfaitrice, miss Horniman. Elle a pris à loyer la salle du *Mechanics' Institute* à Dublin, l'a fait réparer, aménager, et, sous le nom d'*Abbey Theatre* l'a offert comme un berceau au drame naissant.

De toutes les Sociétés qui travaillent à la renaissance celtique, la plus nombreuse, la plus puissante, celle qui tient le plus loin son action est la *Gaelic League*. Elle entretient ou subventionne, en plein Londres, des écoles où les fils et les petits-fils des Irlandais apprennent à parler, à écrire, à chanter dans la langue de leurs pères et de leurs grands-pères. Elle a aussi son théâtre, qui se transporte de ville en ville et de village en village. Le docteur Hyde, qui est, avec lady Gregory, l'apôtre le plus zélé de ce mouvement, et le Père O'Leary ont écrit des pièces pour le théâtre gaélique. Elles donnent une forme scénique à d'anciennes légendes ou à des traditions joyeuses du bon vieux temps. Farces ou féeries, quelques fois tous les deux ensemble, elles font appel aux deux tendances, permanentes, indestructibles, de l'âme rurale et populaire, gaieté et mysticisme.

Le mouvement créé par la *Gaelic League* et celui qui représentent la Société littéraire irlandaise de Londres et le Théâtre national irlandais de Dublin, n'est au fond, et en dépit des apparences, qu'un seul et même mouvement. Dans la langue des consagréments comme dans celle des vaincus, c'est le vieil esprit national qu'il s'agit de ranimer, c'est l'âme celtique qu'on veut faire revivre ; c'est l'antique duel qui recommence, non plus sur le terrain des intérêts matériels et politiques, mais sur celui des sentiments et des idées. Ainsi la *Land League* d'il y a vingt-cinq ans, ressuscitée dans la *Gaelic League*, et M. Yeats est un Parnell

The Society is issuing a Series of Picture Post Cards, representing scenes from the plays. These cards as issued, announcing each production, will be sent to any person giving name and address below.

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poète et dramaturge. Ce n'est pas moi qui établis ce rapprochement entre le passé et le présent. Ce sont les coryphées du mouvement qui se présentent à nous sous cet aspect et veulent être compris de cette façon.

Il importe de s'en souvenir lorsqu'on lit les pièces jouées qui composent le répertoire du nouveau théâtre national et les poésies irlandaises de ces dernières années.

Dans *The Hour Glass* qui fut, si je ne me trompe, la pièce d'inauguration, on voit une sorte de maître d'école qui paraît personnifier

la science moderne, faite d'ignorances, de négations et de sophismes. Un ange paraît et l'avertit que son heure suprême est venue : « Vois ce sablier que je retourne. Lorsque le dernier grain de sable sera écoulé, tu paraîtras devant Dieu. » Sur quoi le savant est pris d'une terreur abjecte. « Puis-je encore être sauvé ? » — « Oui, si tu trouves durant cette dernière heure une âme humaine qui croie au ciel, au purgatoire, à l'enfer. » L'infortuné professeur d'athéisme cherche désespérément cette âme dont la foi sera la rançon de son impiété. En vain. Sa femme, ses enfants, ses élèves l'ont trop bien écouté : il n'y a plus que des incrédules autour de lui. Il se rabat sur un vagabond, un simple d'esprit. Ce pauvre homme ne comprend pas, mais il croit. Il va, le matin, sur la montagne, couper les filets que les hommes, dans leur méchanceté, y ont tendus pour prendre les pieds des anges et les anges, en retour, lui ont appris ceci : « Souviens-toi quel y a trois feux : le feu qui dévore, le feu qui purifie et le feu qui entretient la vie impérissable des élus. » Cet homme sera le rédempteur du savant qui a renié sa science. Lorsque le sablier sera vide, un ange recueillera dans sa main l'âme qui s'envole et ne la rouvrira que dans les jardins du Paradis.

Voici maintenant *The King's Threshold*. Le roi, cédant à la jalousie des grands, a exclu le barde de sa table et celui-ci s'est couché sur le seuil du palais, refusant toute nourriture et décidé à mourir. Ses élèves, puis les gens de son village viennent le supplier de renoncer à sa fatale résolution. A ces instances, où se glissent quelques traits extrêmement naïfs et familiers, les courtisans mêlent leurs prières ironiques. Un soldat voudrait qu'on le forçât à manger ; un moine, déconcerneusement jaloux, donne à entendre que ses hymnes valent tous les chais du poète. Les princesses, pour obéir au roi leur père, présentent de la nourriture au barde. Sa fiancée, à son tour, essaye de l'entraîner loin de ce seuil maudit où il va expirer ; mais il résiste jusqu'au moment où le roi vient, en pleurant, lui offrir sa propre couronne. Le barde la prend et la replace sur la tête du monarque repentant. Et cela, veut dire, je pense, qu'on ne fait pas à l'idéal sa part, au-dessous des passions et des intérêts. Si n'est tout, il n'est rien. Il ne gouverne pas lui-même le monde, mais il doit dominer ceux qui le gouvernent.

Avec *Kathleen ni Hoolhan*, nous sommes transportés dans une chaumière de paysans, aux environs de la baie de Bantry, en la mémorable année 1798, où les Français débarquèrent en Irlande et où éclata le grand soulèvement. Nous assistons aux préparatifs d'une nocce villageoise et nous voyons se déployer, à cette occasion, les calculs honnêtement et naïvement sordides, qu'une telle circonstance fait naître dans l'esprit d'un paysan. Tout à coup, l'allégorie entre dans cette cabane où nous n'aurions cru trouver qu'une humble idylle. Une vieille femme frappe à la porte et demande l'hospitalité. On la croit folle quand elle parle des étrangers qui ont envahi sa maison et son domaine, des hommes qui l'ont aimée et qui sont morts pour elle. Cette vieille vagabonde est l'Irlande elle-même et ces « quatre beaux champs » qu'on lui a ravis, ce sont les quatre grandes provinces que vous savez. Les champs qu'elle chante produisent un effet magique et voici Michel qui oublie sa fiancée, sa famille, sa petite fortune pour s'élancer sur les pas de l'étrangère mendicante. Et comme Patrick, son frère, revient par le même sentier où elle a disparu, on lui crie : « N'avez-vous pas rencontré une vieille femme ? » Il répond : « Non, j'ai rencontré une belle jeune fille. » Remarquez cette transformation : elle est significative. Les Irlandais aiment l'Irlande comme une mère et comme une maîtresse, pour ses souffrances d'autrefois et pour sa beauté d'aujourd'hui.

Tout cela, bien entendu, n'est pas du théâtre véritable mais de la poésie sous une forme concrète. Je ne suis donc pas surpris de retrouver les mêmes tendances chez les poètes de la nouvelle école et, par exemple, chez cette jeune femme prématurément enlevée en plein bonheur et en plein talent, à l'affection des siens et à la sympathie de tous, chez Anna Mac Manus, l'auteur de *The Four Winds of Eirinn*. Je les retrouve surtout chez M. Yeats avec plus d'originalité et de fantaisie, avec l'accent impérieux et, par éclairs, la sauvagerie grandiose des anciens Celtes. D'abord un idéalisme vague, mais puissant, qui semble puiser sa force, consciemment ou non, dans l'inspiration catholique et qui s'oppose dédaigneusement au commercialisme vulgaire et rapace de l'Anglo-Saxon. Puis, le patriotisme, une patriotisme que le nôtre, si ardent qu'il soit, ne peut pas comprendre. C'est que l'Irlande ne se réalise point,

ne s'incarne jamais ; elle plane, toujours sérieuse et immaculée, dans le souvenir ou dans la rêve. Une patrie vivante et agissante ne peut compromettre, se ridiculiser ou s'avilir : la patrie idéale garde l'inextinguible beauté des êtres qu'on devine, des choses qu'on entrevoit.

Un autre trait de l'âme irlandaise apparaît dans ses poètes. Cette âme-là ne sait pas chercher les biens de ce monde ; elle est divinement paresseuse et contemplative. L'Irlande vit encore de la vie d'autrefois qui coulait plus

lente et plus profonde, oh! combien plus profonde! L'individu avait pleine conscience d'exister; il n'était pas emporté comme aujourd'hui, par les grands courants sociaux, absorbé par l'être collectif dont il n'est qu'une molécule... Eh bien la poésie irlandaise nous rend quelque chose de ces sensations si intenses et si personnelles qui faisaient le charme et le prix de l'existence. L'humble vie rustique l'atmosphère et la solitude a pour elle d'irrésistibles fascinations. L'article de miss Wheeler dans *East and West* et, mieux encore, les vers subtils et pénétrants qu'elle publiait l'an dernier sous ce simple titre *Fervor*, m'ont fait comprendre le caractère particulier de cette intimité qui s'établit entre l'âme celtique et la nature au milieu de laquelle elle s'épanouit. L'âme celtique ne vient pas, à la manière de Rousseau et de Wordsworth, confier à la nature ses émotions, lui imposer ses états intérieurs, réclamer d'elle une sympathie qu'elle ne peut donner; mais elle se couche sur son sein comme pour y dormir et y rêver, pour se pénétrer de son calme et de sa force, s'oublier et se perdre en elle, pour courir avec le vent, et couler avec les eaux pour sentir passer, à travers sa chair éphémère, le frisson sublime, la sourde palpitation de la vie universelle.

Voilà quelques-unes des impressions que me donne la poésie irlandaise contemporaine. Reste à savoir si elle s'affirmera par des chefs-d'œuvre ou si elle continuera à n'être qu'un répertoire de sensations poétiques. Réussira-t-elle à ressusciter la langue qui lui appartient? On pliera-t-elle l'idiome de l'odieux Sassenach à l'expression de ses sentiments, si différents des siens? Je posais récemment ces questions devant un Irlandais. « Attendez vingt ans », me cria-t-il avec conviction. Je lui ai répondu que je ne demandais pas mieux.

AUGUSTIN PILON.

News of the World

IN MY STUDY.

M. Augustin Pilon, writing in the *Journal des Débats*, gives an interesting French impression of the Irish literary renaissance. After noting the rise of the various Irish Societies—Literary, Folk-song, and Text; after a word for the National Theatre at Dublin and the plays of Mr. Yeats, who, as he writes, "seems to be recognised by everybody as the Victor Hugo of this Irish play," M. Pilon interprets the whole movement, both in the Irish and in English aspects, as "the old national spirit reanimating itself; the whole dual beginning again, no longer in the field of material and political interests, but in the realm of sentiment and ideas." Then, from the French point of view, "the Land League of twenty-five years ago lives again in the Gaelic League, and Mr. Yeats is Patrick Henry, and the drama is the Irish theatre. M. Pilon discovers not so much real drama as "poetry in concrete form." In fact, throughout this new literature, above all in Yeats, "with charms of originality and fancy, and now and then the grand compelling accent of the ancient Celts"—he adds:—

First, as feeling, vague but intense, which seems to derive its force, connectedly or unconsciously, from catholic tradition, and which regards itself scornfully against the vulgar and grasping commercialism of the Anglo-Irish. Then a patriotism which our own, so-called as it is, cannot comprehend. The explanation of it all is in the fact that Ireland's ideal of herself is never realised, never attained; she has been always such a memory as dream, oppressed by the status of reality. An actual living country, yet comprising its honour—may make itself ridiculous or corrupt; but the ideal land keeps over the moribund lawlessness of things created—of realities but half-revealed.

And again:—

The Irish temperament knows naught of seeking its blessings in this world; it is divinely idle and contemplative. Ireland still lives that life of the golden time that ran so much slower and deeper—so wonderfully deeper. The individual was fairly aware of his own being; he was not, as to-day, swept along in great social currents, absorbed by the collective mass of which he is but a molecule. . . . The Irish poetry gives us something of these feelings, so intense, so personal, that made the charm of that earlier time. Humble, rustic life attracts it, and solitude for it has irresistible fascinations.

In the following passage M. Pilon makes a significant point:—

Yet the Celtic soul comes to nature, not in the manner of Rousseau or Wordsworth, to confide in her for its own emotions, to impose upon her its own inner states of feeling, to demand of her a sympathy she cannot give; rather does it lay itself upon her bosom as if to sleep and dream, to become imbued with her calm and strength, to forget and lose itself in her, to fly with the winds and flow with the waters until it feels across the passing flesh the sweep of the sublime breath, the infinite stirring of universal life.

Whether this Irish poetry is to "arouse itself with gesticulations," or to continue "only a superfluous of poetic impressions," whether it will actually succeed in "reviving the language that belongs to it," or will "bend the idiom of the odious Sassenach to the expression of unenvied sentiments," M. Pilon leaves each reader to settle.

THE ABBEY THEATRE.

Yeast — *W. G. Fay*
"THE BUILDING FUND" AND "THE LAND."

Last night the Irish National Theatre Society opened its season (1903-4) at the Abbey Theatre with Mr. William Boyle's comedy, "The Building Fund," and Mr. Padraic Colum's play, "The Land."

The efforts of both authors when first brought to the notice of the public during the last season, won instant recognition and established their reputations as dramatic writers for whom patrons of the Literary Theatre may with good reason hope for much in the future.

Mr. Boyle in his comedy displays a close knowledge of the general features of peasant life in Ireland, while he portrays the central figures, Mrs. Grogan, a minority, worldly-minded old woman, and her crafty son, Shamus—rare exceptions grating upon the stock in rural Ireland—with a genius that entitles him to the warmest congratulations. Mr. Boyle's comedies were presented with singular ability by the artists. Miss Emma Forrest, as Mrs. Grogan, displayed great skill in the interpretation of a most difficult and exacting part. Her personality was completely merged in the thirty-hearted old miser whose principal anxiety seemed to be that she could not carry her gold with her beyond the grave. Mr. W. G. Fay, as Shamus, was an unsplendid success, ready to grovel, to fawn, to lie, and, if necessary, to at the end of the old woman, who, notwithstanding, he devotedly wished to see in the grave, so that he might enjoy the wealth he had long coveted for his own. The disclosure that in the end the old miser had left all to the "Building Fund" for the new Church, to which she would not subscribe a penny when Shamus was a desecrated leecher, no doubt, but none the less gratifying to the audience, when the will was read. Miss Sara Allgood, as Sheila O'Draper, granddaughter of Mrs. Grogan, acted with her accustomed sympathy and grace, while Mr. F. J. Fay and Mr. Arthur Sinclair, the former as the elderly farmer, O'Callaghan, and the latter, as Dan MacDonogh, acted capitally.

Mr. Shamus's play followed. The success which it achieved in its former production was more than maintained last night. It is a piece imbued with the peasant life of today and it puts upon the stage with as much veracity and fidelity a picture of contemporary society as if the audience were assembled in

and Southern Pacific, for that which pervades

Department (Scotch) is playing the martinet, obstructionist and the bigot in its relation to the Fiscal Committee of Trade, and things, as a consequence, are at a deadlock. It is almost needless to say

the evening with comedy, and "The Land, by "Padric Colum," more than contained its own motive the principle set by the earlier piece. The play had been previously seen at this theatre, and drew a fair audience, but outside the immediate circle of the Society many did not clear their way through the wet night to the theatre. It is a naked Nature, indeed, that dramatic art, in its naked Nature, the Society contemplates, is doomed to a struggle for existence. The scenic equipment of the building, we said, hardly repeat, is almost disadvantageously alien, while the scheme disclaims the influence of alien elements, and the audience are invited to surrender themselves to admire the pure in dramatic art—according to the standards of ideals—or nothing. Thus is "The Builders

ented. The brothers may again discharge their work in coequal parts with monotonous Miss Sara Allgood did well as Sally, and the thick part of Cornelius was made quite a feature by Mr. Arthur Sullivan. The minor parts were fairly well filled. The meal in the first act was not very clearly defined, the male actors therein being a singularly stiff pair. The audience were, of course, full of appreciation for the two plays. Applause and shouts of "Author," indeed, are never denied to the Society's aspirants for fame. Whether their works be trivial or epoch-making. On the whole, however, their applause was not a conspicuous feature. They were not well received, and were fairly well, and could be conscientiously accorded.

In the Abbey Theatre last night "The Building Fund," by Mrs. Kyrle, and "The Land," by Padraic Colum, new productions by special request under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre Society. These two plays are both remarkably well written, and present some of the more salient features of Irish peasant life with undoubted solidity. The cast in both cases was apparently the same as in the presentation of previous productions, the thoroughness being exceedingly creditable.

The plays will be performed each night during the week; and visitors to the theatre will find it most commodious and well equipped in every respect.

Notionnet Oct 5

At the Abbey Theatre.

THE Abbey Theatre re-opened on Monday night with "The Building Fund," by William Boyle, and "The Land," by Padraic Colum. Since its last production, "The Building Fund" has been slightly expanded. "The Land" is, except on the part of the players, the kind of emigrants being much more effective. "The Building Fund" may be described as a sort of It stages a base, though, of course, reality, and the native baseness of the

is exaggerated by the artistic process which it is submitted. Pascal has established legitimacy in treating moral corruption, of ignoring for the time the moral howling the Devil that he is not only . . . This is what Mr. Boyle has done. . . for his subject, that crude, savage one does now and then encounter actors are phenomena of moral putrefaction from the comic point of view stretch of them comes to us only in . . . has done even more than that. He death-bed and a funeral, without for the farcical atmosphere. A good . . . rather obvious and machined, but . . . sold an art as the drama. The acting

on Monday night was admirable. Miss Vernon, as the woman, succeeded almost completely in repressing her abundant vitality, and Miss Allgood played the "soothing" grand-daughter with her usual skill. As the miserly son, Mr. W. G. Fay gave an even better reading than we had from him before—his riotous agitation while waiting for the execution of his mother's will was almost painfully

POST CARD.

KEY THEATRE

ish National Theatre Society
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play a most excellent sample of serious acting was seen between Mr. P. MacDonagh and Miss Mairé Ní Ghaerdaigh. This was in the second act, when there is a slight rift in the lovers' love, and high-spirited outpourings dignify the situation. Each artist—and seldom has that name been more readily written—rose to the occasion with dignity and strength. It was an episode simply but forcibly pre-

to be seen, and to capture the heart of the local elite and all of its assistance. The dramatic personae are the men and the women of the Minister and Congress, of Larraín and of Alfaro, the friends and the enemies. The theater the theater is the stage of their daily intercourse, and the spirit is that which pervades the air of the feasts and joys and the mountains. It is, indeed, "holding up the mirror to nature" in the style of the French, the artist interpreted the piece with masterly skill and most excellent dramatic effect. Francisco Macchiain, in the part of the Minister, Miss Sara Algodon and Miss Marie N. Garbajal, as Sally and Ellen, the daughters of Cogcar and Martin Douglas, were eminently successful in their respective parts. In the character of the Minister, the former as a former, Cogcar, and the latter as Martin Douglas, were admirable, and Arthur Martin, in the part of Cheludis, the son of Martin Douglas, manifested the standard reached by his comrades in the performance.

The two pieces will be repeated each day during the week.

THE ABBEY THEATRE. Oct-2

[illegible]

United. It brothers say again charged their work in conventional parts with success. Miss Sara Allgood did well as Sally, and the thick part of Cordelia was made quite a feature by Mr. Arthur Sinclair. The minor parts were fairly well filled. The musical in the evening was "The Merry Widow," and the male actors therein being a singularly mild pair. The audience were, of course, full of appreciation for the two plays. Applause and shouts of "Author," indeed, are never denied to the Society's aspirants for fame, whether they be to be trivial or epoch-making. On this occasion, however, the applause was not a caricature. It was fairly won, and could be conscientiously accorded.

IRISH PLAYS AT THE ABBEY.

In the Abbey Theatre last night "The Building Fund," by Wm. Boyle, and "The Land," by Padraic Colum, were produced by special request under the auspices of the Irish National Theatre Society. These two plays are both remarkably well written, and present some of the more salient features of Irish peasant life with undoubted fidelity. The cast in both cases was apparently the same as on the occasion of previous productions, the acting throughout being exceedingly creditable. The audience last night was not large, but it was most appreciative.

The plays will be performed each night during the week; and visitors to the theatre will find it most commodious and well equipped in every respect.

hationment Oct 5

At the Abbey Theatre.

THE Abbey Theatre re-opened on Monday night with "The Building Fund," by William Boyle, and "The Land," by Padraic Colum. Since its last production, "The Building Fund" has been slightly expanded. "The Land" exhibited no change, except on the part of the players, the groups of farmers and of emigrants being much more effectively handled.

"The Building Fund" may be described as a sort of dramatic gargoyle. It stages a base, though, of course, undeniable piece of reality, and the native baseness of the

matter is still further exaggerated by the artistic process of condensation to which it is submitted. Pascal has established for all time the legitimacy in treating moral corruption of a certain kind, of ignoring for the time the moral point of view, and showing the Devil that he is not only wicked but ridiculous. This is what Mr. Hoyle has done. He takes miserliness for his subject, that crude, savage miserliness of which one does now and then encounter an instance. His characters are phenomena of moral putrefaction, but he treats them from the comic point of view so skillfully that the stench of them comes to us only in terms of intellect. He has done even more than that. He has put in his play a death-bed and a funeral, without for a moment perturbing the farcical atmosphere. A good deal of the humour is rather obvious and machined, but this is inevitable in so old an art as the drama. The acting on Monday night was admirable. Miss Vernon, as the old woman, succeeded almost completely in repressing her abundant vitality, and Miss Allgood played the "soothing" grand-daughter with her usual skill. As the miserly son, Mr. W. G. Fay gave an even better reading than we had from him before—his riotous agitation while waiting for the execution of his mother's will was almost painfully

infectious—and Mr. F. J. Fay gave Michael O'Callaghan a saving touch of dignity. Mr. Arthur Sinclair has the true comic verve.

"The Land" is too well known to call for a detailed account. Mr. Colum is a contributor of ours, and it would be unseemly to be too superlative. But it is my honest conviction that "The Land" is the best play yet given us by the dramatic movement. Technically it is not, of course, better than two or three others, but it is more fully in the stream of actuality. Mr. Colum has put on the stage the largest fact of Irish life; he has dramatised agrarianism, and written the secret history of emigration. Some reservations must naturally be made. For one thing, is not Ellen Douras, the protagonist of rebellion, presented in a somewhat too unlovely light? Her appetite for life, for self-realisation, is not in the play justified as from her own point of view she would justify it. Revolt after all is not a bad but a good thing; man, as a scientist was telling us the other day, is the "rebel of nature." Perhaps it is sufficient to say in one word that, while Ellen is real and living, she is not to be taken as typical. The acting was wonderfully good, and the culminating moment of the play won from the audience that highest approbation, a vibrating silence. As Ellen, Miss Ni Gharbhaigh played the most difficult part in the play perfectly. Mr. W. G. Fay has not completely succeeded in identifying himself with Murtagh Cosgar. Murtagh is a strong, hard, sardonic nature, and Mr. Fay tends to envelope this in a veil of surface comedy. In the passionate and feverish character of Matt, Mr. MacSuihbhaigh is almost too effective for artistic restraint; and Mr. F. J. Fay gives a most careful study of the scholarly impracticability of Martin Douras. The acting of Miss Allgood and Mr. Sinclair raises a problem. They take two weak and silly characters, and put so much abundance and soundness of heart into them, that they transform a play which is at core tragic into something very like a comedy.

The house, though enthusiastic, was rather thin. The plays will be repeated every night up to Saturday, and it is to be hoped that Dublin will during the week show itself better worthy of having a native drama. T. M. K.

THE IRISH HOMESTEAD.

OCTOBER 7, 1905.

THE LAND.

A PROBLEM IN IRISH LIFE.

The land for the people is a cry that has nerved the Irish people for generations to a desperate struggle to gain possession of the soil. It has been said that the Irish will never fight in earnest for a cause until it is lost beyond all hope of redemption. In fighting for the land, however, they were fighting for a cause that has ultimately been crowned with success; and yet the conduct of some of them in this hour of victory suggests the question whether the converse may not be true that the Irish people cease to care for a cause once its principles have been triumphantly vindicated. In this year of grace, 1905, the land is passing for ever into the hands of the strong farmers, who have clung to it with such a passionate devotion that to maintain a slippery foothold upon a rain-swept hillside seemed to some the be-all and end-all of an Irishman's existence. Under the circumstances we should expect that their sons would be eager and anxious to step into the shoes of their fathers, the proprietors. On the contrary, their minds seem fatally set, not on a pair of farmer's breeches but on a pair of magical seven-league boots that will make the road to America even shorter and more tempting

than the insinuating mendacity of the emigration agent can render it. When all allowance has been made for the scarcity of all employment but ill-paid agricultural labour, the emigration statistics still indicate a virulence of social disorder, which an intelligent change in the people's habits can far more easily rectify than the great economic causes of emigration can as yet be removed. We commend the perusal of the "Land," written by Mr. Padraic Colum, to all those who are interested in the greatest of Irish problems, that of stopping the emigration. Last night, as we watched its vivid and masterly representation by the actors of the Abbey street Theatre, it struck us that he touched as an aspect of the problem as homely as it is vital, and upon which we hereby invite all those readers of the HOMESTEAD who study rural life and manners to give us their opinion. First, as to the play and its author. In the pleasant champagne country of the Irish midlands—whose lush and smiling pastures stretch out to the borders of less favoured Connaught, there has arisen a poet, who writes of the farmers' life in Ireland with more steadfastness and simplicity of vision than has often been expressed before. It was kind mother for him—to quote what Cornelius Douras in the play grandly calls "the Hibernian Vernacular"—to write with such simplicity and insight of the life of farming people; for he was reared in a farmhouse in Longford, his nostrils ever flushed with the smell of the rank earth and crops, while the roof and walls of the dwelling framed the

scope of his imagination within the bounds of a sane and representative outlook on Irish life. A good play is like one of those good hay ricks, of which the proper principles of construction have often been here set forth, in that it should have no loose and wispy ends as of unfinished character drawing sticking out of its structure. "The Land" is a slight and unpretentious sketch of Irish life, in which every character is as clearly and definitely outlined against the background of a midland farmhouse as the limited range of dramatic action demands. The subject of the play is nothing if not topical, and contains a moral, which we call upon all pioneers of Irish reform in general, and upon the rural community in particular, to take into earnest consideration. We should like to know how far the intelligent country people of Ireland are in agreement with Mr. Colum, when he teaches that one of the many deadly social diseases which ravage Ireland and send the strong and healthy to the emigrant ship, is the harsh and unsympathetic despotism with which Irish parents would condemn their children to a life of hard and joyless toil, preceded by a loveless marriage. Murtagh Cosgar, the hard old curmudgeon of a farmer, and Martin Douras, his more



PADRAIC COLUM,
(Author of "The Land.")

to endure the chill repression of personal sentiment that conformity to his father's wishes implies. In the end he

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and to many pigs and cows, much as enterprising grocers give away trifles of equivocal value with every pound of tea. Let Irish parents remember that they too were young once; or if they had the misfortune to be born full blown worldly

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plant and more sympathetic neighbour, have each of them a son and daughter. Matt Cogar and Ellen Douras are young people of spirit and intelligence, who contrast strongly with the impoverished natures of Sally Cogar and Cornelius Douras, respectively their sister and brother. Old Cogar cannot understand the outlook of vigorous youth expressed to him in the words of Matt, "The homes that you remember are not the homes that are now." It is to him incredible that any young man in his senses should forgo the lands and farms, the priceless boon earned by a life-long struggle, for the sake of a little personal freedom in the ordering of his own life and in the choice of a wife. Matt Cogar, himself a diligent farmer, is less possessed of the fever of emigration than many of his contemporaries; yet his young blood runs too warmly in his veins to endure the chill repression of personal sentiment that conformity to his father's wishes implies. In the end he breaks away from the father's farm, and with the money earned by caring milk to a creamery, carries off to America the wife who is the choice of his heart and not a mere incidental human make-weight in the balancing of an inadequate dowry against Cogar's cows and acres. Cornelius and Sally now become the destined inheritors of their

father's hardly amassed property. By nature weak and devitalised they are too deeply involved in the coil of material existence to do anything but acquiesce in their father's purely mercenary contract for their marriage with aught but a bovine placidity. Like a Court fool, idly defying the rush of the enemy into the fallen stronghold, when all the men-at-arms have beat a retreat, Cornelius stands mouthing foolish phrases about the birth of the Irish nation. It is he and Sally, the inert sediment of this soething pot of midland village life, who are left to furnish the material for rational reconstruction—the good stuff flows across the Atlantic. We wonder what will our readers think of this picture of the harsh parent—the Mrs. Grady of an unattract and sordid marriage system—as one of the agencies in promoting emigration. We ourselves believe somewhat in its truth to life. We believe that thousands of boys and girls of meikle leave this country, because their parents frown too sternly upon a moderate expenditure of time and money in innocent pleasure, and because young blood recoils being thrown into the matrimonial scales along with so many pigs and cows, much as enterprising grocers give away trifles of equivocal value with every pound of tea. Let Irish parents remember that they too were young once; or if they had the misfortune to be born full blown worldly wisacres, they should strive to expiate that double dose of original sin by allowing special latitude to the grace and generosity of exuberant youth in their own progeny. A young man that has not the energy to prefer one girl to another is apt to prove a poor farmer, a dull husband, and in general, a tame and spiritless guardian of the family home and possessions. "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." So it does in more sensibly ordered countries than ours. In Ireland, where love is prohibited as a frivolous interference with the circulation of capital, it turns to Queenstown and a cheap ticket to Boston. The result is neither good for Ireland nor for those whose stupid attempt to dam the strong tide of youthful sentiment has driven their children away. It leaves Ireland full of those high and dry wrecks of human personality, those "stale boys" and "stale girls" of our Irish countryside who have about as much grace and aplomb of personality as a turnip, and who are about as well fitted to plant and uphold the name of their forefathers in this historic land as the man-in-the-moon is to run a co-operative creamery.

DIARMUID.

Paul Mall

Nov 13

That curiously un-Irish institution, the National Theatre Society (Ltd.), will give four performances at St. George's Hall, Langham-place, on the following nights next to London: "The Well of the Saints" and "In the Shadow of the Glen," by J. M. Synge; "Succeeding the News," by Lady Gregory; "On Baden's Strand," and "Kathleen ni Houlihan," by W. B. Yeats. Most, if not all, of these have been "produced" at the Abbey Theatre. No doubt, however, there will be a good deal of variation in

A VOICE FROM THE PIT.

Now that the laudations of the artists and the poets, and the fulsome effusions of the daily Press are waning, perhaps there may be an opportunity for a weak, unpretentious voice from the "Pit" to utter an opinion upon the recent production of the Abbey Theatre, "The Land."

That I am not at all connoisseur, I am aware, and my pretensions towards offering a literary criticism of Mr. Colman's latest work, are few; all I pretend to put forward are a few plain, instinctive opinions.

Earnest in my desire to see a native drama established in Ireland, I have patronised the Society's productions from their inception, though at times the effort required all the enthusiasm a vulgar soul could muster; yet it was my misfortune to miss the first production of "The Land," but having eagerly scanned the various Press notices and reviews, it was with, perhaps, too great expectation that I hailed the announcement of its second production.

Even a long apprenticeship at the Molesworth Hall has not worn off the vague feeling of discomfort which invariably attends the miserable paucity of the attendance; nor does the more decorative interior of the Abbey tend to relieve the feeling; but the "Building Fund," with its dry, cynical humour, and the inimitable portrayal of Shan, soon banished all lonely and miserable feelings, and left me in the greatest heart to view the promised "Land" which, however, proved barren in "the milk and honey" of human charity.

It has been said that Mr. Colman, like all his famous predecessors, holds the mirror up to nature, but is it not a concave rather than a plain mirror that he has used? Otherwise it is not easy to account for the strange medley of misdirected passion, warped virtue, and pedantic infelicity which is reflected as, to a certain extent, the outstanding characteristics, the ruling instincts of the life of the present-day rural population of this most maligned country. We have Ellen, with the false notions of respectability—the squire of the district—who who "was near a favourite, and who lived to herself," and one, might add, lived for herself: unable or unwilling to recognise the nobility, the manliness of honest toil; a farmer's daughter spurning the farmer's life, and possessed with a morbid craving for "the sights of great towns, and the fine manners, and the fine life." A woman incapable of any noble or elevating passion; wearing her love as one wears a glove, to be removed or put on at pleasure. We have Matt Cogar—the socialist of an ignoble group—casting aside family ties, surrendering filial affection for the love of such an unworthy one as Ellen; banished about from a harsh parent to an ungrateful sweetheart; treated like "a beifer strayed into a patch of oats;" and requiring all the silent scorn of the parent, and the threatened desertion of the sweetheart to pin him to a measly rescission. And what of the parent, devoid of any feeling for his own flesh and blood—who has no regret for, who never thinks of the ten children that have fled from the gallery of his household; and who continues the harsh slave-driver of his two remaining ones; harsh, sour, and grasping, and lacking even the saving grace of gratitude for benefits rendered, despising the man "who did more than any of them to bring about the redemption of the land," though reaping to himself himself—lauding a man who spent a year in Maryboro' Jail that man like Murtogh Cogar might exclaim, as he looked out upon his broad acres: "Ah, but that's the sight to fill one's heart, laud, praise and spread, and all our own; all our own." I care not to dwell on the characters of Sally and of Cornelius—a nice pair

SAMHAIN

An Occasional Review, Edited
by W. B. Yeats, containing
Notes by the Editor and Two
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The Exile	by E. Longworth

Dances

Poems:

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Samhain : An occasional
review edited by W. B. Yeats.



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Notes and Opinions.

I.

OUR first season at the Abbey Theatre has been tolerably successful. We drew small audiences, but quite as big as we had hoped for, and we end the year with a little money. On the whole we have probably more than trebled our audiences of the Molesworth Hall. The same people come again and again, and others join them, and I do not think we lose any of them. We shall be under more expense in our new season, for we have decided to pay some of the company and send them into the provinces, but our annual expenses will not be as heavy as the weekly expenses of the most economical London manager. Mr. Philip Carr, whose revivals of Elizabethan plays and old comedies have been the finest things one could see in a London theatre, spent £300 and took £12 during his last week; but here in Ireland enthusiasm can do half the work, and nobody is accustomed to get much money, and even Mr. Carr's inexpensive scenery costs more than our simple decorations. Our staging of *Kincora*, the work of Mr. Robert Gregory, was beautiful, with a high grave dignity and that strangeness which Ben Jonson thought to be a part of all excellent beauty, and the expense of scenery, dresses and all was hardly above £30. If we find a good scene we repeat it in other plays, and in course of time we shall be able to put on new plays without any expense for scenery at all. I do not think that even the most expensive decoration would increase in any way the pleasure of an audience that comes to us for the play and the acting.

We shall have abundance of plays, for Lady Gregory has written us a new comedy besides her *White Cockade*, which is in rehearsal; Mr. Boyle a satirical comedy in three acts; Mr. Colum has made a new play out of his *Broken Soil*; and I have made almost a new one out of my *Shadowy Waters*; and Mr. Synge has practically finished a longer and more elaborate comedy than his last. Since our start last Christmas we have shown eleven plays created by our movement and very varied in substance and form, and six of these were new: *The Wolf of the Saints*, *Kincora*, *The Building Fund*, *The Land*, *On Baile's Strand*, and *Spreading the News*.

One of our plays, *The Well of the Saints*, has been accepted for immediate production by the Deutsches Theatre of Berlin; and another, *The Shadow of the Glen*, is to be played during the season at the National Bohemian Theatre at Prague; and my own *Cathleen ni Houlihan* has been translated into Irish and been played at the Oireachtas, before an audience of some thousands. We have now several dramatists who have taken to drama as their most serious business, and we claim that a school of Irish drama exists, and that it is founded upon sincere observation and experience.

..

As is natural in a country where the Gaelic League has created a pre-occupation with the countryman, the greater number of our plays are founded on the comedy and tragedy of country life, and are written more or less in dialect. When the Norwegian National movement began, its writers chose for their maxim, "To understand the saga by the peasant and the peasant by the saga." Ireland in our day has re-discovered the old heroic literature of Ireland and she has re-discovered the imagination of the folk. My own pre-occupation is more with the heroic legend than with the folk, but Lady Gregory in her *Spreading the News*, Mr. Synge in his *Well of the Saints*, Mr. Colum in *The Land*, Mr. Boyle, in *The Building Fund*, have been busy, much or little, with the folk and the folk imagination. Mr. Synge alone has written of the peasant as he is to all the ages; of the folk imagination as it has been shaped by centuries of life among fields or on fishing grounds. His people talk a highly-coloured musical language, and one never hears from them a thought that is of to-day and not of yesterday. Lady Gregory has written of the people of the markets and villages of the West, and their speech, though less full of peculiar idiom than that of Mr. Synge's people, is still always that vivid speech which has been shaped through some generations of English speaking by those who still think in Gaelic. Mr. Colum and Mr. Boyle, on the other hand, write of the countryman or villager of the East or centre of Ireland, who thinks in English, and the speech of their people shows the influence of the newspaper and the National Schools. The people they write of, too, are not the true folk. They are the peasant as he is being transformed by modern life, and for that very reason the man of the towns may find it easier to understand them. There is less surprise, less wonder in what he sees, but there is more of himself there, more of his vision of the world and of the problems that are troubling him.

It is not fitting for the showman to overpraise the show, but he is always permitted to tell you what is in his booths. Mr. Synge is the most obviously individual of our writers. He alone has discovered a new kind of sarcasm, and it is this sarcasm that keeps him, and may long keep him, from general popularity. Mr. Boyle satirizes a miserly old woman and he

has made a very vivid person of her, but as yet his satire is such as all men accept; it brings no new thing to judgment. We have never doubted that what he assails is evil, and we are never afraid that it is ourselves. Lady Gregory alone writes out of a spirit of pure comedy, and laughs without bitterness and with no thought but to laugh. She has a perfect sympathy with her characters, even with the worst of them, and when the curtain goes down we are so far from the mood of judgment that we do not even know that we have condoned many sins. In Mr. Colum's *Land* there is a like comedy when Cornelius and Sally fill the scene, but then he is too young to be content with laughter. He is still interested in the reform of society, but that will pass, for at about thirty every writer, who is anything of an artist, comes to understand that all a work of art can do is show one the reality that is within our minds, and the reality that our eyes look on. He is the youngest of us all by many years, and we are all proud to foresee his future.

..

I think that a race or a nation or a phase of life has but few dramatic themes, and that when these have been once written well they must afterwards be written less and less well until one gets at last but "Soulless self-reflections of man's skill." The first man writes what it is natural to write, the second man what is left to him, for the imagination cannot repeat itself. The hoydenish young woman, the sentimental young woman, the villain and the hero alike ever self-possessed, of contemporary drama, were once real discoveries, and one can trace their history through the generations like a joke or a folk tale, but, unlike these, they grow always less interesting as they get farther from their cradle. Our opportunity in Ireland is not that our playwrights have more talent, it is possible that they have less than the workers in an old tradition, but that the necessity of putting a life that has not hitherto been dramatized into their plays excludes all these types which have had their origin in a different social order.

An audience with National feeling is alive, at the worst it is alive enough to quarrel with. One man came up from the scene of Lady Gregory's *Kimona* at Killaloe that he might see her play, and having applauded loudly, and even cheered for the Dalcassians, became silent and troubled when Brian took Gormleith for his wife. "It is a great pity," he said to a man next to him "that he didn't marry a quiet girl from his own district." Some have quarrelled with me because I did not take some glorious moment of Cuchulain's life for my play, and not the killing of his son, and all our playwrights have been attacked for choosing bad characters instead of good, and called slanderers of their country. In so far as these attacks come from National feeling, that is to say, out of an interest or an affection for the life of this country now and in past times, as did the countryman's trouble about Gormleith, they are in the long run the greatest

help to a dramatist, for they give him something to startle or to delight. Every writer has had to face them where his work has aroused a genuine interest. The Germans at the beginning of the nineteenth century preferred Schiller to Goethe, and thought him the greater writer, because he put nobler characters into his books; and when Chaucer met Eros walking in the month of May, that testy god complains that though he had "sixty bookkes olde and newe," and all full of stories of women and the life they led, and though for every bad woman there are a hundred good, he has chosen to write only of the bad ones. He complains that Chaucer by his *Troilus* and his *Romaunt of the Rose* has brought love and women to discredit. It is the same in painting as in literature, for when a new painter arises men cry out, even when he is a painter of the beautiful like Rosetti, that he has chosen the exaggerated or the ugly or the unhealthy, forgetting that it is the business of art and of letters to change the values and to mint the coinage. Without this outcry there is no movement of life in the arts, for it is the sign of values not yet understood, of a coinage not yet mastered. Sometimes the writer delights us, when we grow to understand him, with new forms of virtue discovered in persons where one had not hitherto looked for it, and sometimes, and this is more and more true of modern art, he changes the values not by the persons he sets before one, who may be mean enough, but by his way of looking at them, by the implications that come from his own mind, by the tune they dance to as it were. Eros, into whose mouth Chaucer, one doubts not, puts arguments that he had heard from his readers and listeners, objected to Chaucer's art in the interests of pedantic medieval moralizing; the contemporaries of Schiller commended him for reflecting vague romantic types from the sentimental literature of his predecessors; and those who object to the peasant as he is seen in the Abbey Theatre, have their imaginations full of what is least observant and most sentimental in the Irish novelists. When I was a boy I spent many an afternoon with a village shoemaker who was a great reader. I asked him once what Irish novels he liked, and he told me there were none he could read, "they sentimentalized the people," he said angrily; and it was against Kickham that he complained most. "I want to see the people," he said "shown up in their naked hideousness." That is the peasant mind as I know it, delight in strong sensations whether of beauty or of ugliness, in bare facts, and quite without sentimentality. The sentimental mind is the bourgeois mind, and it was this mind which came into Irish literature with Gerald Griffin and later on with Kickham.

It is the mind of the town, and it is a delight to those only who have seen life, and above all country life, with unobservant eyes, and most of all to the Irish tourist, to the patriotic young Irishman who goes to the country for a month's holiday with his head full of vague idealisms. It is not the art of Mr. Colum, born of the people, and when at his best looking at the town and not the country with strange eyes, nor the art of Mr. Synge spending weeks and months in remote places talking Irish to

fishers and islanders. I remember meeting, about twenty years ago, a lad who had a little yacht at Kingstown. Somebody was talking of the sea paintings of a great painter, Hook, I think, and this made him very angry. No yachtsman believed in them or thought them at all like the sea, he said. Indeed, he was always hearing people praise pictures that were not a bit like the sea, and thereupon he named certain of the greatest painters of water—men who more than all others had spent their lives in observing the effects of light upon cloud and wave. I met him again the other day, well on in middle life, and though he is not even an Irishman, indignant with Mr. Synge's and Mr. Boyle's peasants. He knew the people, he said, and neither he nor any other person that knew them could believe that they were properly represented in *The Well of the Saints* or *The Building Fund*. Twenty years ago his imagination was under the influence of popular pictures, but to-day it was under the conventional idealisms which writers like Kickham and Griffin substitute for the ever-varied life of the cottages, and that conventional idealism that the contemporary English Theatre substitutes for all life whatsoever. I saw *Caste*, the earliest play of the modern school, a few days ago, and found there more obviously than I expected, for I am not much of a theatre-goer, the English half of the mischief. Two of the minor persons had a certain amount of superficial characterization, as if out of the halfpenny comic papers; but the central persons, the man and woman that created the dramatic excitement, such as it was, had not characters of any kind, being vague ideals, perfection as it is imagined by a common-place mind. The audience could give them its sympathy without the labour that comes from awakening knowledge. If the dramatist had put any man and woman of his acquaintance that seemed to him nearest perfection into his play, he would have had to make it a study, among other things, of the little petty faults and perverted desires that come out of the nature or its surroundings. He would have troubled that admiring audience by making a self-indulgent sympathy more difficult. He might have even seemed, like Ibsen or the early Christians, an enemy of the human race. We have gone down to the roots, and we have made up our minds upon one thing quite definitely—that in no play that professes to picture life in its daily aspects shall we admit these white phantoms. We can do this, not because we have any special talent, but because we are dealing with a life which has for all practical purposes never been set upon the stage before. The conventional types of the novelists do not pervert our imagination, for they are built, as it were, into another form, and no man who has chosen for himself a sound method of drama, whether it be the drama of character or of crisis, can use them. The Gaelic League and *Cumann na nGaedhéal* play does indeed show the influence of the novelists; but the typical Gaelic League play is essentially narrative and not dramatic. Every artist necessarily imitates those who have worked in the same form before him, and when the preoccupation has been with the same life he almost always,

consciously or unconsciously, borrows more than the form, and it is this very borrowing—affecting thought, language, all the vehicles of expression—which brings about the most of what we call decadence.



After all, if our plays are slanders upon their country; if to represent upon the stage a hard old man like Cosgar, or a rapacious old man like Shan, or a faithless wife like Nora Burke, or to select from history treacherous Gormleith for a theme, is to represent this nation at something less than its full moral worth; if every play played in the Abbey Theatre now and in times to come be something of a slander, is anybody a penny the worse? Some ancient or mediæval races did not think so. Jusseland describes the French conquerors of mediæval England as already imagining themselves in their literature, as they have done to this day, as a great deal worse than they are, and the English imagining themselves a great deal better. The greater portion of the *Divine Comedy* is a catalogue of the sins of Italy, and Boccaccio became immortal because he exaggerated with an unceasing playful wit the vices of his countryside. The Greeks chose for the themes of their serious literature a few great crimes, and Corneille, in his article on the theory of the drama, shows why the greatness and notoriety of these crimes is necessary to tragic drama. The public life of Athens found its chief celebration in the monstrous caricature of Aristophanes, and the Greek nation was so proud, so free from morbid sensitiveness, that it invited the foreign ambassadors to the spectacle. And I answer to those who say that Ireland cannot afford this freedom because of her political circumstances, that if Ireland cannot afford it, Ireland cannot have a literature. Literature has never been the work of slaves, and Ireland must learn to say—

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."



The misrepresentation of the average life of a nation that follows of necessity from an imaginative delight in energetic characters and extreme types, enlarges the energy of a people by the spectacle of energy. A nation is injured by the picking out of a single type and setting that into print or upon the stage as a type of the whole nation. Ireland suffered in this way from that single whiskey-drinking, humorous type which seemed for a time the accepted type of all. The Englishwoman is, no doubt, injured in the same way in the minds of various Continental nations by a

habit of caricaturing all Englishwomen as having big teeth. But neither nation can be injured by imaginative writers selecting types that please their fancy. They will never impose a general type on the public mind, for genius differs from the newspapers in this, that the greater and more confident it is, the more is its delight in varieties and species. If Ireland were at this moment, through a misunderstanding terror of the stage Irishman, to deprive her writers of freedom, to make their imaginations timid, she would lower her dignity in her own eyes and in the eyes of every intellectual nation. That old caricature did her very little harm in the long run, perhaps a few car-drivers tried to live up to it, but the mind of the country remained untroubled; but the loss of imaginative freedom and daring would turn us into old women. In the long run, it is the great writer of a nation that becomes its image in the minds of posterity, and even though he represent, like Aristophanes, no man of worth in his art, the worth of his own mind becomes the inheritance of his people. He takes nothing away that he does not give back in greater volume.



If Ireland had not lost the Gaelic she never would have had this sensitiveness as of a *parvenu* when presented at Court for the first time, or of a nigger newspaper. When Ireland had the confidence of her own antiquity, her writers praised and blamed according to their fancy, and even as throughout all mediæval Europe, they laughed when they had a mind to at the most respected persons, at the sanctities of Church and State. The story of the *Shadow of the Glen*, found by Mr. Synge in Gaelic-speaking Aran, and by Mr. Curtin in Munster; the *Song of the Red Haired Man's Wife*, sung in all Gaelic Ireland; the *Midnight Court of Mac Giolla Meidhre*; the *Vision of MacCoinnigáine*; the old romancers, with their Bricriu and their Conan, laughed and sang as fearlessly as Chaucer or Villon or Cervantes. It seemed almost as if those old writers murmured to themselves, "If we but keep our courage let all the virtues perish, for we can make them over again, but if that be gone, all is gone." I remember when I was an art student at the Metropolitan School of Art a good many years ago, saying to Mr. Hughes the sculptor, as we looked at the work of our fellow-students, "Every student here that is doing better work than another is doing it because he has a more intrepid imagination; one has only to look at the line of a drawing to see that;" and he said that was his own thought also. All good art is extravagant, vehement, impetuous, shaking the dust of time from its feet, as it were, and beating against the walls of the world.



If a sincere religious artist were to arise in Ireland in our day, and

were to paint the Holy Family, let us say, he would meet with the same opposition that sincere dramatists are meeting with to-day. The bourgeois mind is never sincere in the arts, and one finds in Irish chapels, above all in Irish convents, the religious art that it understands. A Galway convent a little time ago refused a fine design for stained glass sent from Miss Sarah Purser's studio, because of the personal life in the faces and in the attitudes, which seemed to them ugly, perhaps even impious. They sent to Miss Purser an insipid German chromo-lithograph, full of faces without expression or dignity, and gestures without personal distinction, and Miss Purser, doubtless because her enterprise was too new, too anxious for success, to reject any order, has carried out this ignoble design in glass of beautiful colour and quality. Let us suppose that Meister Stefan were to paint in Ireland to-day that exquisite Madonna of his, with her lattice of roses; a great deal that is said of our plays would be said of that picture. Why select for his model a little girl selling newspapers in the streets, why slander with that miserable little body the Mother of God? He could only answer, as the imaginative artist always answers, "That is the way I have seen her in my mind, and what I have made of her is very living." All art is founded upon personal vision, and the greater the art the more surprising the vision; and all bad art is founded upon impersonal types and images, accepted by average men and women out of imaginative poverty and timidity, or the exhaustion that comes from labour.

Nobody can force a movement of any kind to take any pre-arranged pattern to any very great extent; one can, perhaps, modify it a little, and that is all. When one says that it is going to develop in a certain way, one means that one sees, or imagines that one sees, certain energies which, left to themselves, are bound to give it a certain form. Writing in *Samhain* some years ago, I said that our plays would be of two kinds, plays of peasant life and plays of a romantic and heroic life, such as one finds in the folk tales. To-day I can see other forces and can foretell, I think, the form of technique that will arise. About fifty years ago, perhaps not so many, the playwrights of every country in the world became persuaded that their plays must reflect the surface of life; and the author of *Caste*, for instance, made a reputation by putting what seemed to be average common life and average common speech for the first time upon the stage in England, and by substituting real loaves of bread and real cups of tea for imaginary ones. He was not a very clever nor a very well-educated man, and he made his revolution superficially, but in other countries men of intellect and knowledge created that intellectual drama of real life, of which Ibsen's later plays are the ripened fruit. This change coincided with the substitution of science for religion in the conduct of life, and is, I believe, as temporary, for the practice of twenty centuries will surely take the sway in the end. A rhetorician in that novel of Petronius, which satirises, or perhaps one should say celebrates, Roman

decadence, complains that the young people of his day are made block-heads by learning old romantic tales in the schools, instead of what belongs to common life. And yet is it not the romantic tale, the extravagant and ungovernable dream which comes out of youth; and is not that desire for what belongs to common life, whether it comes from Rome or Greece or England, the sign of fading fires, of ebbing imaginative desire? In the arts I am quite certain that it is a substitution of apparent for real truth. Mr. George Moore has a very vivid character; he is precisely one of those whose characters can be represented most easily upon the stage. Let us suppose that some dramatist had made even him the centre of a play in which the moderation of common life was carefully preserved, how very little he could give us of that headlong intrepid man, as we know him, whether through long personal knowledge or through his many books. The more carefully the play reflected the surface of life the more would the elements be limited to those that naturally display themselves during so many minutes of our ordinary affairs. It is only by extravagance, by an emphasis far greater than that of life as we observe it, that we can crowd into a few minutes the knowledge of years. Shakespeare or Sophocles can so quicken, as it were, the circles of the clock, so heighten the expression of life, that many years can unfold themselves in a few minutes, and it is always Shakespeare or Sophocles, and not Ibsen, that makes us say, "how true, how often I have felt as that man feels;" or "how intimately I have come to know those people on the stage." There is a certain school of painters that has discovered that it is necessary in the representation of light, to put little touches of pure colour side by side. When you went up close to that big picture of the Alps by Segantini, in Mr. Lane's Loan Exhibition a year ago, you found that the grass seeds, which looked brown enough from the other side of the room, were full of pure scarlet colour. If you copy nature's moderation of colour you do not imitate her, for you have only white paint and she has light. If you wish to represent character or passion upon the stage, as it is known to the friends, let us say, of your principal persons, you must be excessive, extravagant, fantastic, even in expression; and you must be this, more extravagantly, more excessively, more fantastically than ever, if you wish to show character and passion as they would be known to the principal person of your play in the depths of his own mind. The greatest art symbolises not those things that we have observed so much as those things that we have experienced, and when the imaginary saint or lover or hero moves us most deeply, it is the moment when he awakens within us for an instant our own heroism, our own sanctity, our own desire. We possess these things—the greatest of men not more than Seaghan the Fool—not at all moderately, but to an infinite extent, and though we control or ignore them, we know that the moralists speak true when they compare them to angels or to devils, or to beasts of prey. How can any dramatic art, moderate in its expression, be a true image of hell or heaven or the wilderness, or do anything but create

those faint histories that but touch our curiosity, those groups of persons that never follow us into our own intimate life, where Odysseus and Don Quixote and Hamlet are with us always?

The scientific movement is ebbing a little everywhere, and here in Ireland it has never been in flood at all. And I am certain that everywhere literature will return once more to its old extravagant fantastical expression, for in literature, unlike science, there are no discoveries, and it is always the old that returns. Everything in Ireland urges us to this return, and it may be that we shall be the first to recover after the fifty years of mistake.



The antagonism of imaginative writing in Ireland is not a habit of scientific observation but our interest in matters of opinion. A misgoverned country seeking a remedy by agitation puts an especial value upon opinion, and even those who are not conscious of any interest in the country are influenced by the general habit. All fine literature is the disinterested contemplation or expression of life, but hardly any Irish writer can liberate his mind sufficiently from questions of practical reform for this contemplation. Art for art's sake, as he understands it, whether it be the art of the Ode to a Grecian Urn or of the imager of Falstaff, seems to him a neglect of public duty. It is as though the telegraph boys botanized among the hedges with the undelivered envelopes in their pockets; one must calculate the effect of one's words before one writes them, who they are to excite and to what end. We all write if we follow the habit of the country not for our own delight but for the improvement of our neighbours, and this is not only true of such obviously propagandist work as the *Spirit of the Nation* or a Gaelic League play but of the work of writers who seemed to have escaped from every national influence, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. George Moore, or even Mr. Oscar Wilde. They never keep their head for very long out of the flood of opinion. Mr. Bernard Shaw, the one brilliant writer of comedy in England to-day, makes these comedies something less than life by never forgetting that he is a reformer, and Mr. Wilde could hardly finish an act of a play without denouncing the British public; and Mr. Moore—God bless the hearers!—has not for ten years now been able to keep himself from the praise or blame of the Church of his fathers. Goethe, whose mind was more busy with philosophy than any modern poet, has said "the poet needs all philosophy, but he must keep it out of his work." One remembers Dante and wishes that Goethe had left some commentary upon that saying, some definition of philosophy perhaps, but one cannot be less than certain that the poet, though it may be well for him to have right opinions, above all if his country be at death's door, must keep all opinion that he holds to merely because he thinks it right, out of his poetry if it is to be poetry at all. At the enquiry which preceded the granting of a patent to the Abbey Theatre I was asked if *Cathleen ni Houlihan* was

not written to affect opinion. Certainly it was not. I had a dream one night which gave me a story, and I had certain emotions about this country, and I gave those emotions expression for my own pleasure. If I had written to convince others I would have asked myself not "Is that exactly what I think and feel?" but "How would that strike so and so?" How will they think and feel when they have read it?" And all would be oratorical and insincere. We only understand our own minds, and the things that are striving to utter themselves through our minds, and we move others, not because we have understood or thought about them at all, but because all life has the same root. Coventry Patmore has said "the end of art is peace," and the following of art is little different from the following of religion in the intense preoccupation that it demands. Somebody has said "God asks nothing of the highest soul except attention;" and so necessary is attention to mastery in any art, that there are moments when one thinks that nothing else is necessary, and nothing else so difficult. The religious life has created for itself monasteries and convents where men and women may forget in prayer and contemplation everything that seems necessary to the most useful and busy citizens of their towns and villages, and one imagines that even in the monastery and the convent there are passing things, the twitter of a sparrow in the window, the memory of some old quarrel, things lighter than air, that keep the soul from its joy. How many of those old religious sayings can one not apply to the life of art. "The Holy Spirit" wrote S. Thomas A Kempis "has liberated me from a multitude of opinions." When one sets out to cast into some mould so much of life merely for life's sake, one is tempted at every moment to twist it from its eternal shape to help some friend or harm some enemy. Alas, all men, we in Ireland more than others, are fighters, and it is a hard law that compels us to cast away our swords when we enter the house of the Muses, as men cast them away at the doors of the banquetting hall at Tara. A weekly paper in reviewing last year's *Samhain*, convinced itself, or at any rate its readers—for that is the heart of the business in propaganda—that I only began to say these things a few months ago under I know not what alien influence; and yet I seem to have been saying them all my life. I took up an anthology of Irish verse that I edited some ten years ago, and I found then there, and I think they were a chief part of an old fight over the policy of the *New Irish Library*. Till they are accepted by writers and readers in this country it will never have a literature, it will never escape from the election rhyme and the pamphlet. So long as I have any control over the National Theatre Society it will be carried on in this spirit, call it art for art's sake if you will; and no plays will be produced at it which were written, not for the sake of a good story or fine verses or some revelation of character, but to please those friends of ours who are ever urging us to attack the priests or the English, or wanting us to put our imagination into handcuffs that we may be sure of never seeming to do one or the other.

I have had very little to say this year in Samhain, and I have said it badly. When I wrote *Ideas of Good and Evil* and *Celtic Twilight*, I wrote everything very slowly and a great many times over. A few years ago, however, my eyesight got so bad that I had to dictate the first drafts of everything, and then re-write these drafts several times. I did the last *Samhain* this way, dictating all the thoughts in a few days, and re-writing them in two or three weeks; but this time I am letting the first draft remain with all its carelessness of phrase and rhythm. I am busy with a practical project which needs the saying of many things from time to time, and it is better to say them carelessly and harshly than to take time from my poetry. One casts something away every year, and I shall, I think, have to cast away the hope of ever having a prose style that amounts to anything. After all, dictation gives one a certain vitality as of vehement speech.

W. B. YEATS.

"Spreading the News."

(A COMEDY.)

By LADY GREGORY.

PERSONS:—

BARTLEY FALLON.
MRS. FALLON.
JACK SMITH.
SHAWN EARLY.
TIM CASEY.
JAMES RYAN.
MRS. TARPEY.
MRS. TULLY.
A POLICEMAN (JO MULDOON).
A REMOVABLE MAGISTRATE.

SCENE.—*The outskirts of a Fair. An Apple Stall. Mrs. Tarpey sitting at it. Magistrate and Policeman enter.*

MAGISTRATE.—So that is the Fair Green. Cattle and sheep and mud. No system. What a repulsive sight!

POLICEMAN.—That is so, indeed.

MAGISTRATE.—I suppose there is a good deal of disorder in this place?

POLICEMAN.—There is.

MAGISTRATE.—Common assault?

POLICEMAN.—Its common enough.

MAGISTRATE.—Agrarian crime, no doubt.

POLICEMAN.—That is so.

MAGISTRATE.—Boycotting? Maiming of cattle? Firing into houses?

POLICEMAN.—There was one time, and there might be again.

MAGISTRATE.—That is bad. Does it go any farther than that?

POLICEMAN.—Far enough, indeed.

MAGISTRATE.—Homicide then! This district has been shamefully neglected! I will change all that. When I was in the Andaman Islands

my system never failed. Yes, yes, I will change all that. What has that woman on her stall?

POLICEMAN.—Apples mostly—and sweets.

MAGISTRATE.—Just see if there are any unlicensed goods underneath—spirits or the like. We had evasions of the salt tax in the Andaman Islands.

POLICEMAN (*Sniffing cautiously and upsetting a heap of apples*).—I see no salt here—or spirits.

MAGISTRATE (*To Mrs. Tarpey*).—Do you know this town well, my good woman?

MRS. TARPEY (*Holding out some apples*).—A penny the half-dozen, your honour.

POLICEMAN (*Shouting*).—The gentleman is asking do you know the town! He's the new magistrate!

MRS. TARPEY (*Rising and ducking*).—Do I know the town? I do, to be sure.

MAGISTRATE (*Shouting*).—What is its chief business?

MRS. TARPEY.—Business is it? What business would the people here have but to be minding one another's business?

MAGISTRATE.—I mean what trade have they?

MRS. TARPEY.—Not a trade. No trade at all but to be talking.

MAGISTRATE.—I shall learn nothing here.

(*James Ryan comes in, pipe in mouth. Seeing Magistrate he retreats quickly, taking pipe from mouth*).

MAGISTRATE.—The smoke from that man's pipe had a greenish look; he may be growing unlicensed tobacco at home. I wish I had brought my telescope to this district. Come to the post-office, I will telegraph for it. I found it very useful in the Andaman Islands.

(*Magistrate and Policeman go out left*).

MRS. TARPEY.—Bad luck to Jo Muldoon, knocking my apples this way and that way. (*Begins arranging them*). Showing off he was to the new magistrate.

(*Enter Bartley Fallon and Mrs. Fallon*).

BARTLEY.—Indeed it's a poor country and a scarce country to be living in at all. But I'm thinking if I went to America it's long ago the day I'd be dead!

MRS. FALLON.—So you might, indeed. (*She puts her basket on a barrel and begins putting parcels in it, taking them from under her cloak*).

BARTLEY.—And it's a great expense for a poor man to be buried in America.

MRS. FALLON.—Never fear, Bartley Fallon, but I'll give you a good burying the day you'll die.

BARTLEY.—Maybe it's yourself will be buried in the graveyard of Cloonmara before me, Mary Fallon, and I myself that will be dying unbeknownst some night, and no one a-near me. And the cat itself may be gone straying through the country, and the mice squealing over the quilt.

MRS. FALLON.—Leave off talking of dying. It might be twenty years you'll be living yet.

BARTLEY (*With a deep sigh*).—I'm thinking if I'll be living at the end of twenty years, it's a very old man I'll be then!

MRS. TARPEY (*Takes and sees them*).—Good morrow, Bartley Fallon, good morrow, Mrs. Fallon. Well, Bartley, you'll find no cause for complaining to-day, they are all saying it was a good fair.

BARTLEY (*Raising his voice*).—It was not a good fair, Mrs. Tarpey. It was a scattered sort of a fair. If we didn't expect more, we got less. That's the way with me always; whatever I have to sell goes down and whatever I have to buy goes up. If there's ever any misfortune coming to this world, it's on myself it pitches, like a flock of crows on seed potatoes.

MRS. FALLON.—Leave off talking of misfortunes, and listen to Jack Smith that's coming the way, and he singing.

(*Voice of Jack Smith heard singing*).

I thought my first love
There'd be but one house between you and me,
And I thought I would find
Yourself coaxing my child on your knee.
Over the tide
I would leap with the leap of a swan,
Till I came to the side
Of the wife of the Red-haired man!

(*Jack Smith comes in, he is a red-haired man, and is carrying a hayfork*).

MRS. TARPEY.—That should be a good song if I had my hearing.

MRS. FALLON (*Shouting*).—It's "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

MRS. TARPEY.—I know it well. That's the song that has the skin on it!

(*She turns her back to them and goes on arranging her apples*).

MRS. FALLON.—Where's herself, Jack Smith?

JACK SMITH.—She was delayed with her washing; bleaching the clothes on the hedge she is, and she daren't leave them, with all the tinkers that do be passing to the fair. It isn't to the fair I came myself, but up to the Five Acre meadow I'm going, where I have a contract for the hay. We'll get a share of it into tramps to-day. (*He lays down hayfork and lights his pipe*).

BARTLEY.—You will not get it into tramps to-day. The rain will be down on it by evening, and on myself too. It's seldom I ever started on

a journey but the rain would come down on me before I'd find any place of shelter.

JACK SMITH.—If it didn't itself, Bartley, it is my belief you would carry a leaky pail on your head in place of a hat, the way you'd not be without some cause of complaining.

(A voice heard "Go on, now, go on out o' that. Go on I say.")

JACK SMITH.—Look at that young mare of Pat Ryan's that is backing into Shaughnessy's bullocks with the dint of the crowd! Don't be daunted, Pat, I'll give you a hand with her. *(He goes out, leaving his hayfork.)*

MRS. FALLON.—It's time for ourselves to be going home. I have all I got put in the basket. Look at there, Jack Smith's hayfork he left behind him! He'll be wanting it. *(Calls) Jack Smith! Jack Smith!—*He's gone through the crowd—hurry after him, Bartley, he'll be wanting it.

BARTLEY.—I'll do that. This is no safe place to be leaving it. *(He takes up fork awkwardly and upsets the basket.)* Look at that now! If there is any basket in the fair upset, it must be our own basket! *(He goes out to R.)*

MRS. FALLON.—Get out of that! It is your own fault it is. Talk of misfortunes and misfortunes will come. Glory be! Look at my new egg-cups rolling in every part—and my two pound of sugar with the paper broke—

MRS. TARPEY.—*(Turning from stall.)* God help us, Mrs. Fallon, what happened your basket?

MRS. FALLON.—It's himself that knocked it down, bad manners to him. *(Putting things up.)* My grand sugar that's destroyed, and he'll not drink his tea without it. I had best go back to the shop for more, much good may it do him!

(Enter Tim Casey.)

TIM CASEY.—Where is Bartley Fallon, Mrs. Fallon? I want a word with him before he'll leave the fair. I was afraid he might have gone home by this, for he's a temperate man.

MRS. FALLON.—I wish he did go home! It'd be best for me if he went home straight from the fair green, or if he never came with me at all! Where is he, is it? He's gone up the road *(jerks elbow)* following Jack Smith with a hayfork. *(She goes out to L.)*

TIM CASEY.—Following Jack Smith with a hayfork! Did ever anyone hear the like of that. *(Shouts)* Did you hear that news, Mrs. Tarpey?

MRS. TARPEY.—I heard no news at all.

TIM CASEY.—Some dispute I suppose it was that rose between Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon, and it seems Jack made off, and Bartley Fallon is following him with a hayfork!

MRS. TARPEY.—Is he now? Well, that was quick work! It's not ten

minutes since the two of them were here, Bartley going home and Jack going to the Five Acre Meadow; and I had my apples to settle up, that Jo Muldoon of the police had scattered, and when I looked around again, Jack Smith was gone, and Bartley Fallon was gone, and Mrs. Fallon's basket upset, and all in it strewed upon the ground—the tea here—the two pound of sugar there—the egg-cups there.—Look now what a great hardship the deafness puts upon me, that I didn't hear the commencement of the fight! Wait till I tell James Ryan that I see below, he is a neighbour of Bartley's, it would be a pity if he wouldn't hear the news!

(She goes out. Enter Shawn Early and Mrs. Tully.)

TIM CASEY.—Listen Shawn Early! Listen Mrs. Tully to the news! Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon had a falling out, and Jack knocked Mrs. Fallon's basket into the road, and Bartley made an attack on him with a hayfork, and away with Jack, and Bartley after him. Look at the sugar here yet on the road!

SHAWN EARLY.—Do you tell me so! Well, that's a queer thing, and Bartley Fallon so quiet a man!

MRS. TULLY.—I wouldn't wonder at all. I would never think well of a man that would have that sort of a mouldering look. It's likely he has overtaken Jack by this.

(Enter James Ryan and Mrs. Tarpey.)

JAMES RYAN.—That is great news Mrs. Tarpey was telling me! I suppose that's what brought the police and the magistrate up this way. I was wondering to see them in it a while ago.

SHAWN EARLY.—The police after them? Bartley Fallon must have injured Jack so. They wouldn't meddle in a fight that was only for show!

MRS. TULLY.—Why wouldn't he injure him? There was many a man killed with no more of a weapon than a hayfork.

JAMES RYAN.—Wait till I run north as far as Kelly's barn to spread the news! *(He goes out.)*

TIM CASEY.—I'll go tell Jack Smith's first cousin that is standing there south of the church after selling his lambs. *(Goes out.)*

MRS. TULLY.—I'll go telling a few of the neighbours I see beyond to the west. *(Goes out.)*

SHAWN EARLY.—I'll give word of it beyond at the east of the green. *(Is going out when Mrs. Tarpey seizes hold of him.)*

MRS. TARPEY.—Stop a minute, Shawn Early, and tell me did you see red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary, in any place?

SHAWN EARLY.—I did. At her own house she was, drying clothes on the hedge as I passed.

MRS. TARPEY.—What did you say she was doing?

SHAWN EARLY (*breaking away*).—Laying out a sheet on the hedge. (*He goes*).

MRS. TARPEY.—Laying out a sheet for the dead! The Lord have mercy on us! Jack Smith dead, and his wife laying out a sheet for his burying! (*Calls out*). Why didn't you tell me that before, Shawn Early? Isn't the deafness the great hardship? Half the world might be dead without me knowing of it or getting word of it at all! (*She sits down and rocks herself*). O my poor Jack Smith! To be going to his work so nice and so hearty, and to be left stretched on the ground in the full light of the day!

(*Enter Tim Casey*).

TIM CASEY.—What is it, Mrs. Tarpey? What happened since?

MRS. TARPEY.—O my poor Jack Smith!

TIM CASEY.—Did Bartley overtake him?

MRS. TARPEY.—O the poor man!

TIM CASEY.—Is it killed he is?

MRS. TARPEY.—Stretched in the Five Acre Meadow!

TIM CASEY.—The Lord have mercy on us, is that a fact?

MRS. TARPEY.—Without the rites of the Church or a ha'porth!

TIM CASEY.—Who was telling you?

MRS. TARPEY.—And the wife laying out a sheet for his corpse, (*Sits up and wipes her eyes*). I suppose they'll wake him the same as another?

(*Enter Mrs. Tully, Shawn Early, and James Ryan*).

MRS. TULLY.—There is great talk about this work in every quarter of the fair.

MRS. TARPEY.—O chone! cold and dead. And myself maybe the last he was speaking to!

JAMES RYAN.—The Lord save us! Is it dead he is?

TIM CASEY.—Dead surely, and the wife getting provision for the wake.

SHAWN EARLY.—Well now, hadn't Bartley Fallon great venom in him?

MRS. TULLY.—You may be sure he had some cause. Would he have made an end of him if he had not? (*To Mrs. Tarpey, raising her voice*) What was it rose the dispute at all, Mrs. Tarpey?

MRS. TARPEY.—Not a one of me knows. The last I saw of them, Jack Smith was standing there, and Bartley Fallon was standing there quiet and easy, and he listening to "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

MRS. TULLY.—Do you hear that, Shawn Early? Do you hear that, Tim Casey and James Ryan? Bartley Fallon was here this morning listening to red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary that was! Listening to her and whispering with her! It was she started the fight so!

SHAWN EARLY.—She must have followed him from her own house. It is likely some person roused him.

TIM CASEY.—I never knew, now, Bartley Fallon was great with Jack Smith's wife.

MRS. TULLY.—How would you know it? Sure it's not in the streets they would be calling it. If Mrs. Fallon didn't know of it, and if I that have the next house to them didn't know of it, and if Jack Smith himself didn't know of it, it is not likely you would know of it, Tim Casey.

SHAWN EARLY.—Let Bartley Fallon take charge of her from this out so, and let him provide for her. It is little pity she will get from any person in this parish.

TIM CASEY.—How can he take charge of her? Sure he has a wife of his own. Sure you don't think he'd turn souper and marry her in a Protestant church?

JAMES RYAN.—It would be easy for him to marry her if he brought her to America.

SHAWN EARLY.—With or without Kitty Keary, believe me it is for America he's making at this minute. I saw the new magistrate and Jo Muldoon of the police going into the post-office as I came up—there was hurry on them—you may be sure it was to telegraph they went the way he'll be stopped in the docks at Queenstown!

MRS. TULLY.—It's likely Kitty Keary is gone with him, and not minding a sheet or a wake at all. The poor man to be deserted by his own wife, and the breath hardly gone out yet from his body that is lying bloody in the field.

(*Enter Mrs. Fallon*).

MRS. FALLON.—What is it the whole of the town is talking about? And what is it you yourselves are talking about? Is it about my man Bartley Fallon you are talking? Is it lies about him you are telling, saying that he went killing Jack Smith? My grief that ever he came into this place at all!

JAMES RYAN.—Be easy now, Mrs. Fallon. Sure there is no one at all in the whole fair but is sorry for you!

MRS. FALLON.—Sorry for me, is it! Why would anyone be sorry for me? Let you be sorry for yourselves, and that there may be shame on you for ever and at the day of judgment, for the words you are saying and the lies you are telling to take away the character of my poor man, and to take the good name off of him, and to drive him to destruction! That is what you are doing!

SHAWN EARLY.—Take comfort now, Mrs. Fallon. The police are not so smart as they think. Sure he might give them the slip yet, the same as Lynchbaun.

MRS. TULLY.—If they do get him, and if they do put a rope around his neck, there is no one can say he does not deserve it!

MRS. FALLON.—Is that what you are saying, Bridget Tully, and is that what you think? I tell you it's too much talk you have, making

yourself out to be such a great one, and to be running down every respectable person! A rope is it? It isn't much of a rope was needed to tie up your own furniture the day you came into Martin Tully's house, and you never bringing as much as a blanket, or a penny, or a suit of clothes with you, and I myself bringing seventy pounds and two feather beds. And now you are stiffer than a woman would have a hundred pounds! It is too much talk the whole of you have. A rope is it? I tell you the whole of this town is full of liars and schemers that would hang you up for half a glass of whiskey. (*Turning to go*). People they are you wouldn't believe as much as daylight from without you'd get up to have a look at it yourself. Killing Jack Smith, indeed! Where are you at all, Bartley, till I bring you out of this? My nice, quiet little man! My decent comrade! He that is as kind and as harmless as an innocent beast of the field! He'll be doing no harm at all if he'll shed the blood of some of you after this day's work! That much would be no harm at all. (*Calls out*). Bartley! Bartley Fallon! Where are you? (*Going out*) Did anyone see Bartley Fallon?

(*All turn to look after her.*)

JAMES RYAN.—It is hard for her to believe any such a thing, God help her!

(*Enter Bartley Fallon from R. carrying hayfork.*)

BARTLEY.—It is what I often said to myself, if there is ever any misfortune coming to this world, it is on myself it is sure to come!

(*All turn round and face him.*)

BARTLEY.—To be going about with this fork, and to find no one to take it, and no place to leave it down, and I wanting to be gone out of this.—Is that you, Shawn Early? (*holds out fork*) Its well I met you. You have no call to be leaving the fair for a while the way I have, and how can I go till I'm rid of this fork? Will you take it and keep it until such time as Jack Smith.—

JAMES RYAN (*Taking off hat*).—The Lord have mercy on him.

SHAWN EARLY (*backing*).—I will not take it, Bartley Fallon, I'm very thankful to you!

BARTLEY (*Turning to apple stall*).—Look at now, Mrs. Tarpey, it was here I got it; let me thrust it under the stall.—It will lie there safe enough, and no one will take notice of it until such time as Jack Smith.—

MRS. TARPEY.—Take your fork out of that! Is it to put trouble on me and to destroy me you want? putting it there for the police to be rooting it out maybe.— (*Thrusts him back.*)

BARTLEY.—That is a very unneighbourly thing for you to do, Mrs. Tarpey. Hadn't I enough care on me with that fork before this, running up and down with it like the swinging of a clock, and afraid to lay it down in any place. I wish I never touched it or meddled with it at all!

JAMES RYAN.—It is a pity, indeed, you ever did.

BARTLEY.—Will you yourself take it, James Ryan? You were always a neighbourly man.

JAMES RYAN (*Backing*).—There is many a thing I would do for you, Bartley Fallon, but I won't do that!

SHAWN EARLY.—I tell you there is no man will give you any help or any encouragement for this day's work. If it was something agrarian now—

BARTLEY.—If no one at all will take it, maybe its best to give it up to the police.

TIM CASEY.—There'd be a welcome for it with them, surely! (*Laughter.*)

MRS. TULLY.—And it is to the police Kitty Keary, herself will be brought.

MRS. TARPEY (*Rocking to and fro*).—I wonder now who will take the expense of the wake for poor Jack Smith!

BARTLEY.—The wake for Jack Smith!

TIM CASEY.—Why wouldn't he get a wake as well as another? Would you begrudge him that much?

BARTLEY.—Red Jack Smith! Who was telling you he was dead?

SHAWN EARLY.—The whole town knows of it by this.

BARTLEY.—Do they say what way did he die?

JAMES RYAN.—You don't know that yourself, Bartley Fallon? You don't know he was followed and that he was laid dead with the stab of a hayfork?

BARTLEY.—The stab of a hayfork!

SHAWN EARLY.—You don't know, I suppose, that the body was found in the Five Acre Meadow?

BARTLEY.—The Five Acre Meadow!

TIM CASEY.—It is likely you don't know that the police are after the man that did it?

BARTLEY.—The man that did it!

MRS. TULLY.—You don't know, maybe, that he was made away with for the sake of Kitty Keary, his wife?

BARTLEY.—Kitty Keary his wife! (*Sits down bewildered.*)

MRS. TULLY.—And what have you to say now, Bartley Fallon?

BARTLEY (*Crossing himself*).—I to bring that fork here, and to find that news before me! It is much if I can ever stir from this place at all, or reach as far as the road!

JIM CASEY.—Look, boys, at the magistrate, and Jo Muldoon along with him! Its best for us to quit this.

SHAWN EARLY.—That is so. It is best not to be mixed in this business at all.

JAMES RYAN.—Bad as he is, I wouldn't like to be an informer against any man. (*All hurry away except Mrs. Tarpey, who remains behind her stall. Enter magistrate and policeman.*)

MAGISTRATE.—I knew the district was in a bad state, but I did not expect to be confronted with a murder at the first fair I came to.

POLICEMAN.—I am sure you did not, indeed.

MAGISTRATE.—It was well I had not gone home. I caught a few words here and there that roused my suspicions.

POLICEMAN.—So they would, too.

MAGISTRATE.—You heard the same story from everyone you asked?

POLICEMAN.—The same story—or if it was not altogether the same, anyway it was no less than the first story.

MAGISTRATE.—What is that man doing? He is sitting alone with a hayfork. He has a guilty look—. The murder was done with a hayfork!

POLICEMAN (*in a whisper*).—That's the very man, they say, did the act; Bartley Fallon himself!

MAGISTRATE.—He must have found escape difficult—he is trying to brazen it out. A convict in the Andaman Islands tried the same game, but he could not escape my system! Stand aside—. Don't go far—have the handcuffs ready. (*He walks up to Bartley, folds his arms, and stands before him*). Here, my man, do you know anything of John Smith?

BARTLEY.—Of John Smith? Who is he, now?

POLICEMAN.—Jack Smith, sir—. Red Jack Smith!

MAGISTRATE (*coming a step nearer and tapping him on the shoulder*).—Where is Jack Smith?

BARTLEY (*with a deep sigh, and shaking his head slowly*).—Where is he, indeed?

MAGISTRATE.—What have you to tell?

BARTLEY.—It is where he this morning, standing in this spot, singing his share of songs—no, but lighting his pipe—scraping a match on the sole of his shoe—

MAGISTRATE.—I ask you, for the third time, where is he?

BARTLEY.—I wouldn't like to say that. It is a great mystery, and it is hard to say of any man, did he earn hatred or love.

MAGISTRATE.—Tell me all you know.

BARTLEY.—All that I know—. Well, there are the three estates; there is Limbo, and there is Purgatory, and there is—

MAGISTRATE.—Nonsense! This is trifling! Get to the point.

BARTLEY.—Maybe you don't hold with the clergy so? That is the teaching of the clergy. Maybe you hold with the old people. It is what they do be saying, that the shadow goes wandering, and the soul is tired,

and the body is taking a rest—. The shadow! (*Starts up*). I was nearly sure I saw Jack Smith not ten minutes ago at the corner of the forge and I lost him again—. Was it his ghost I saw, do you think?

MAGISTRATE (*to policeman*).—Conscience struck! He will confess all now!

BARTLEY.—His ghost to come before me! It is likely it was on account of the fork! I to have it and he to have no way to defend himself the time he met with his death!

MAGISTRATE (*to policeman*).—I must note down his words (*takes out notebook. To Bartley*). I warn you that your words are being noted.

BARTLEY.—If I had ha' run faster in the beginning, this terror would not be on me at the latter end! Maybe he will cast it up against me at the day of judgment—. I wouldn't wonder at all at that.

MAGISTRATE (*writing*).—At the day of judgment—.

BARTLEY.—It was soon for his ghost to appear to me—is it coming after me always by day it will be, and stripping the clothes off my bed in the night time?— I wouldn't wonder at that, being as I am an unfortunate man!

MAGISTRATE (*sternly*).—Tell me this truly. What was the motive of this crime?

BARTLEY.—The motive, is it?

MAGISTRATE.—Yes; the motive; the cause.

BARTLEY.—I'd sooner not say that.

MAGISTRATE.—You had better tell me truly. Was it money?

BARTLEY.—Not at all! What did poor Jack Smith ever have in his pockets unless it might be his hands that would be in them?

MAGISTRATE.—Any dispute about land?

BARTLEY (*indignantly*).—Not at all! He never was a grabber or grabbed from anyone!

MAGISTRATE.—You will find it better for you if you tell me at once.

BARTLEY.—I tell you I wouldn't for the whole world wish to say what it was—it is a thing I would not like to be talking about.

MAGISTRATE.—There is no use in hiding it. It will be discovered in the end.

BARTLEY.—Well, I suppose it will, seeing that mostly everybody knows it before. Whisper here now. I will tell no lie; where would be the use? (*Puts his hand to his mouth, and Magistrate stoops*). Don't be putting the blame on the parish, for such a thing was never done in the parish before—it was done for the sake of Kitty Keary, Jack Smith's wife.

MAGISTRATE (*to Policeman*).—Put on the handcuffs. We have been saved some trouble. I knew he would confess if taken in the right way. (*Policeman puts on handcuffs*).

BARTLEY.—Handcuffs now! Glory be! I always said, if there was ever any misfortune coming to this place, it was on myself it would fall. I to be in handcuffs! There's no wonder at all in that.

(Enter Mrs. Fallon, followed by the rest. She is looking back at them as she speaks.)

MRS. FALLON.—Telling lies the whole of the people of this town are; telling lies, telling lies as fast as a dog will trot! Spouting against my poor respectable man! Saying he made an end of Jack Smith! I'm nearly sure I saw Jack Smith a while ago coming down by the gap. My decent comrade! There is no better man and no kinder man in the whole of the five parishes! It's little annoyance he ever gave to anyone! (Turns and goes down). What in the earthly world do I see before me? Bartley Fallon in charge of the police! Handcuffs on him! O Bartley, what did you do at all at all!

BARTLEY.—O Mary, there has a great misfortune come upon me! It is what I always said, that if there is ever any misfortune—

MRS. FALLON.—What did he do at all, or is it bewitched I am?

MAGISTRATE.—This man has been arrested on a charge of murder.

MRS. FALLON.—Whose charge is that? Don't believe them! They are all liars in this place! Give me back my man!

MAGISTRATE.—It is natural you should take his part, but you have no cause of complaint against your neighbours. He has been arrested for the murder of John Smith, on his own confession.

MRS. FALLON.—The saints of heaven protect us! And what did he want killing Jack Smith?

MAGISTRATE.—It is best you should know all. He did it on account of a love affair with the murdered man's wife.

MRS. FALLON (sitting down).—With Jack Smith's wife! With Kitty Keary!—Ochone, the traitor!

THE CROWD.—A great shame, indeed. He is a traitor, indeed.

MRS. TULLY.—To America he was bringing her, Mrs. Fallon.

BARTLEY.—What are you saying, Mary? I tell you—

MRS. FALLON.—Don't say a word! I won't listen to any word you'll say! (Steps her ears). O, isn't he the treacherous villain? Oh, go down!

BARTLEY.—Be quiet till I speak! Listen to what I say!

MRS. FALLON.—Sitting beside me on the ass car coming to the town, so quiet and so respectable, and treachery like that in his heart!

BARTLEY.—Is it your wits you have lost or is it I myself that have lost my wits?

MRS. FALLON.—And it's hard I earned you, slaving, slaving—and you grumbling, and sighing and coughing, and discommending and the priest went out moaning you, with all the times you threatened to die!

BARTLEY.—Let you be quiet till I tell you?

MRS. FALLON.—You to bring such a disgrace into the parish! A thing that was never heard of before!

BARTLEY.—Will you shut your mouth and hear me speaking?

MRS. FALLON.—And if it was for any sort of a fine handsome woman! but for a little bottle of a woman like Kitty Keary, that's not four feet high hardly, and not three teeth in her head unless she got new ones! May God reward you, Bartley Fallon, for the black treachery in your heart and the wickedness in your mind, and the red blood of poor Jack Smith that is wet upon your hand!

(Voice of Jack Smith heard singing)

The sea shall be dry,

The earth under mourning and ban!

Then loud shall he cry

For the Wife of the Red-haired man!

BARTLEY.—It's Jack Smith's voice—I never knew a ghost to sing before. It is after myself and the folk he is coming! (Goes back. Enter Jack Smith). Let one of you give him the fork and I will be clear of him now and for eternity!

MRS. TULLY.—The Lord have mercy on us! Red Jack Smith! The man that was going to be wined!

JAMES KEARY.—Is it back from the grave you are come?

MAGISTRATE.—What is this? There seems to be something wrong!

POLICEMAN.—There does so.

SHOWN EARLY.—Is it alive you are, or is it dead you are?

TIM CASEY.—Is it yourself at all that's in it?

MRS. TULLY.—Is it letting on you were to be dead?

MRS. FALLON.—Dead or alive, let you stop Kitty Keary, your wife, from bringing my man away with her to America!

JACK SMITH.—It is what I think, the wits are gone astray on the whole of you. What would my wife want bringing Bartley Fallon to America?

MRS. FALLON.—To leave yourself, and to get quit of you she wanted Jack Smith, and to bring him away from myself. That's what the two of them had settled together.

JACK SMITH.—I'll break the head of any man that says that! Who is it says it? (To Tim Casey). Was it you said it? (To Shown Early). Was it you?

ALL TOGETHER (backing and shaking their heads).—It wasn't I said it!

JACK SMITH.—Tell me the name of any man that said it!

ALL TOGETHER (flinging to Bartley).—It was him that said it!

JACK SMITH.—Let me at him till I break his head!

(Bartley backs in terror. Neighbours hold Jack Smith back.)

JACK SMITH (Trying to free himself).—Let me at him! I'll give him something more to think of than tempting my wife away from me to America! To leave me and go with Bartley Fallon! Bartley Fallon! A pleasant sort of a scarecrow to be crossing the ocean with! It's back from

the docks of New York he'd be turned! It's likely indeed they'd let the likes of him land, being as he is, without means, without store, without teeth, (*Trying to rush at him again*) without wit, without strength, but with a lie in his mouth and treachery in his heart, and another man's wife by his side and he passing her off as his own! (*Makes another rush but is held back*).

MRS. TULLY.—To have put a prod of a fork through Jack Smith, and left him stretched in the meadow, and to have set his ghost wandering, and to have coaxed away Kitty Keary to America! Well now, wasn't Bartley Fallon a very boastful man to say he did all that?

MAGISTRATE (*Pointing to Jack Smith*).—Policeman, put the handcuffs on this man. I see it all now. A case of false impersonation, a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice. There was a case in the Andaman Islands, a murderer of the Mopsa tribe, a religious enthusiast—

POLICEMAN.—So he might be too.

MAGISTRATE.—We must take both these men to the scene of the murder. We must confront them with the body of the real Jack Smith.

JACK SMITH.—I'll break the head of any man that will find my dead body!

MAGISTRATE.—Call more help from the barracks. (*Policeman whistles*).

BARTLEY.—It is what I am thinking, if myself and Jack Smith are put together in the one cell for the night, the handcuffs will be taken off of him, and his hands will be free, and murder will be done that time surely!

MAGISTRATE.—Come on! (*They turn to the right*).

MRS. TARFEY.—The two of them in charge now, and a great troop of people going by from the fair. Come up here the whole of you! It would be a pity you to be passing, and I not to be spreading the news!

AN FEAR SIUBAIL.

ORÁMA MIONBUILLÉ AN MBAINTEGEANNAN SREÓIME.

AN AIT.—Circin tige óig i mBaile Laoi. Deán ann ir i ag cup ar an mbóro, féala, epéca, agus clár beag i gcóir fuinte.

AN FUIREANN: Mácar; páiste; fear fuabail.

PÁISTE.—Cao vo déanfaí leo rúo, a Mácar?

MÁCÁIR.—Déanfaí mé clíre bpeag den plúr geal. Cuiptró mé filini ann. Déirpí go n'éanfaínn clíre beag ic cómor-ra leir. Féarfaí é cup ra córcán beag an farr vo beró an clíre móp agá beirpíuagá ra córcán móp.

PÁISTE.—Mac é an fepupal mo éarai a beir mteigíe go tci an t-aonad uain i gcóir Oróde Samna.

MÁCÁIR.—Beró an feparta agam ar a fon-ran, map ir meafa liom-ra Oróde Samna 'ná aon oróde eile. Roinnt bliabanta ó foin ar an oróde reo ir ead tánaig ar uéar go tci an uéig reo.

PÁISTE.—Ir uoda go mbéir ag bainc na mar úo den nuporéir, pé rin na mara go bfuil na bliáca oíca; agus beró tú á gcup ar an mbóro.

MÁCÁIR.—Beao. Cóipeóga mé an tíg mtoia. Cógrat annar na spéirpe ir fepáir agann agus cuiprat gac nio dá feabair ar an mbóro i gcummuagá ar an éadé a clálarú uam i gcómarfeam an lae reo.

PÁISTE.—Caoé an t-éadé é rúo?

MÁCÁIR.—Ir amlarú a fuaisgearó a táis go fadair im éailín amipre ann.

PÁISTE.—Cá fad an tíg reo? Innir tam map groll air.

MÁCÁIR [ag fadé 7 ag fine a máipe ó uéar].—Call annrúo vo bíor im comuúre, i uéig fepiméopa éuar ar Siab éadéige i n-aice le Siab an Óir.

PÁISTE.—Siab an Óir an eab! Ni fudáig nó áit bpeag ir eab é rin.

MÁCÁIR.—Ni haon áit pó-bpeag é go uemina. Uionn pé lom agus fwar go mar an taca go bliabain. Ác vo tugáir an bócar tam Oróde Samna map reo, uionn putáir éigin a cuipreáir im leir.

PÁISTE.—Ógur cao vo uemir annpoin?

MÁCÁIR.—Cao vo d'féirpí uam a uéanam, ác an bócar a cláirpe

opm epio an mbogac lom i mearc na ngarib-énoe i n-ait ná raib fagail ar poitin, aet pinn géar na gaote im coinnib agus an pluaró d'agac ar mo b'ogair. Cénas go veí Cúil Deaganaig.

PÁISTE—Díor-ia i gCúil Deaganaig. Annpóir í ead fearar na mipeáin a b'aróal ó mnaoi an triopa.

MÁICAIR—Géobéa-ia a leicéir uairi anoir, aet an oróde úo bí a vopur b'únta, bí na vóeppe go léir vúnta, agus vo cónnac, epio na fúnnedógaib, na buacailí í na caillín n-a fúinne cónnail na cónnac ag cleapúndéac vóib péin agus ní raib pé vo mipeac agam aoróacé vo tops opca; ír amlaró a bí eagla oim gur vóis leó gur beap nápeac a bí vónta agam ír gur b'í pé vóeapá vaim beic ar an mbóac im anoir íre oróde.

PÁISTE—Agur ar cónnac anoir n-a vóaró-pan?

MÁICAIR—Da cónnac anoir pan vóaróac le pánaí an éime agus epí méro mo buapá ír a fáro a bí an bódar vo léir mo meap oim ír ba pó-vóbaip vaim curcim. Vo leagac mé pé vóeró map vo cónnac i gcoinnib cónnín vo élocab b'upce ar faoi an bódar.

PÁISTE—Do fopceagac mo gláin-ia an uair úo a fúceap ar an gcapnán éloc.

MÁICAIR—B'ín é an uair a éaplaró an c-óacé vaim. Vo cónnac an fear cugam. Fear an-ápo vo b'ead é; an fear vo b'fopar vo b'paca-ia fúam; é go geal agus go fopurpáir ar faoi an b'aróac é fopurim epio an vóaróac. Bí fopar agus ná vóime gúacac a bí ann.

PÁISTE—Cia-ia b'é péin?

MÁICAIR—Ír é fúleap-ia naé gur b'é Rí na Cúinne a bí ann.

PÁISTE—An raib cónnín aip péin map vo b'ionn ar fús?

MÁICAIR—Má bí ír vo gápacáir lom-ópaigín a vómeac í, aet vo bí aige i n-a lúim cpaobín glap ná pá raam ar épaín pan cpaobáí ra. Rús pé ar lúim oim agus vo fúopúis me cpaepna an élocab an an vóacó amúis v'én vopur po, agus vóbaipé liom buacal íreac anoir ír go fúpaín poitin fopacá. Vo cuacáir ar mo gláin éan a vóbeacáí a fúbaip vó, aet cós pé aip mé agus vóbaipé: "Cuipceac vóacáipé epí éigin éile vóe fopurpáir. Agus má bí vóbeacáí na cónnac vo éapde íepna méicó a beupim vóit," ar feprean, "aet bío páice agac poime."

PÁISTE—Ag imúis pé léir anpoin?

MÁICAIR—Mí b'puaipéar padope aip n-a vóaró-pan aet vo vómeap pvo aip. [b'puaipéar n-a fopacáir agus vóbeacáí go veí an vopur] Seo maí cénas íreac. Bí c'acáip anpóir n-a fúide le har na cónnac, agus é n-a anoir v'ep bíar a míu. Bí uaigneap appean ír bí uaigneap oim-ia agus vo pópaí le cónne pinn, agus ní raib uipapá póca ná cónnóir oim-ia ó pinn. Agus ba maí an cónne ír an cónnacóir cige vó me.

PÁISTE—An b'páir ceadáipé an Ríog cagaice fop?

MÁICAIR—Mí. Ír mím ó pinn v'péacáir péin agus c'acáip amac an vopur. Oróde fúanna ag b'páir ar go b'péimíí é. aet tá geallaméac an Ríog péin agam aip go vóicopáir.

PÁISTE—Tá raí agam ná vóicopáir pé pan oróde nuair a beap-ia im éolacó.

MÁICAIR—Ír aip-pan a cónnógim gaé buacáin, an fáro a bím ag cónnógac an cige ír ag fúmeac cipe i gcóir an cpaupéir.

PÁISTE—Cao vo vóeapáir pé ar vóeacé íreac vó?

MÁICAIR—Ír é m'péimíí-ia ná go vóicopáir pé íreac agus gile ír lonnpóir angil uime. B'póir pé anpóir pan gacáip. Cuipceac-ia fop ar na cónnóir go léir. "Méopáir mé ná c'acáip vóacáí liom ar mo ceadé anpóir. aet méac le cónnac liom ná c'acáip vóacáí liom ar mo ceadé anpóir. aet méacáir fúo fúpaí uairte mipe 'ná éime aca péin, nuair ír eol vóib oia acá cagaice ar cuipceac cugam. Raagáir fúo go léir ar a ngúimíí ag íapáir a beannacéan. aet beir fúga na mbeannacé ar an vóis gur éamí ar cuipceac ann tá cail péin.

PÁISTE—An b'páir éan an cipe a vóeapáir anoir, a máicair?

MÁICAIR—Mí fúapáí é vóeapáir lúicéac nó beir pé vóbeacac agáinn. Táim vóbeacac éana péin. Díor ag b'páir ar vóime vó fúo cónnóir éan ponnit plóp geal a fúbaipé cugam ón mbuic móir. Mí fúpaí a fúleac. Géobáir ar íapacé i mbail éigin é. Beir pinnce i vóis an cpaupéarópa íre oróde vóapacáir agus ní beir fúo gan plóp pan cige.

PÁISTE—Raagáir leat cail.

MÁICAIR—Ír fopáir vóit panaméac anpóir. Bí ír leam maí anoir agus ná bann le fúo beapáiróib péo ar an mbóir. B'póir anpóir le har an cónnac, agus bí ag b'páir na gcpíní péo a cugáir íreac ó c'acáir. Vóim c'acáir beag vóib im c'acáir agus beir an-céime agáinn ar ball éan an cipe a beupúacáir. Fúceim-ia anoir an 'mó cónnac a b'páir. Ná bann le vóit amac an vopur an fáro a beap-ia amúis. Vo b'eadal liom c'acáir i ngacáir vóim abann agus i n-a cúile. Pan go fopacáir anpóir. Bí ag cónnacáir na gcpíní péin map b'páir an c'acáir. [Céacáir ír amac.]

PÁISTE [n-a fúide agus é ag b'páir na gcpíní cpaepna ar a leat-íleac]—A haon . . . agus a vó, . . . aet fúpaí péo a b'páir go mion; a haon, a vó, a epí, a ceadáir . . . Tá an cónnac po fúac . . . Mí maí liom c'acáir fúac, . . . a cúig, a pé . . . ír mó an c'acáir é fú . . . fúacáir an cónnac móir po . . . Tá pé pó-éapáir . . . ír vóim liom go b'páir Mami é péo a b'páir . . . vo b'páir vóit é.

[Opacáir an leat-íleac, agus agáinn fúo fúac íreac. B'páir g'acáir ar agus fúpaí ar a epí. é cónnac-óacáir agus c'acáir. Cpaepna glap i n-a leat-íleac.]

FÉAR SUADÁIL [ag cpaepna ar cónnac an leat-íleac agus ag b'páir an gcpíní]—C'acáir vóam-ia é, agus beir-ia aip péo. [Cuipceac an c'acáir beag i lúim an b'páir.]

PÁISTE—Ír maí an c'acáir i péo, tá vóla upéir, agus bíacá. Tá vóla fop ar an gcpáin ag an mbeann, aet v'íméir na bíacá go léir páo é. Tá b'páir an c'acáir po?

FÉAR SUADÁIL—Fúapáir i i ngacáir abapá ír abap ar po.

pÁISTE—Cá bhfuil an garróba nó car ar tuit péin?
FEAR SIUBAIL [as píneao a théip a óear]—Cánaas ón tceasó eile óe pna enocabó úto.

pÁISTE—An ó Siab an óip a tangaip?
FEAR SIUBAIL—Ó Siab an óip, rin é an áit go tpeac. Dao maí uom purbe ar mo fceacéat ar peat camail.

pÁISTE—Suro annpo lem aip. Tá pé corpce ópamí uol i n-aice an báiprú nó baint le hém-níó, nó beao peapag ar mo Mami. Tá mo Mami cun eipce álumna a véanam, eipce a beao opeamíac u'áingéal tá tceasó éugamí i gcóip fupéip.

FEAR SIUBAIL—Surofatu-ia it fceapí annpo ar an uplár. [Suroean]
pÁISTE—Innir dam puró éigin i tceasó an epléibe peo an óip.
FEAR SIUBAIL—Tá garróba ann agus tá epamí ag pái rin ngarróba úto go mbionn corpa agus bláta aip rin an geatona.

pÁISTE—Feib map atá ar an gceasóib peo.
FEAR SIUBAIL—Uipeac péib map atá ar an gceasóibín rin.
pÁISTE—Cao iao ná purab eile atá rin ngarróba úto?

FEAR SIUBAIL—Tá éantac ann ve gac uac agus bíto ag ceileadag go benn gac uap óen ló i púge ip go tceocpar cun upuróbe a páo. Agus tá balla apó móp éiméail an garróba.

pÁISTE—Agus cionnur a falcap trío an mballa?
FEAR SIUBAIL—Tá ceirpe geata inr an mballa, map atá, geata úip agus geata aipgíto, geata eiporcal ip geata pionnópaime.

pÁISTE [as bpeit ar na cipinib]—Uéanpato-ia garróba. Uéanpato mé balla le pna cipinib peo.

FEAR SIUBAIL—Bíor an marbe móp fo map balla tóib. [Céagao ceapmós le cipinib.]

pÁISTE [as bpeit ar an gceasóib]—Cuiprú mé i peo i Lár buil ann. Ip i peo an epamí. Geobatu puró éigin a doméadapóir i n-a pepará i. [éimé-eann i n-a pepará agus pácann ar an upuróip.] Mí pécavim bpeit aip; éimé-pe agus tabair dam an eipéca geal úto [éimé-eann an pepar púabí agus tceasó uó an eipéca.]

FEAR SIUBAIL—Seo tuit é. [Cuipam an páirce leatúig ve ballaib na ceapmós agus ceapann an ópao n-a pepará ann.]

pÁISTE—Innir dam puró éigin eile atá inran ngarróba úto.
FEAR SIUBAIL—Tá ceirpe cinn ve cúbacabú upce ann agus iao éom gléimneac le gloime.

pÁISTE—Tós anuap na cuplín úto go bhfuil na bláta opeá, veapamíto eubpaca tóib. [Céagao pé anuap iao.] Anuap véanpam na geatái; tabair dam na mapá úto i gcóip geatái; ná bac na cinn glánua úto; peat, na cinn véapá éap. . . . [Céagao pé anuap iao, i cuplín i gcóip geatái iao ar ceirpe caobab na ceapmós, éimé-eann an páirce agus pácann ar.]

FEAR SIUBAIL—Sen é é; tá pé eiplocuicéat agac.
pÁISTE—An bhfuil pé éom veap leip an ngarróba eile úto? Cionnur a págam go tci Siab an óip cun an garróba eile u'fepicint?

FEAR SIUBAIL—Ragam ag mapceagacéat ann.

pÁISTE—óet n'í don éapall agamí.
FEAR SIUBAIL—Bíor an pepará fo i n-a éapall agamí. [Ceapmóeann pepará ar an gcáimna. Céicéann ag mapceagacéat ar agus tógann an páirce ar a téalab.] Seo cun riubail pinn. [Ceapann ar aipín.]

Ragam ar pécip ve bíip na gceao
ag éapall cúbom cóip
map a mbu na páirce ip bíip uol
ip éin ag cantain cedel.

Cupá: [Gabhann an páirce n-a bíab é.]

Geot a éapall cóip, geot, geot,
Geot a éapall cóip;
Ragam anuap ve bíip na gceao
ip geot a éapall cóip.

FEAR SIUBAIL—Cionnur ar éatén pé píu leat, a mapceag bíg?

pÁISTE—Ciomám leat! Spear eile!

FEAR SIUBAIL—[as aipín.]

Ragam ar pécip gam pín ná a éipg
pé bíip épam-abail na gceao
'n go bípécpmip n-a tceag ar an upuróbe
na céigie u'blá ar gcóip.

Cupá: [Gabhann an leat n-a bíab é.]

pÁISTE—Ip gepar uainn Siab an óip anuap. Seo, spear eile . . .
Dimir ag aipín . . .

FEAR SIUBAIL [as aipín]—

Ragam éap ípeal pagam éap apó
ip cionnam gépta plós
ip uóine ag pú le map ar pín
San ngarróba veabua uó.

Cupá: [Gabhann an páirce n-a bíab é.]

pÁISTE—Seat spear eile anuap. . .
FEAR SIUBAIL—Ip é peo an ceann veapamíac, mápéat Deo anuap, agamí ve. . . . [Gagann an éiméap ípeal. Pécavim oita ar peat éimé. Céicéann a bpeacó uatí; bpeapann ar an bpeirce i poubann léi é.]

MÁICAIR—An bpeacóir éimé piam a leicéit! Bacac veatib, pepar púabí na mbéirpe, agus mo leantópa ar a bacalann aige! Bual amac ar pain, pé hé tu péin, agus pág an tís peo, nó glatópa-ia ar buine a cuiprú púabí oit iméacó go meap.

pÁISTE—Ná cuip amac é! Mí haon upó-úime é. Pepar maí peat é. Bí pé ag mámeat mapceagacéat uam-ia. Tá aipín bpeagca aige

MÁICAIR—Iméigead pé ar fo Lútpéac, é péin agus a éuro aipín. Peat map tá uo púipéin-pe paltúge aige u'éir dam é mige ar maríen.
pÁISTE—Bí pé 'om doméat ar muin an éapall. Diomair ag mapceagacéat. Uo cuipcinn-pe mapá mbéat go puró gpeim aige oim.

MÁICAIR—Deipim mípocal tuit go bhfuil péit le mapceagacéat peparca.

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Independent Sept 9

Theatrical Aspects.

Theatrical enterprise of a literary kind for art's sake rather than for profit has not been so successful on this side—in any particular case—as have been the performances of National drama in Ireland. A striking contrast is afforded between the popularity of the Abbey Theatre and the quiet of the Mervin Repository Theatre founded a couple of years ago. The Mervin Theatre, I was informed last night, and suspect the performances daily thereafter, it is to be hoped—from to-day, owing to lack of public support. This interesting venture has already resulted in a certain measure of artistic achievement. It commenced in 1905 with a production of *William's Mask of "Gemma"* in the Botanical Gardens, Regent's Park. W. G. Fay, Johnston and Fletcher and Congreve were given the royalty, and I witnessed some things on a very superior performance in *William's Mask* in the latest house in the city, the Great Queen Street Theatre. Now I have on the authority of the leading critic, the director, that while the cost of conducting the theatre is over £200 a week the receipts from the performances of *William's Mask* are over £100 a week. Mr. Castellan, are expected to be about £100. It is hoped that the literary enterprise, which includes the production of *William's Mask*, Lord Kilbane, the *Orange Committee* at Limerick, Lord Wellesley, and Mr. W. B. Yeats will be enabled to send several requests to the agents to resume the performances at an early date.

Academy Nov 11

The National Theatre Society, Limited, from the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, the company of Irish actors which performed with such success at the Queen's Gate Hall in 1903, and at the Royalty Theatre, Soho, in 1904, will make their third visit to London on November 27 and 28. They will perform the following plays at St. George's Hall: *On Bailie's Strand* and *Kathleen ni Houlihan*, by W. B. Yeats; *The Well of the Saints* and *The Shadow of the Glen*, by J. M. Synge; *Spreading the News*, by Lady Gregory; *The Building Fund*, by William Boyle; and *The Land*, by Patrick Colm. Of these plays, all but *Kathleen ni Houlihan* and *The Shadow of the Glen* will be new to London. On their way the company will visit Oxford to give two performances on November 23, and perhaps Cambridge on November 25. It is possible that they will perform in Manchester before the end of Lent.

Oxford May 18

On Thursday, November 23, we are to have a visit from the Irish National Theatre Company, which won golden opinions in London last season. They bring with them three one-act plays for a morning performance at 2.30 p.m.:—*On Bailie's Strand* by Mr. W. B. Yeats, *The Shadow of the Glen* by Mr. J. M. Synge, and a comedy by Lady Gregory, entitled *Spreading the News*. The evening performances will consist of *The Well of the Saints* by Mr. J. M. Synge, and *Kathleen ni Houlihan* by Mr. W. B. Yeats. The performances will be in the Corn Exchange, and seats may be booked at Mr. Acott's. The players have received the enthusiastic praise of *The Times*, *The Academy*, the *Mercure de France*, and the *Journal des Debats*. They appeal to literary and artistic sentiment, and art precludes politics, so that the attendance of the staunchest Unionist will not commit him to any dangerous propaganda. The performances have even been attended by "The Castle"—at least, so it is whispered in Dublin.

Oxford Times Nov 25

**IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE.
PERFORMANCES OF IRISH PLAYS.**

The playing members of the Irish National Theatre Society met with a cordial welcome from large audiences in the Corn Exchange on Thursday, when they gave performances of several Irish plays, some of which are now being produced in England for the first time. The afternoon programme opened with a one-act play, *On Bailie's Strand*, by W. B. Yeats, whose name as a poet is already well known. The story in brief is the meeting of Cuchullain, one of the lower kings of the district, with a youth who comes from the house of a rival down as a champion to challenge him to single combat. Cuchullain, who is of a retiring, light-hearted disposition, takes a fancy to the youth and refuses to fight, but is able to stay with him, and the young man is almost persuaded to do so when Connobar, the High King, and two old knights, his supporters, issued upon Cuchullain giving up the idea, whereupon, in a frenzy of exaltation he renounces his over-riding with violence. Then in a sudden reversal of feeling, Cuchullain goes out and fights the stranger, and when the youth is dead, learns that he has slain his own son. The little tragedy, which is surrounded by poetic imagery typical of the time and people, was well acted by Mr. F. J. Fay as Cuchullain, King of Murrumbidgee, W. J. Tunney as Connobar, the High King, Arthur Sarsfield as Fiachra, a knight, and W. G. Fay as Harach, a clown; the other characters being taken by F. Macbeth, Duff, a poet, H. Wright, E. Keegan, and J. Dunne. The second item was J. M. Synge's one-act play, "In the Shadow of the Glen," in which an old farmer with a young wife slams death, apparently to see what his wife will do under the circumstances. Finding that a young herd is making up to her and the contents of a stocking and having overheard some very uncomplimentary remarks, he revives in the nick of time, and turns his wife out of doors. A kindly tramp whom she had been about to take charge of, and the curtain falls on the revived couple and the young man who had tried to succeed him in the household together quite amicably. Maria, the wife, George Roberts as Dan Burke, the farmer, F. Macbeth as the young herd, and W. G. Fay as the tramp were all remarkably good. The programme concluded with a comedy in one act, by Lady Gregory, entitled "Spreading the News," illustrating the story of a terrible scandal which is evolved from a harmless incident through the agency of a dead man, a live wife, a policeman, a politician, and being well acted, was much appreciated. No scenery was used, the stage being draped, very much in the manner of the Elizabethan plays given here recently.

of the points, wherein a saint speaks to a crowd, who have gathered one another on their imaginary beauty, their sight by a wandering friar. The play upon setting one another to work to build a tower. Martin Deul, the old man, whose affections to a pleasing colour, Mary Deul, the young girl, who is the daughter of Martin Deul, aided by a blow from his wife, who is an inopportune moment, is not so much as he returns to his seat at the opera-house, and that Mary Deul, his wife, has a great deal of the wandering friar to please him, a second time. The acting was throughout of a pleasing character. During the afternoon performance, which was a reproduction of the work of the Society, that it was their effort to take to the stage, the young man, who had given them the theatre, was fully indebted to an English lady, who, when they performed once a month, that by request, the comedy by Lady Gregory, entitled "Spreading the News," given in the afternoon performance, would be repeated next time was a word already, in the next item was "Kathleen ni Houlihan," a reminiscence of the freedom of Ireland. The piece was splendidly acted, the play, Martin Deul, who is the daughter of Martin Deul, being very effective.

The evening performance attracted a large and fashionable audience. The first item was a play in three acts, by W. B. Yeats, entitled "The Well of the Saints."

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The National Theatre Society, Ltd., from the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, will (by permission of the Reverend the Vice-Chancellor and the Right Worshipful the Mayor) appear on November 23rd, in the following Plays:—

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"It is with no mischievous desire of vexing the 'propagandist' newspapers in Ireland that we venture once more to say a good word for the Irish National Theatre Society.

We learn that our former praise of the Society has given umbrage to these newspapers. An English critic, even though his criticism resolves itself into eulogy, is, it seems, an 'enemy' whose praise should be no more regarded by good Irish patriots than his blame. Well, we are not at all offended by this stern, unbending attitude of the propagandists; indeed, we rather like it. It is a picturesque trait of character, and at the same time a little flattery addressed to our sense of self-importance; it gives us, as it were, a kind of international or inter-racial status. The truth, of course, is, that in praising the Irish Theatre we had no thought of pleasing the propagandists; we gave no thought to them in the matter; we were simply bent upon pleasing ourselves, out of pure selfishness. Critical praise generally gratifies the object of it, just as critical blame generally annoys them; but that is, for the critic, a mere accident. His business is to express and, if he can, to explain his emotions in the presence of a work of art. There is no 'enmity,' or 'friendship' either, in the case. The emotions excited in us by the Irish Theatre performances happen, on the whole, to have been distinctly pleasurable. Their art appeals to us as something simple and sincere and autochthonous. It gives a new orientation to drama, and brings a current of fresh air into a playhouse badly in need of ventilation. The fact that this art proceeds from a certain

national movement, and is mixed up with certain patriotic aspirations, views of government, and the like, has, of course, its interest for the politician and the sociologist: it is nothing to us. In exchange for our half-guinea we bargain for an evening of æsthetic enjoyment; that is all we look for; and we have duly recorded our satisfaction in getting it from the Irish Theatre. If we got it from an Ojibbeway or Siamese theatre we should be just as pleased."—*The Times (Literary Supplement)*, Jan. 6th, 1905.

"And how do the plays themselves rank? Up to the present the best plays of the Society have excelled rather in characterisation than in what we call 'construction,' plot. Even in the work of the most notable of the younger men, Mr. J. M. Synge, plot is almost entirely absent; but the characters are absolutely true to life—the life of present-day Irish peasant and fisher-folk. Mr. Yeats tells us that the aims of the Society are summed up in 'good play-writing, good speaking, and good acting' (scenery is almost disregarded). Good speaking and good acting the members of the Society seem to have rapidly attained; perhaps because the demand for what was wanted admitted of little doubt."—*Academy*, April 22nd, 1905.

"Quite different was the comedy by Lady Gregory, 'Spreading the News,' a clean-cut bit of Irish life; immensely humorous and laughable, with not a touch in it of what is known as the stage Irishman, and played with astonishing appreciation of the light and shade of the Irish peasant character."—*The Observer*, Jan. 1st, 1905.

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SAMHAIN, an occasional Review, edited by W. B. Yeats. Containing Notes by the Editor, and two Plays by Lady Gregory, one put into Irish by T. O'Donoghue. Published in November, 1905, by Maunsel & Co., Ltd, Dublin, and sold for Sixpence.

SAMHAIN for 1904 contains a detailed exposition of the aims and methods of the Irish National Theatre Society by W. B. Yeats ; Miss Horniman's letter to the Society, offering it the free use of the Abbey Theatre ; and Plays by Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge. Price One Shilling.

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MACMILLAN & CO., Ltd., LONDON.

ST. GEORGE'S HALL,

LANGHAM PLACE, W.

The National Theatre Society, Ltd., will appear on November 27th and 28th in the following Plays:—

The Well of the Saints. By J. M. Synge.

Matinee,
Monday, Nov. 27th,
at 2.30.

Spreading the News. By Lady Gregory.

On Baile's Strand. By W. B. Yeats.
Kathleen ni Houlihan. By W. B. Yeats.

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The Building Fund. By W. Boyle.
Kathleen ni Houlihan. By W. B. Yeats.

Evening
Performance,
Tuesday, Nov. 28th,
at 8.30.

Numbered Tickets, price 7/6, 5/6, and 3/6, and Un-numbered, price 2/6.

For sale at the Box Office, St. George's Hall, Langham Place, W.

THE ABBEY THEATRE,
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4 Ford Journal Nov 29

The visit of the National Theatre Society has been a great success, and the few who found their way through Oxford shish to the Corn Exchange on Thursday were well rewarded.

The aim of the Society is to raise the standard of contemporary dramatic literature. We went to see their plays feeling that so laudable an aim deserved support. By the end of the evening we had gained a hope that their object may be obtained.

Ideas and character have long been banished from the English drama. For years threadbare impossibilities out of all relation to real life have been duly iterated at the theatres, and even Mr. Pinero seems to have abandoned his crusade in ennui or despair. It was only recently that the new management of the Court Theatre revived our hopes of English drama. Mr. Shaw, Mr. Barker, and Mr. Harkin

were the trio of our trust. Their assault upon the forts of folly is powerfully aided by these allies from Ireland. At last drama has got out of the drawing-room. Here are fresh fields of character and manners, and men to work in them who possess ideas, imagination, and know the witchery of words.

Our enthusiasm was not immediately kindled. The evening bill was the better, and the actors seemed a little ill at ease in the afternoon. "Interesting," but not yet "great" was our verdict at tea-time. The father who unwittingly kills his own son, the young wife who marries an old husband for his money, and the gossip who idle chatter causes the hero's arrest for murder—these are all subjects often treated before in literature, but they are freshly and interestingly handled by Mr. W. G. Fay, Mr. J. M. Synge, and Lady Gregory. We do not know, after all, where to look in modern England for any one-act plays so good.

The influence of Masterlinck is strongly felt, especially in *On Baile's Strand*. Under any but the most favourable circumstances a play on such simple and archaic lines, if it fails to produce the intended effect, is likely to become ridiculous, and the Corn Exchange on a November afternoon provides an unromantic setting. In spite of this we felt the seriousness of Mr. Yeats's aims, and realized that if read quietly at home his play would produce its true effect of poetic grandeur.

The other two works, which dealt with modern times, gave us greater pleasure than Mr. Yeats's legend of the childhood of mankind. Their aim was simpler, and they therefore succeeded better in realizing it. Mr. Synge's play, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, is a complete and finished piece of work, and the character of the tramp was most ably acted by Mr. W. G. Fay. Lady Gregory's farce, *Spreading the Net*, was full of Irish humour, and drew many hearty laughs from the audience.

In the evening the plays ran more briskly. *The Will of the Saint* is more of a story than a play, a staged satire on the vanity of human wishes. Its charm lies in the careful, humorous study of the Irish peasant; and the well-turned lines, spoken with a sustained correctness of intonation which was very remarkable, pleased us continuously. We greatly envied Martin Douli his astounding power of Irish improvisation, which would hold in awe the most truculent of Commons Rooms, Senior or Junior. *Kathleen in Handshaws* is a perfect miniature drama which well shows Mr. Yeats's artistry in language; the quiet lines suggest a vast emotion; and the splendid closing sentence really thrilled the audience. Miss N. Blinckhugh played with wonderful sweetness and power a part we had believed, when reading the play, could not be adequately represented on the stage. Finally, Lady Gregory's farce was repeated by special request, in the loud approval of the audience.

Throughout the evening the acting was admirable. We almost felt we were in France. In intonation and gesture the actors were always effective and sincere, and not one of them lacked the supreme quality; they could all stand still. Mr. W. G. Fay played during the day five different parts, and all, we thought, perfectly. The Society are certainly fortunate to secure his talent. We hope he may stay with them, and that the rest of the company will not share the fate of the Elizabethan Stage Society and exchange the sure simplicity of their methods for the fussy movement and inane play-acting and affected intonation which make so many English professional actors infamous. We shall follow the future of the National Theatre Society with great interest, and

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

Two interesting dramatic performances were given in the Corn Exchange, on Thursday, by the National Theatre Society from the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. There was a very large attendance in the afternoon, when the programme opened with a one-act play by W. B. Yeats, whose poetic magic has since already well known here. *On Baile's Strand* is a tragedy written with a dramatic feeling and a wealth of poetic images, which make it a delight to the sympathetic spectator, but it is almost impossible to realize all its beauty at a first hearing, especially in a hall with the acoustic defects of the Corn Exchange. Mr. F. J. Fay in the leading character acted with great power; he was particularly good in the scene where he fights an imaginary enemy on the stage theme. The scene in which he realizes that he has slain his son is an exceedingly difficult one to make effective, but he carried it off through with success. The Crown of Mr. W. G. Fay was very good on the whole; he made the final scene, in which he describes to a blind beggar Cathleen's last fight with the waves, remarkably vivid. It may be noted that some of the tragedies take place on the stage. Mr. W. J. Turner as the High King was somewhat hampered by his crown. In this play the absence of scenery was not felt at all, but it is no doubt a disadvantage in the Hamlet-like play by J. M. Synge, *"In the Shadow of the Glen."* It is an old farmer with a young wife eludes death, apparently to one who has wife will do under the circumstances. Finding that a young hand is making up to her and the contents of a shooting, and having overheard some very uncomplimentary remarks, he seizes in the nick of time, and turns his wife out of doors. A kindly tramp whom she had befriended takes charge of her, and the curtain falls on the married couple and the young man who had tried to seduce him drinking whiskey together quite amicably. Miss N. Blinckhugh as the wife spoke with an accent which was rather noticeable; it would be an improvement if she took advantage of the author's opportunity to show a flash of literary now and then. Mr. W. G. Fay was remarkably good as the tramp. Mr. P. MacDonagh as the young man was a fine actor. The performance concluded with an amusing farce by Lady Gregory, called *"Spreading the Net."* It is a brilliant instance of a farce which is not only a farce, but a farce in the best sense of the word. It is a story of a deaf old woman, a few imaginative persons, a policeman, and a memorable Magistrate, who the second his appointment to the business in the Anderson Islands. It is delightfully funny, and kept the audience in ripples of laughter. The humour of the acting fell to Mr. W. G. Fay as Captain Fallon, who is supposed to have committed a murder. Miss N. Blinckhugh as Mrs. Fallon, Miss Hanna Vernon, who as a characteristically strong Mrs. Fallon, and Mr. F. J. Fay as the magistrate.

THE EVENING PERFORMANCE.

"The Will of the Saint" was given in the evening. This is another play by J. M. Synge. In three acts. It is the story of an old blind couple, who, receiving their sight by means of a miracle, are mutually disgusted at the sight of each other. The old man, Martin Douli, falls in love with a handsome young girl, Molly Ingram, and after trying to induce her to go away with him, a proceeding which the girl refuses with great scorn, Martin is once more struck with blindness. The old woman, Mary, also becomes blind again, and, both love and domestic, meet once more and are reconciled. Mr. W. G. Fay as the blind Martin Douli was exceedingly good, and Miss Hanna Vernon was magnificent as his wife Mary. Miss N. Blinckhugh as a handsome Molly Ingram, and Mr. F. J. Fay as the young man, took part in a lively manner. The performance elicited great applause, and there was a call for the author at the end, but he did not respond. Instead, Mr. Yeats thanked the audience for their kind reception. A short allegory by Mr. Yeats followed, in which Ireland is represented as an old wandering woman, grieving for the loss of her four beautiful provinces and the murder of her children at the time of the rebellion in 1798. The performance concluded with a repetition of Lady Gregory's *"Spreading the Net,"* which went admirably, and was, if possible, even more enjoyed than in the afternoon.

The Irish Players

OF

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY, LIMITED,

FROM THE

ABBEY THEATRE, DUBLIN,

WILL APPEAR IN

C A M B R I D G E,

for the first time on

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 24th, 1905,

AT THE

Victoria Assembly Rooms,

AND ON

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 25th,

AT THE

Small Guildhall.

The Programme will include Two Plays by W. B. YEATS, "ON BAILE'S STRAND," and "KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN,"
also Plays by J. M. SYNGE and LADY GREGORY.

Tickets 5/- Numbered; 2/6 and 1/- Unnumbered, should be taken as soon as possible, to avoid disappointment, at

GRANT & LANE, 6, KING'S PARADE.

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LANGHAM PLACE, W.

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Langham Place, W.

[Over.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"One goes to the Abbey Theatre to see an action finely placed, and to hear poetry beautifully spoken. There is no attempt to trick the uncritical into side-issues.

There is no ranting, no violent gesture. The movements of the actors are slow and dignified, and beautiful like the rhythm of a poem. The persons pass across the stage slowly, and the stately moving of the figures never distracts one from the speech. Such gestures as they use are simple and elemental. Such tones as they employ in speech are those of beautiful conversation, rising to great passion, or to lyrical fervour, but never becoming dead or tedious."—*Daily News*, Jan. 4th, 1905.

"It is with no mischievous desire of vexing the 'propagandist' newspapers in Ireland that we venture once more to say a good word for the Irish National Theatre Society.

We learn that our former praise of the Society has given umbrage to these newspapers. An English critic, even though his criticism resolves itself into eulogy, is, it seems, an 'enemy' whose praise should be no more regarded by good Irish patriots than his blame. Well, we are not at all offended by this stern, unbending attitude of the propagandists; indeed, we rather like it. It is a picturesque trait of character, and at the same time a little flattery addressed to our sense of self-importance; it gives us, as it were, a kind of international or inter-racial status. The truth, of course, is, that in praising the Irish Theatre we had no thought of pleasing the propagandists; we gave no thought to them in the matter; we were simply bent upon pleasing ourselves, out of pure selfishness. Critical praise generally gratifies the object of it, just as critical blame generally annoys them; but that is, for the critic, a mere accident. His business is to express and, if he can, to explain his emotions in the presence of a work of art. There is no 'enmity,' or 'friendship' either, in the case. The emotions excited in us by the Irish Theatre performances happen, on the whole, to have been distinctly pleasurable. Their art appeals to us as something simple and sincere and autochthonous. It gives a new orientation to drama, and brings a current of fresh air into a playhouse badly in need of ventilation. The fact that this art proceeds from a certain

national movement, and is mixed up with certain patriotic aspirations, views of government, and the like, has, of course, its interest for the politician and the sociologist; it is nothing to us. In exchange for our half-guinea we bargain for an evening of æsthetic enjoyment; that is all we look for; and we have daily recorded our satisfaction in getting it from the Irish Theatre. If we got it from an Ojibbeway or Siamese theatre we should be just as pleased."—*The Times (Literary Supplement)*, Jan. 6th, 1905.

"And how do the plays themselves rank? Up to the present the best plays of the Society have excelled rather in characterisation than in what we call 'construction,' plot. Even in the work of the most notable of the younger men, Mr. J. M. Synge, plot is almost entirely absent; but the characters are absolutely true to life—the life of present-day Irish peasant and fisher-folk. Mr. Yeats tells us that the aims of the Society are summed up in 'good play-writing, good speaking, and good acting' (scenery is almost disregarded). Good speaking and good acting the members of the Society seem to have rapidly attained; perhaps because the demand for what was wanted admitted of little doubt."—*Arassey*, April 22nd, 1905.

"Quite different was the comedy by Lady Gregory, 'Spreading the News,' a clean-cut bit of Irish life; immensely humorous and laughable, with not a touch in it of what is known as the stage Irishman, and played with astonishing appreciation of the light and shade of the Irish peasant character."—*The Observer*, Jan. 1st, 1905.

"Cette simplicité de diction, de geste, de décor s'adaptait excellemment au genre de pièces qui furent représentées devant des salles enthousiastes. Pour ces artistes irlandais, c'est la pièce seule qui compte."—"La Jeune Irlande," *Mercur de France*, 1 Mars, 1905. Paris.

"Elles donnent une forme scénique à d'anciennes légendes ou à des traditions joyeuses du bon vieux temps. Farces ou fées, quelques fois tous les deux ensemble, elles font appel aux deux tendances, permanentes, indestructibles, de l'âme rurale et populaire, gaieté et mysticisme. Tout cela bien entendu, n'est pas du théâtre véritable, mais de la poésie sous une forme concrète."—Augustin Filon. *Journal des Débats* du 19 Avril, 1905. Paris.

SAMHAIN, an occasional Review, edited by W. B. Yeats. Containing Notes by the Editor, and two Plays by Lady Gregory, one put into Irish by T. O'Donoghue. Published in November, 1905, by Maunsel & Co., Ltd. Dublin, and sold for Sixpence.

SAMHAIN for 1904 contains a detailed exposition of the aims and methods of the Irish National Theatre Society by W. B. Yeats ; Miss Horniman's letter to the Society, offering it the free use of the Abbey Theatre ; and Plays by Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge. Price One Shilling.

BOOKS OF THE PLAYS and SAMHAIN will be sold at the Performances.

IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE

One recalls with a genuine sense of pleasure last week's visit by the members of the Irish National Theatre to London. The pieces then presented were both interesting and characterizable, the acting on a level with the pieces. Yesterday the little company of actors made their reappearance at St. George's Hall, but if the evening's programme may be accepted as a fair criterion, there is a marked falling-off in the quality alike of the pieces and of the general performance. To last night's best, Mr. W. B. Yeats contributed a couple of one-act plays, both eminently characteristic of his peculiar methods. It may almost be said, indeed, that in each instance the author carries those methods to an excessive length. Inactive he is undoubtedly is, but when imagination degenerates into vagueness and uncertainty he claims upon the attention of the public eye apt to weaken. "On Ball's Strand" and "Kathleen An Bheinn" share the same merits and defects. There is a poetic idea in both, but in both there is much of a vagueness and another vagueness suggests itself. It would be unfair to suppose that the author deliberately sets forth to reveal and to irritate his listeners, but that he succeeds in doing so is unquestionable. Possibly to the Celtic mind the meaning may be clear as crystals to metaphors comprehensible to mental attitude intelligible. But whatever all that the privilege of being Irish and kind in the stimulating atmosphere of the Green Room, and it is perhaps permissible to ask that Mr. Yeats shall occasionally descend from the clouds and see his feet firmly and squarely upon solid English ground. His work certainly would suffer to no way from the step. At present it is all very wild and mystical and wonderful, no doubt; still, the dramatist first has to render his purpose plain, and when he fails to do this the audience has every right to complain. Mr. Yeats appears to be fond of the writing (or the reading) of the kind, the audience protesting that productions differ essentially from those which obtain where an essay or a poem is concerned. Happily Lady Gregory's usual remedy, "Re-reading the News," which completed last night's programme, is free from any reproach of the kind. The piece is a fairly amusing farce, handled upon rather primitive lines, but embodying a really humorous idea. It seems to show how an imagination, even when it is not a very fertile one, may from month to month a new and entirely unexpected complexion, and at length it develops into sheer simplicity. Here, as in the other pieces, the best work we do by Mr. W. G. de M. and Mr. F. J. Fay. Of the criticism given them there is, however, nothing very revealing to be said.

IRISH DRAMA.

FOUR PIECES PERFORMED AT
ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

The Irish Theatre Society inaugurated a brief season in London yesterday by four distinct, if not distinguished, performances at St. George's Hall, and it may be said at once that the result was more flattering to the zeal than to the discriminating intelligence or artistic ability of those concerned.

On a stage as poverty stricken as Ireland is reputed to be, under stage-management that banished the signs of inexperience, and sometimes of laziness, a company of earnest performers attempted the difficult interpretation of fear as ambiguous dramatic compositions as could very well be gathered together. Mr. J. M. Lynde, who is assumed the most notable of the

whereas, in engaged in Irish drama, authenticity presented "The Well of the Saints," a play in three acts. It carried throughout a distinct flavour of Irish peasant life, and was not without flashes of true Irish wit. Its story—that of two beggars blind from childhood, who are miraculously cured, only to find misery waiting on vision—contained dramatic possibilities, which were almost destroyed by faulty structure. In this play Mr. W. G. Fay, by his own admission, sustained the principal roles, and to the utmost advantage, especially since as the performance achieved was chief due.

A Homing* Foe

Lady Gregory's comedy in due act, "Spread the News," interpreted by the same set of players, was evolved from a very ancient precept as to the celerity with which evil tidings is spread abroad. The actors, by this time warmed to their work, entered upon the acting of what is really a roving Irish farce with a degree of self-confidence which atoned for the meanness of the play, and for their own inexperience. That the audience enjoyed this form of entertainment was evidenced by the applause which rewarded the actors at the close of the play.

Mr. W. B. Yeats was represented in the evening bill by "On Baile's Strand," a metaphorical composition most difficult to understand; and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," a pathetic plea for the land-loving and land-robbing Irish peasant. These plays were followed by a repetition of Lady Gregory's comedy.

The audience, which was large and fashionable, gave every indication of pleasure.

IRISH PLAYS IN LONDON.

Playgoers will have an opportunity to-day of seeing the Abbey Theatre Company from Dublin in some Irish plays at St. George's Hall. What makes the performances specially interesting is that the Irish men and women are presented naturally as they are, not as they are often constrained to be on the stage. It need hardly be said that the company are admirable exponents of the Irish character in all its phases, besides having at their command a genuine rack of the soil.

Yesterday a play new to Londoners was produced. It is by J. M. Synge, and deals with the superstitious side of the Irish character in the old days; then ignorance was rife in the land. "The Well of the Saints" is distinguished by originality of idea, and is distinguished by quaint humor and a display of the garrulous order, though there is not much movement in it. Martin and Mary Doal are blind beggars who gather alms by the wayside, and deplore their unhappy lot. The villagers by and by announce the arrival of a holy man, who by the aid of some miraculous statue made the well able to restore the sight of the blind. Instead of the relief, the relief, the relief, the ill-matched pair find fault with each other's appearance, and eventually separate. Martin is a lazy rascallion, who makes love to a pretty girl, and is promptly driven out by a village squire after having lost his sight. Martin. The holy man offers to cure him, but Martin prefers to remain a blind beggar, having seen enough of his little world.

To-day the company will produce "The Land" at a morning performance, and in the evening "The Building Fund" will be played.

1. 11.

IRISH PLAYS IN
LONDON.

THE PATHOS AND HUMOUR
OF CELTIC DRAMA.

The new Irish National Theatre, the first subsidised playhouse in these islands, has taken up its temporary home in St. George's Hall, and the performance of a cycle of seven Irish plays began there yesterday afternoon.

Wearing an enormous black butterfly bow, Mr. W. B. Yeats, the prophet of the Irish Renaissance, offered a welcome in choice Gaelic to the company of Irish players. Mr. and Mrs. Clement K. Shuster and other enthusiasts were in the stalla.

Four Irish plays were presented during the day—Mr. J. M. Synge's "The Well of the Saints"; "Spreading the News," a comic comedy by Lady Gregory, another apostle of the Irish revival; "On Bull's Strand," by Mr. Yeats; and the same author's beautiful little play of "Kathleen Ni Houlihan"—the only one of the four that was not new to a London

A few drops of water brought by a holy friar restored sight to a blind Irish peasant and his blind wife, who all at the cross roads begging for alms. But the gift brings no happiness to the blind man, who esteems that to his wife, whose beauty he believed to be the wonder of the West, is only a mutilated old woman. When next the holy friar goes that way they implore him to reveal them the peace and quiet of a spiritual darkness.

As the blind peasant Mr. W. G. Fay distinguished himself, and Miss Emma Vernon acted the part of his wife with charming naturalness.

Lady Gregory's clever little farce, "Spreading the News," abounds in rollicking Irish humor.

Mr. W. B. Yeats' tragedy, "The Shadow of a Great Soul," was given at night. From the dramatic standpoint it is one of the best of the poet's productions. The old legend of the combat between Carbalan, the King of Muirtheine, and his unknown son, and his subsequent madness and death, is told in terse and vigorous blank verse. It is solidly impressive, and it has another claim to interest, inasmuch as there is no woman's part in it.

Belfast to home
on 4/

A second play by Mr. W. B. Yeats, entitled "On Baileys Strand," was given in picturesque black robes and dealt with the old legend of the combat of Cuchullain, King of Murechessau, with some unknown son, killing him the King, so suddenly covering the identity of his antagonist, who becomes instantly, rushes, sword in hand, upon the sea, and there perishes. The old Celtic legends are powerful and romantic in the extreme, and often have much dramatic force in them.



PROGRAMME.



The National Theatre Society,
Limited, from the Abbey
Theatre, Dublin.

Programme of Plays in the
Victoria Assembly Rooms and
Small Guildhall, Cambridge,
by permission of the Right
Worshipful the Mayor.

Numbered Tickets, 5s.

Un-numbered, 2s. 6d. and 1s.

Mr. W. B. Yeats' New Book.

"POEMS, 1899=1905."

By W. B. YEATS.

Crown 8vo.

6s. net.

This volume contains all the Poetry, Lyric and Dramatic,
written by Mr. W. B. YEATS during the past six years.

[December, 1905.

A. H. BULLEN, 47 Great Russell Street, London.

BOOKS OF THE PLAYS

WILL BE SOLD AT ALL PERFORMANCES.

On Baile's Strand (In Vol. III. of Plays for an Irish Theatre—Bullen)	3s. ^{NETT} 6d.
Kathleen ni Houlihan (In Vol. II. of Plays for an Irish Theatre—Bullen)	3s. 6d.
The Well of the Saints (In Vol. IV. of Plays for an Irish Theatre—Bullen)	3s. 6d.
The Land (Abbey Theatre Series—Maunsel)	1s. 0d.
The Building Fund do, do, do. ...	1s. 0d.
Spreading the News (Samhain, 1903) ...	0s. 6d.
In the Shadow of the Glen (Samhain, 1904, and Vigo Cabinet Series—Mathews) ...	1s. 0d.

Evening Performance,
In the
Victoria Assembly Rooms,
Friday, November 24th,
At 8.30.

Matinée,
In the Small Guildhall,
Saturday, November 25th,
At 2.30.

EVENING PERFORMANCE, NOVEMBER 24th, AT 8.30.

ON BAILE'S STRAND, A PLAY IN ONE ACT,
BY W. B. YEATS.

CUCHULLAIN, the King of Muirthemne	F. J. Fay
CONCOBAR, the High King of Ullad	W. J. Tunney
FINTAIN, a blind man	Arthur Sinclair
BARACH, a fool	W. G. Fay
A YOUNG MAN	P. MacSiubhlaigh
YOUNG KINGS and OLD KINGS	{ A. Power, U. Wright, E. Keegan, J. Dunne

SCENE.—A GREAT HALL BY THE SEA CLOSE TO
DUNDALGAN.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GLEN, A PLAY
IN ONE ACT, BY J. M. SYNGE.

DAN BURKE, Farmer and Herd	George Roberts
NORA BURKE, his wife	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
MICHAEL DARA, a Young Herd	P. MacSiubhlaigh
A TRAMP	W. G. Fay

SCENE.—THE LAST COTTAGE AT THE HEAD OF A LONG
GLEN IN COUNTY WICKLOW.

SPREADING THE NEWS, A COMEDY IN ONE
ACT, BY LADY GREGORY.

BARTLEY FALLON	W. G. Fay
Mrs. FALLON	Sara Allgood
Mrs. TULLY	Emma Vernon
Mrs. TARPEY	Maire Ni Gharbhaigh
SHAWN EARLY	U. Wright
TIM CASEY	George Roberts
JAMES RYAN	Arthur Sinclair
JACK SMITH	P. MacSiubhlaigh
A POLICEMAN	A. Power
A REMOVABLE MAGISTRATE	F. J. Fay

SCENE.—THE OUTSKIRTS OF A FAIR.

MATINÉE, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25th, AT 2.30.

THE WELL OF THE SAINTS, A PLAY IN
THREE ACTS, BY J. M. SYNGE.

MARTIN DOUL, a blind man	W. G. Fay
MARY DOUL, his wife	Emma Vernon
TIMMY, a smith	George Roberts
MOLLY BYRNE	Sara Allgood
BRIDE	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
MAT SIMON	P. MacSiubhlaigh
A WANDERING FRIAR	F. J. Fay
GIRLS and MEN	

ACT I. Cross-roads in lonely mountainous district in Ireland. ACT
II. The Outskirts of a village not far away. ACT III, same as
Act I.

The action takes place many years ago. The first act is in the autumn;
the second act towards the end of winter; and the third at the
beginning of spring.

KATHLEEN NI HOULIHAN, A PLAY IN ONE
ACT, BY W. B. YEATS.

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Kathleen ni Houlihan. By W. B. Yeats.	
Spreading the News. By Lady Gregory.	
The Land. By Padraic Colum.	Matinee, Tuesday, Nov. 28th, at 2.30.
In the Shadow of the Glen. By J. M. Synge.	
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**"THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY, LIMITED,"
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Apparently the name of what in former years was referred to as the Irish National Theatre has been changed, since the performances given yesterday at St. George's Hall were by "The National Theatre Society, Limited," from the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. The association has been in existence long enough to demand criticism unqualified by apologetic allowances, and, judged by the programme last night, the progress is not satisfactory. Three plays were presented, "On Baile's Strand," "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," and "Spreading the News," the first two by Mr. W. B. Yeats and the third by Lady Gregory. The play with the name unpronounceable by the base Saxons has been acted in London already; it is a symbolical work, suggesting the spirit of Ireland in the guise of an old woman calling upon a young man to forsake his bride and join the French Army which is landing on the island. It is, of course, vastly tactful to produce a play written in such a spirit at the present moment. Possibly if it were efficiently acted its curious spirit would get across the footlights, but it would require an actress of very much greater power than that of the lady who took the chief part to render it really impressive to the profane. "On Baile's Strand" is a little perplexing. By listening carefully I discovered that it is a story relating to very ancient Irish history concerning a mighty warrior—a king, of course. This king, whose name is Cuchullain, has vanquished a mighty queen in battle, and by way of ransom made her the mother of a male child, and then lost sight of her. The Queen educates the child in all the known lethal arts, and sends him to fight the father, who, ignorant of his paternity, kills him, and then, learning the truth from a blind beggar, goes mad and attempts to fight the ocean, and the ocean, using a phrase of the people, "came out on top." It is probable, seeing that Mr. Yeats really is a poet of fine quality, that the piece has great literary merit. Though close to the stage, I could not hear it well enough to form an opinion on the subject, assuming, fatuously, that I am competent to do so. It certainly was not dramatic in the common sense of the word, and most of us are insufficiently attuned to its ideas to be sympathetic with any esoteric meaning underlying it. "Spreading the News" was a fairly funny little farce showing how in a small village a scandalous story comes into being on scant foundation, and grows to immense dimensions. It is somewhat artless and a little long. The best piece of acting was that of Miss Sara Allgood as the wife of a man who gets into trouble. Taking the three plays together, it may be hinted that the acting shows no signs of real advance, and that Messrs. W. G. Fay and F. J. Fay, two really clever players, remain where they were. It one may judge from the entertainment of yesterday evening, the present spirit of the Society may make its efforts barren, for nothing is less likely to be fertile than the deliberate attempt to be artless and archaic.

E. F. S.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

Yesterday afternoon the National Theatre Society opened its season, now annual, at St. George's Hall. It is a short season, covering only yesterday and to-day, but it is a welcome. The visit of these Irish comedians to London are among the very few events of the theatrical year to which the seriously-minded playgoer can look forward with pleasure. For the last century and a half practically the whole of the so-called English drama has come from Ireland. And Ireland today possesses a national drama, a drama which grows out of the soil and reeks of it, to which neither England nor Scotland can show the fellow. Our drama is not grown, it is manufactured, the raw or partially manufactured material being imported from abroad. Further, its folk are born comedians. Hence the National value, direct as a pleasure, indirect as an object lesson, of these Irish performances. Why,

then, is St. George's Hall not crowded yesterday afternoon to the utmost limit of its rather limited capacity? Simply because the Irish, with the rare turn of genius, have no talent, no practical level-headedness, in common sense. This time their business arrangements are more than usually deplorable. To mention but one blunder: the society has chosen the two very worst dates of the whole year. Yesterday afternoon their performance clashed with the Stage Society's performance at the Scala, and this afternoon's performance clashes with the production of Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Major Barbara" at the Court. It is to be hoped that not only for its own sake, but for the sake of its friends over here, the Society will in future time and otherwise contrive its visits with more judgment.

Both of the plays presented yesterday afternoon were new to London. First came "The Well of the Saints," by Mr. J. M. Synge. It is a three-act play with a perfectly definite idea. Knowledge is not necessarily a blessing. Pope has declared as much in one of his most hackneyed lines. His ballad of "The Father and the Son" is a good example of the principle. In his ballad of "Miss Turpin," Othello has a speech of which the essential points run, "So I had nothing known." Martin and Mary Dool are positively happy, though blind. Each believes the other to be handsome, and they tramp the countryside in perfect utility. The Irish "guilt" of his is shattered by a priest who brings with him miraculous water that will give them sight. They get their sight and are none the happier. Each sees the other to be below belief. And so they part. Now that they have their eyes they lose sympathy and are called on to do work. Martin does not take to work kindly; he prefers running about. His wife, with less adventure, returns to darkness. And when the Friar comes along once more with enough water left to re-reflect their cure they sweep the hoods aside and again take to the unseen road. There is a fine idea, which is, for the most part, finely handled. Mr. Synge writes dialogue with a facility and fluency that bring him into long conversations of no dramatic significance, but he draws character with insight and, when a dramatic moment crops up, handles it with complete and unexpected mastery. And he has Mr. W. G. Fay to do a glorious best for him as the male tramp, and Miss Anna Yeats and Sara Allgood to give him a pair of lovely female wife and to the girl that his active eyes prefer. Mr. F. J. Fay is most impressive as the well-meaning wandering Friar who works the havoc.

Lady Gregory's "Spreading the News," which followed, is a one-act piece designed to show how the simplest actions and words may be misunderstood, and, with the aid of a few women, misinterpreted, till a whole village is in an uproar, and the supposed murderer and the supposed victim are both in handcuffs at the dictation of an imbecile Resident Magistrate. It is a very interesting and amusing trifle that does not quite compel belief, but does compel the bestial laughter. In W. G. Fay, a comedian not so much on the stage, makes great sport as the supposed homicide. The pieces are not mounted with undue ostentation. Everywhere is simplicity, as of the nursery. The vigns are not "by" Clarkson. They are so unconvincing as to suggest that the time-honoured phrase, "Wigs on the Grooms" was never more perfectly performed twice yesterday, and will give afternoon and evening performances today.

DUBLIN THEATRE SOCIETY.

To the EDITOR of THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE.

DEAR SIR,—The recent stories having made the delivery of your paper less certain than we could wish, it is probable that I have been already anticipated in commenting on the report (on November 28) of the Dublin National Theatre Society's programme in London. The dramatic criticism, since it is individual and expert, I have no title to dispute; though, having myself taken a quite unforgettable and incoercible pleasure in each and all of the plays, I may regret that it should constitute the authoritative opinion of your paper. I suggest also that your critic's complaint that "On Baile's Strand" was largely inaudible to him, while it justifies his condemnation of the actors, may also account for his failure to appreciate the play. But in the case of "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," "E. F. S." has other ground. He objects ironically to the "tact" exhibited by the production of a play couched in such a spirit at the present time. I object to that objection. "Kathleen Ni Houlihan" may be incidentally a political tract; it is primarily a piece of literature; and whether E. F. S.'s allusion is to the domestic troubles of England and Ireland, or, more circuitously, to the international relations of England and France, I cannot think that the present political situation would be so seriously complicated by even a sympathetic understanding of Mr. Yeats's play. I think it is a pity that it had pleased him to say of the Oxford production of the same in your columns in the general interests of humanity, to observe with what intelligent and generous complacency an audience of devoted Unionists swallowed raw Nationalism by the half-hour together. Are we to suppose that the English Parliament or the English public is less generous—or less intelligent—than yours truly? M. STODOLSKY.

Norfolk, Norfolk, Alving, Italy, December 4.

Globe Nov 28

ST. GEORGE'S HALL. THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

Prodigality rather than judgment seems the distinguishing attribute of the National Theatre Society, the first performances of which, during the present season, were given yesterday afternoon and evening at the St. George's Hall. Five dramas, all new to the majority of English playgoers, were then exhibited, and a like number, including, however, two or three repetitions, is fixed for the afternoon and evening of to-day. This wholesale supply arrives at a time when the dramatic market is overstocked, and when the best disposition in the world scarcely avails to secure for the experienced adequate consideration. To complicate further the muddle the repeated plays, which were announced as obtainable at the doors, were not on sale, while long rows of seats remained untampered and exercised a depressing influence. "Over these things we grieve, since the entertainment is not without attractions, and the pieces presented are, as a rule, clever and amusing."

"The Well of the Saints," a three-act comedy by Mr. J. M. Synge, with which the series began, seems suggested by a comic poem of Thomas Hood, in which, with a customary profusion of puns, it is told how a blind man who has lived in happiness with his wife has his sight restored to him by a benevolent oculist, looks upon his spouse, and "sees her very plain," so plain, indeed, that he feels compelled to slay her, and is fully hanged for so doing. No such tragical issue is in the present instance provided, and he sees like that presented in Athenian halls by Nick Bottom and his associates, is a very good piece of work, and a merry "it is nothing less than a miracle to which is due the restoration of sight of Martin Dool and his wife Mary. In the hands of a travelling friar the water from the holy well of the saints gives sight to the blind, bearing to the deaf, power of movement to the cripple, and works other wonders. When its precious drops are applied to the eyes of the Douls, and each gaze on the other, a strong feeling of dissatisfaction is stirred. Each finds the other too cherished companion plain, and Martin in particular seeks to change his old wife for a younger. So much discord is thus raised, and so many naughty words are uttered, that the magic and saintly remedy loses its virtue, and the sight consequently of both once more fails. In the darkness the lovers come together again, and when the Friar proposes again to cure them his profane are rejected with scorn, and resisted with violence, the husband, by a smart use of his stick, knocking the cup out of the priest's hands and spilling the precious liquor on the ground. They then, amid the execrations of the "parsony," retire to seek some secluded spot where village priests are less welcome, and the rules as to the compulsory application of remedies are less stringent."

"Lady Gregory's" "Spreading the News" shows the manner in which, in a country fair, a tale grows out of nothing, and how, thanks to the pedantic bawling of a new police magistrate, whose previous experience has been confined to the Andaman Islands, two men are hanged, one for the murder of the other, the attestation of his identity by the supposed victim being received with disbelief as an attempt to defraud the saint of justice. This trifle, which, though it is at once thin and extravagant, is highly amusing, was also included in the evening programme, which consisted of three one-act pieces: The other pieces constituting the evening bill are more serious and ambitious, and are included in the plays for an Irish Theatre of Mr. W. B. Yeats.

On Baile's Strand presents what is perhaps the best known incident in the life of the great legendary hero of Ulster, Cuichulain, King of Mourmheru, who, amid the great independent or tributary kings, receives a challenge to fight, and ultimately slays a youth, whom he afterwards finds to have been his own son. Cuichulain has felt his heart go out to the brave and ingenuous youth, and has offered him his friendship. This the lad, much as he burns for it, dares not accept, the laws of Irish chivalry exacting a combat, in which he receives, as has been said, his death. This story, which has, of course, much in common with the Arabian legend of Sohrab and Rostum, told by Matthew Arnold, proved highly poetical and impressive.

"Kathleen Ni Houlihan" is an eminently unpatriotic drama of the year 1798, in which a young Irishman, carried away by the voice of the heroine, appears to be a species of Shan Van Vogh, an incarnation of Ireland, in the person of an old woman, leaves the fair and wealthy bride he is on the point of espousing, and goes to the aid to join the French, who are landing at Killybegs.

The acting in these various pieces is slow.

It may be due to the fact that the stage is so small that an impression of sauntering and "slovening" is conveyed. Whether Irish and folk are so indolent as the people one and all seem to be, we know not. We should be glad, however, of a little more spirit and activity. The people made up for the smallness of their numbers in the opening performance by the warmth of the welcome awarded, and cheered everything and everybody to the echo.

Ev Standard 28

IRISH DRAMA.

FOUR PIECES PERFORMED AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

The Irish Theatre Society inaugurated a brief season in London yesterday by four distinct, if not distinguished, performances at St. George's Hall, and it may be said at once that the result was more flattering to the real than to the discriminating intelligence or artistic ability of these concerned.

On a stage as poverty stricken as Ireland is reputed to be, under stage management that bore all the signs of inexperience, and sometimes of laxity, a company of earnest performers attempted the difficult interpretation of four as ambiguous dramatic compositions as could very well be gathered together. Mr. J. M. Synge, who is accounted the most notable of the younger men engaged in Irish dramatic authorship, presented "The Well of the Saints," a play in three acts. It carried throughout a distinct flavour of Irish peasant life, and was not without flashes of true Irish wit. Its story—that of two beggars blind from childhood, who are miraculously cured, only to find misery waiting on vision—contained dramatic possibilities, which were almost destroyed by faulty structure. In this play Mr. W. G. Fay and Miss Sara Allgood sustained the principal roles, and to their earnest endeavours such success as the performance achieved was chiefly due.

A Romping Farce.

Lady Gregory's comedy in one act, "Spreading the News," interpreted by the same set of players, was evolved from a very ancient pro-

cept as to the celebrity with which civilization is spread abroad. The actors, by this time warmed by their work, entered upon the acting of what is really a romping Irish farce with a degree of self-consciousness which atoned for the weakness of the play, and for their own inexperience. That the audience enjoyed the form of entertainment was evidenced by the applause which is rarely the actors at the close of the play.

Mr. W. B. Yeats was represented, in the evening bill by "On Baile's Strand," a metaphorical composition most difficult to understand, and "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," a pathetic plea for the land-lord and land-cubbed Irish peasant. These plays were followed by a repetition of Lady Gregory's comedy.

The audience, which was large and fashionable, gave every indication of pleasure.

Evening Post
December 2 1906

The Irish Theatre Society commenced a short season at St. George's Hall on Monday under circumstances that were trying to everyone concerned. It seems a pity that an attempt to familiarize London audiences with the best of Ireland's plays should be done in such immature and inexperienced fashion. Nothing could have exceeded the earnestness of the company, but throughout each of the four plays presented there was a lack of stage management most painfully apparent. "The Well of the Saints," by Mr. J. M. Synge, is a play in three acts, and is replete with Irish peasant life. The main idea—that of two beggars, blind from birth, who are miraculously restored to sight only to open their eyes to utter misery—is capable of much, but

the author missed a great deal from his ignorance of stage-craft. "Spreading the News," a farce by Lady Gregory, was played with considerable spirit, but the play is a very weak one, the even for a farce. Throughout both plays the company seemed bent by nervousness, and it would probably be easier to criticize their individual preferences than they are more accustomed to their stage surroundings.

Freeman Nov 29

The tour of the Irish National Theatre Company has been attended with the most flattering success. Its reception at Oxford and Cambridge was remarkably enthusiastic. In both cities the house was crammed at each performance, and hundreds had to be turned away from the doors. The members of the Company were entertained by the dons, and every kind of hospitality showered upon them. The performances at St. George's Hall, London, have also been attended by large and appreciative audiences, while the critics are not slow to acknowledge the originality of the plays, and the fascinating method of the players. "Padraic Colum's" "The Land," "Mr. W. B. Yeats' "Kathleen Ni Houlihan," and "Mr. Boyle's "The Building Fund," have been especially successful here, while Lady Gregory's farce, "Spreading the News," by the artistic directness of its appeal to the sense of the ridiculous, proved irresistibly attractive. The tour, I believe, has been a financial, as well as an artistic success, and if the engagements of the

Players permitted, it might certainly have been extended.

Northam Dec 29

IRISH PLAYS IN LONDON.

The new Irish National Theatre, the first subsidised play house in these islands, has taken up its temporary home in St. George's Hall, and the performances of a season of seven Irish plays began there on Monday afternoon.

Wearing an enormous black butterfly bow, Mr. W. B. Yeats, the president of the Irish Renaissance (says the "Daily Express"), offered a welcome in chosen music to the company of Irish players, Mr. and Mrs. Clement K. Souter and other enthusiasts were in the stalls.

First Irish plays were presented during the day—Mr. J. M. Synge's "The Well of the Saints," "Spreading the News," a one-act comedy by Lady Gregory, another act of the Irish festival, "On Ball's Strand," by Mr. Yeats; and the same author's beautiful little play of '08, "Kathleen ni Houlihan"—the only one of the four that was not new to a London audience.

Full of quaint Irish humor and shrewd common sense, "The Well of the Saints" met with an excellent reception. A few drops of water brought to a halt first a man who is a blind Irish peasant and his blind wife, who sit at the cross roads begging for alms. But the gift brings to happiness to the blind man, who discovers that his wife, whose sanity he believed on to be the wonder of the West, is only a wrinkled old woman. When next the only fair girl goes missing and (mistaken for a peasant daughter). As the blind peasant Mr. W. G. Fay distinguished himself, and Miss Emma Vernon acted the part of his wife with charming naturalness. Lady Gregory's clever little farce, "Spreading the News," abounds in rollicking Irish humor.

Mr. W. B. Yeats's tragedy, "On Ball's Strand," was greeted with applause. From the dramatic standpoint it is one of the best of the poet's productions. The old legend of the combat between Cuchullain, the King of Mourmian, and his unknown son, and his subsequent mad ones and death, is told in terse and vigorous blank verse. It is oddly impressive, and it has another claim to recognition, inasmuch as there is a woman's part in it.

Freeman Dec 1

The opinion, passed by the London newspapers critics on the performances of the National Theatre Company at St. George's Hall have been almost without exception of a highly laudatory character. Both playwrights and actors have come in for warm eulogy, and the hope is expressed that a visit from the theatre will be an annual event of the London theatrical season. Perhaps the most remarkable of the many flattering notices which have appeared is that in the "Morning Post" on Mr. William Boyle's admirable little comedy, "The Building Fund." "Wentley" tenderly appreciative of Mr. Yeats's poetic essays as the audience had been," says the writer, "Mr. Boyle's headlong sense of workmanship woke it to enthusiasm. Here, presented with a technique inferior to that of Ibsen or Hauptmann, was a little comedy of human ally, human failing, human life, so subtly studied and so exquisitely written that even the carping critic could find nothing he wished to better. Just the story of a miserly old woman, with a son who dies after her, and a grand-daughter who was not quite so—perhaps only because she is of tender years. All the interest

of the drama is centred in what the old woman will do with her money. Yet so marvellous is this new playwright's dramatic power that this slender theme held the tired London audience breathless from beginning to end. Wonderful sense of the stage, wonderful character-drawing, and, curious, simple language, of which every word told, literally gripped the hearer. Added to this an interpretation which, seen from the front row of the stalls was well-nigh as perfect in its art as was the art it was helping, so that one came away filled with a desire that all people interested in the kindred arts of playwriting and playacting may be given soon an opportunity to see "The Building Fund," with its original cast, at some regular theatre."

Manchester 9d 28

IRISH PLAYS IN LONDON.

The company of the Irish National Theatre, after a successful visit to Oxford and Cambridge, is giving four performances at St. George's Hall, Lauchlin Place. The programme of yesterday evening's performance opened with Mr. W. B. Yeats's well-known patriotic allegory "Kathleen ni Houlihan," was followed by another play by the same author, entitled "On Ball's Strand." This is the least effective, theatrically, of the pieces Mr. Yeats has written for the Irish plays. It deals with a legend similar to that of "Sohrab and Rustum," showing how a young man comes overseas to challenge the hero Cuchullain; how Cuchullain fights and slays him, and then discovers that the youth is his own son; whereupon he goes mad, and "taking arms against a sea of troubles" rushes into the waves and is drowned. This story, unfortunately, is set forth in a fashion which is scarcely comprehensible unless one knows the whole legendary setting of the theme. To Irish audiences a familiar legend is familiar, but it is surely a sound principle that however much an audience may know beforehand a play should be self-contained and self-explanatory. Certainly it is much less effective than "The King's Threshold" and others of Mr. Yeats's plays. Mr. F. J. Fay plays Cuchullain, and Mr. W. G. Fay Baruch, a fail, but neither actor is seen at his best. A less ambitious, but perhaps more felicitous, effort is the third item in the programme, "Spreading the News," a one-act comic comedy by Lady Gregory. It dramatizes with great humor the fable of the three black angels. Jack Smith having by chance dropped his hat-fork, Baruch, in passing, from mouth to mouth, is presently magnified into a detailed narrative of the murder of Jack Smith by Bartley Fallon and the murderer's flight to America with his victim's wife. Finally an idiotic Smith, and arrests Smith for having killed Smith and Fallon. In this very comic sketch Mr. W. G. Fay is delightful as Fallon. Mr. F. J. Fay is good as the magistrate, and Miss Sara Allgood is excellent as Mrs. Fallon.

W. A.

Monitor Dec 1

IRISH PLAYS AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

Once more the Irish National Theatre Company have come to London. St. George's Hall echoes the soft accents of Hibernia. The broad humor and the modest philosophy of the theater are again delightfully evident. "The Well of the Saints," the acting is very good. Mr. W. G. Fay is as clever and amusing as ever. In "Spreading the News," Lady Gregory's Irish village scenes of "The Three Black Crosses," he provides a continuous scene.

Belfast Dec 1

Lady Gregory's clever little farce, "Spreading the News," is an admirable skill on the part of the Irish mind for pausing at conditions always quite correctly.

Refuge Dec 3

DRAMATIC GOSSIP.

SIX PLAYS FROM PADDYLAND.

"JIMMY'S MOTHER" AND "DODO."

IT has already been remarked here that the Irish National Theatre deserves the attention and support of all good friends of the drama. This opinion was strengthened on Monday and Tuesday when the clever amateur players from the Abbey Street Theatre, Dublin, held possession of the stage at St. George's Hall and gave their admirers some further taste of their own art and some further insight into the workings of Irish dramatic authors, who, despite the deliverance of Mr. Shaw, are not all dead. On Monday afternoon there was a performance of Mr. J. M. Synge's play, arranged in three short acts, and called

"The Well of the Saints."

There was something shocking here for the stern moralist, but there was a good deal of ray humor underlying the suggestion of the story, which was that even so terrible a thing as blindness may be a blessing in disguise. Martin Doole and Mary his wife are blind beggars who have the cross-roads and invoke the goodwill of the saints for all passers-by who give them of their charity. They gossip gaily about the follies of the folk who can see. Martin boasts of the fact that according to hearing he is quite a handsome man, and Mary is proud to think that she has been called the Glory of the West. A wandering friar presently comes their way, and with water from his blindfold comes they of their blindness. At once they look upon each other with disapprobation and disgust, and they go their separate ways. Martin's way leads to work, and that is the one thing to which he has a rooted objection. When for his laziness he is linked up by Timmy, the smith, who has given him employment, he attempts to seduce his blindfold. He narrowly escapes getting his head broken. Again they take their cross back to both himself and his wife against the good man comes with professed cure they had him again and leave them to their fate. In the rendering of the play some excellent work was done by Mr. W. G. Fay, as Martin Doole; Miss Emma Vernon, as the wife; Mr. F. J. Fay, as the Friar; and Miss Sara Allgood, as Molly Byrne.

The other attraction of the matinee programme was Lady Gregory's one-act comedy called

"Spreading the News."

There was nothing strikingly original here. The story was that of the three black crosses in another form; but there was great richness in the development and abundant fun. There was a ripple of laughter for every man, woman, and child. Smith declared that he would punch the head of the man who was bold enough to tell his dead body in a five-acre field was a rose. Jack Smith, on his way to that field, stopped to talk with Bartley Fallon and some other of the famous old neighbors. When Jack had gone, Bartley—who was fond of declaring that when misfortune was about it was sure to come

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On Tuesday afternoon the audience, luckily, rose to Mr. Colman's play, "The Land," and ultimately called for the author in an enthusiasm that was almost hysterical. Hitherto, Mr. Colm has been known as the author of a few scattered verses and a short play called "Broken Soil." Even in this narrow outlet, however, he has made a reputation for himself. "The Land" is a moving, earth-born, a true, a practical play that is building up a new tradition in Anglo-Irish literature. Unlike many of the Irish poets, he is a man acquainted with the contrivance of those who work in the fields, he has seen the sweat and the sweat of the earth when it is labouring, one who has been out in the wind and the rains. In "The Land," a tragedy play in prose dealing with the old men who stay at home in Ireland and the young men and women who go over the seas, he becomes, as it were, the articulate voice of Ireland. More than any living Irish writer, he seems in a common phrase) to be trying to get at something, to express something, exhilaratingly beautiful because it is exhilaratingly true and human. Though in point of sheer literary art he cannot as yet show anything of the achievement of Mr. Yeats or Mr. Synge (both of whom are artists among artists), I cannot help looking at his work as the most promising dramatic and poetical work that is now being done in Ireland. It is fascinating after a few speeches in literature about the various species of the Irish, the old and the young, the rural and the urban, the intellectual and the bodily, the true and the artificial people. "The Land" is now quite excellent. Mr. Phipps, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. W. G. Fay and Mr. E. J. Fay, playing the principal male parts, with Miss Alice N. Garraugh playing the part of a young, correctly gauged with an emotional suggestiveness and a gracefulness of gesture and bearing that were refreshing in a hackneyed world. One must not forget in the meantime that it is to the Gaelic League movement that, in the best analysis, one is indebted for this very rich and creditable contributions to the modern drama in English.

Irish National Theatre

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Lady Gregory's Contribution.

Lady Gregory's Contribution.

The first of the evening at the St. George's Hall was presided by Lady Grey, in her excellent little comedy, *Sweeping the News*. The scene is an Irish village, largely populated with French and Irish representatives of whiteness and the bourgeoisie, and the inhabitants, being too poor to tell and groaning, are therefore listening and groaning. Jack Smith, a famous man, happens in, passing through the village, to see how the production affects him, and Mr. Falcon, the bar landlord, hurries to follow after him with it. Through the darkness of great and awful scenes, Barclay's interpretation with the production is gradually worked up into so disabused a tragedy that when he returns to the village with this implement of agriculture, having been unable to find Jack, he is abandoned as a madman, and subsequently arrested as such. This little comedy, showing how a simple and baronial statement, showing into the most serious of accusations, was indignantly played, and it sent one away in a still more hopeful mood regarding the future fortunes of the Irish National Theatre. I am sure that all were present, at the performances last week, will look forward with a genuine sense of pleasure to the company's next visit to London.

Speaker De Q

IN the last week of November the National Irish Theatre Society came over from Dublin and played during the space of two days seven short plays. Those who wish to understand their aims, and the principles which guide them, but better read the December number of the *Standard*. To-day Mr. Vaile addresses in

to match convolutions attuning this hard of believing. Speaking of the old settings of *Cervantes*, *Beowulf*, and of some Greek plays, he says that, though many hundreds of years may divide their dates, he feels they are essentially of the same mold; that it is only we who are different. "The thought would come to me that has come to me so often before, I feel I have lived at times through man's changing, and that I have been there. Then I manage not to change quickly about them. There was nothing to draw their imagination from the ripening of their folk, from the birth and death of their children, from the destiny of their souls, from all that is the unchanging substance of literature. They had not to deal with the world in such great masses that it could only be represented to their minds by figures and by abstract generalizations. In short, we see life now with too pronounced masks. Theoretic, and distant to give the play to social tendencies and abstractly to carry out, instead as from an inner black, experience. Our language has in consequence

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enough to set the thoughtful thinking. They do not, like Wordsworth, assert that the actual words in which emotion commonly expresses itself must always be beautiful; but they find in the speech of Irish peasants a language, full of phrases polished and worn like a shepherd's crook with constant use, that has at once the vivacity of common life, the solemnity of reverie, and the colours of immemorial custom. Those who listened to the lines in Mr. Synge's two plays, *The Well of the Saints* and *In the Shadow of the Glen*, must have been impressed by these qualities in them. They must have been startled by the prompt, insensitive outspokenness of the talk (the quality which stings in the dialogue of that self-dramatised Irishman, Mr. Bernard Shaw), so different from the talk of the elaborately civilised, who listen with one another's ears to their own remarks and hush their tones under the shadow of conventional consideration. They must have delighted in speech, so leisurely in unwinding its meaning, so simple in its metaphors, so sharpened by the struggle for bare existence, so enlarged by meditations on the hillsides and by broodings over embers fires; in a language that is so fit a vesture for laughter and tears.

I despair of suggesting to those who have not seen these plays the spirit of them; but the characters who move in them have been edged by suffering into a hard practicality. There is no appealing between them to a sentimental standard. They neither tender nor accept "the claims of the Ideal."

In consequence, though there is plenty of superstition and blarney among them, there is no humbug and self-deception. But their imaginations and thoughts have had leisure to go abroad high over the whole stretch of existence. They think often, and talk often, of youth and age, birth and death, and of the nature of the world in which their lives are set. They see life in large spaces. Their feelings and faculties have been formed both by the helpless, empty hours and by the sudden sharp pinches of a poverty-stricken life. They have learnt both to philosophise and to snatch at necessity of the moment; to contemplate life in the long, hence their refinement and poetry; and to live from hand to mouth, hence their hardness and quickness. Some few take refuge altogether in dreams, some few to raking painful peace together, but most have felt this two-fold influence so equally that they have come to have two ways of feeling about everything that happens. Turned one way in their minds, everything is naught; turned the other, everything is of dire importance. These two contradictory aspects neighbour each other so intimately in their heads that they blend, and the result is that characteristic mode of feeling and expression which is called "Irish," perplexing to desperation the matter-of-fact. Taken seriously, this quality will seem the most illuvisively pervasive breath of irony; taken with a sense of superiority in the onlooker, it is cynical weakness, rendering the Irishman amiably harmless (the intelligent, delightful creature!) and wins him the pardon of a patronising guffaw. Which of the two it really is no one of Irish blood should venture to assert. Though it lays the Irishman open to attack, it provides him with his keenest weapon of offence: a turn for searching sarcasm, which enables him to slip a knife between the cracks of the most closely serrated front of plausible pretensions. It endowed Sterne with the flying lightness of his ambiguous touch, it helped Swift to discuss things with awful imperturbability as though they were their opposites, and it has much to do with the agility with which Mr. Shaw jumps from the frivolous to the severe. But it is impossible here to explore the recesses of this subject. The spirit is not only in the characters in the plays, but it hovers about the plays themselves. It is not so marked in Mr. Yeats's work, but it fits like a ubiquitous rainbow-winged Ariel over *The Well of the Saints* and peeps like a Puck of misel countenance between the lines of Mr. Boyle's delightful comedy, *The Building Fund*.

To the peasants of these plays must be allowed every quality the poetic dramatist could wish for in his charac-

ters, with one exception. They lack intensity of affection and concentration of passion. The way to their hearts lies through their imaginations. This enables them to speak beautifully of painful events, that are happening round them at the moment, as though they were "old, unhappy, far-off things," and to hug themselves aloof from it all, if they are selfish. How gently they make the outcast welcome by their fire, to what close-listening sympathy he tells his troubles; but how they bicker and bide among each other! In love they chase for ever an eloping ideal or marry money; but never the human being with faults and foibles. The personal passions evaporate into cloudy longings for something beyond, and abstract aims take on for them the likeness and attraction of humanity. "A nation," says a writer, in the *Leader*, speaking of Irish patriotism, "is the heroic theme we follow, a mourning wasted land its moving spirit; the impersonal assumes personality for us." In *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*, by Mr. Yeats, the spirit of Ireland, calling to her sons, is incarnated in a weird old woman, who knocks at a cottage kitchen door, the night before the son of the house is to be married. She rocks herself to and fro over the fire, crooning strange songs of her wanderings and of the lovers who have died for her. The old people treat her with reverent tenderness, as a poor old body whose sufferings have crazed her; but the songs she sings of her four beautiful lost fields, and of the men who have died to win them back, and her prophecy that to-morrow again many more will die, wake a strange longing in their son's heart. He follows her into the night. His parents and his dear cannot stop him, and he goes. His young brother rushes in with the news that the French ships are in the bay and the countryside is rising against England. "Did you see an old woman go down the road?" they ask him. "No, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen." The actress who played the part Kathleen ni Houlihan had a beautiful thrilling voice.

Mr. Yeats's other play, *On Baile's Strand* (a "Sorah and Rescum" story of ancient Ireland), did not seem to me successful, though Mr. F. J. Fay spoke the verse very well. The speech in which Cuchullain dresses his sword was finely delivered:

"This mutterer, this mutterer, this sand-piper,
This edge that's greyer than the side, this mouse
That's gnawing at the timbers of the world."

Lady Gregory's light-hearted comedy, *Spreading the News*, was played twice, amid great applause and laughter. It is most refreshing to see, for once, in absolutely unintellectual comedy, Mr. W. G. Fay is a born tragic-comedian. His foot in *On Baile's Strand* was a morsel of Shakespearean fancy. His miser in *The Building Fund* and his blind man in *The Well of the Saints* were admirable. Miss Emma Vernon's acting in both these plays was excellent.

The society in playing the prose dramas of peasant-life are most simple and naturalistic in speech and gesture. In the verse-plays they are careful not to act outside their parts, and to avoid emphasis of voice which might distract attention from the sound and meaning of the verse. The scenery is as simple as possible. Art so sincere, frugal, and imaginative is a criticism, more deadly than critics can force, of the congested, over-staged, commercially cooked-up drama that is played nightly in most of our theatres.

DESMOND MACCARTHY.

It was my fault, I suppose, but I really could not make much of the productions of the National Theatre Society of Dublin, as represented by two plays from the pen of Mr. W. B. Yeats and one from that of Lady Gregory at St. George's Hall. I am sure that the former author's *Kathleen Ni Houlihan* had some symbolical significance underlying its busy sayings and doings, but I could not find out exactly what this was. The amateurish rendering gave very little life in the matter, nor did it long to make the most of the rather artless fan of Lady Gregory's much more intelligible *Spreading the News*, a farce dealing with the rapid growth to which almost baseless scandal is liable in a small community. The third of the plays, *On Baile's Strand*, by Mr. Yeats, proved to be a still record of extremely ancient Irish history. It would probably read better than it acted, though, indeed, this is to give but faint praise to the author's genuinely poetic style. On the whole I fear it must be confessed that these developments of Irish drama are unlikely to be these developments in the nation's hand.

Shaw
Yeats
Gregory

Sunday Times Dec 3

THE IRISH PLAYERS.

Letter from Mr. Arthur Symonds.

Mr. Dear Grain.—You have asked me to write out for you my impression of Mr. Synge's play, "The Well of the Saints," which you were not able to see at the performance of the Irish players. Perhaps in trying to do so I shall be able to make my own impression of it clearer to myself, for I confess that this new dramatist is not an easy person to get hold of, and his work is likely to elude one if one comes to it without preparation. For it is like nothing else. Mr. Yeats's tragedy in verse is founded on one tradition, and Lady Gregory's farce in prose is founded on another, but Mr. Synge's tragic farce is founded on none. It is a thing which certainly exists, and it is like no other existing thing. Where has this grave, ironic playwright found his method, so slight, so casual, as it seems, and yet so satisfying—a network of mere talk, which seems to be all the while holding back the action, but deliberately, for a purpose really answered. And this talk, into which most of the action of the play is somehow concentrated, is done with singular skill, with a kind of new grace—the grace of a beautiful peasant woman such as one sees sometimes in Ireland. It is all delivery in simplicity, and this work has none of the hard grip of a younger Irish dramatist, Mr. Cope, who promises to do honest work in fruitful earth. Its simplicity is so subtle that one is surprised to find how well it comes across the footlights. Here, no doubt, much is due to the acting, which added nothing, but interpreted everything; and especially to the highly-finished art of Mr. F. J. Fay and to the vital comic genius of Mr. W. G. Fay. Yes, I know, will do justice to these astonishing people, whom the English critics are beginning to find (what do they call it?) "clever." They do not seem to me clever at all; it is we who have clever actors; but one of these men can bring beauty upon the stage and the other can bring life.—Yours very truly,

ARTHUR SYMONS.

Sunday Times 10th

TWO IRISH PLAYS.

I.

A play of Mr. Yeats, the dramatist, has all the characteristics of Mr. Yeats, the foremost poet of Ireland. He is of cloudy imagination, of sincere intensity, of metaphoric address, of atmospheric imaginativeness. Yet the dramatist is less atmospheric than the poet is impressive. His plays travel aloft, but they do not quite travel beyond the borderland that divides the stage from the audience. We are spellbound by the poet, but we are not held by the dramatist. It is his verbal splendour that conquers, not his drama, not his action. Unless one reads Mr. Yeats's "On Baile's Strand," which is a conflict of ancient Irish rulers, and understands his drift, it is hard to follow his plot. He indicates, he embroiders with deftness, but the groundwork of his pattern is shrouded in mist. He is, indeed, a poet of this sort, his real intentions are covered by sheets of rain and low-lying clouds. To clear them there is need of a commentator, of Yeats himself, who knows, who argues, and who feels with the soul of a poet. The stage setting, too, of Elizabethan simplicity, hampers the effectiveness of his drama. Beyond the words there is little to help our inequity of mind. In order to enjoy the dramatist we must submit to the poet. Sometimes it is difficult and we long for greater instinct of the theatre, but with an effort it is possible, for after all beauty of language and originality are the womb of all drama. The actors, principally Messrs. Fay, Tunney, and Sinclair, fully rendered the spirit of the play. There was nothing affected in their art; indeed, nothing which reminded us of paragonage of English methods. Their diction was a joy.

II.

Lady Gregory's little comedy, "Spreading the News," shows the other side of the Irish character, its delightful sense of humour, its quaintness, its contrariness if I may call it so. Practically, the little comedy is nothing but a huge joke. In the little village the news spreads that Jack Smith has been murdered, and that a fellow-villager is the murderer, and so well does Dame Rumour wag her tongue that finally the innocent man finds himself in handcuffs and the dead man gaily marches upon the scene. Jack Smith had left home for some reason or other, but he was alive and kicking. Lady Gregory adds value to this little tale not only by the vividness of her narrative but particularly by the wonderful reproduction of Irish ways and village manners. The picture of a little fair with an old woman, who is the chatterbox in general, selling sweets, is so essentially taken from life that one feels as if transplanted across the St. George's Channel.

J. T. GREEN.

Atkinson Dec 2

ST. GEORGE'S HALL.—Performances of the National Theatre Society.

THE conditions attending the performances of the National Theatre Society are scarcely favourable to a calm estimate of its merits. No fewer than eight new plays were presented during the first two days of the week—a period already heavily charged with theatrical novelty. It is obviously all but impossible to follow the whole of these, and the majority of the pieces remain unseen. In the collected dramas of Mr. W. B. Yeats and in other forms most of the plays are accessible, and on the merits of some of these—as, for instance, 'On Baile's Strand,' the Sohrab and Rustum episode of the Cuchullain legend, and on 'Kathleen Ni Houlihan,' a patriotic (from the Irish standpoint) piece dealing with Irish revolt in 1798 upon the arrival of the French in Killala Bay—eulogy has already been passed. 'Spreading the News,' by Lady Gregory, is a humorous little comedy showing the manner in which a baseless rumour, originated and repeated at a village fair, attains such proportions that a man innocent of all blame gets arrested for a murder, and cannot even obtain his freedom when his supposed victim is his partner in captivity.

Being in three acts, 'The Well of the Saints' of Mr. J. M. Synge may be regarded as the most important of the first day's productions. It also is a humorous work, the idea of which may be found in one of the panning songs of Thomas Hood. An Irish couple, aged and blind, recover their sight by miraculous means, and are no wise contented with the result, each finding the other plainer and less attractive than had been surmised. When, in punishment for wantonness or profanity, their divinely endowed vision is taken away, their quarrels cease, the happy state of affairs previously existing is renewed, and both experience the truth of the consolatory lesson preached by Dalila to Samson—that,

Though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights.

At any rate, the offer of the strolling priest to repeat the miracle is received, not with indifference, but with resentment and violence, and the happy couple, restored to their former blindness, shake the dust off their feet, and quit a country in which so priestly functions are discharged with so proudly superfluous zeal, and the lay population is disposed to resent the slight put upon sacerdotal ministrations by the recalc-

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Vanity Fair Nov 28

THE IRISH PLAYERS IN LONDON.

The Irish National Theatre Company arrived this year at an unfortunate time, when there happened to be an unusual number of conflicting claims upon our attention. I was able to see only two of its four performances, and I misused what I understand to be one of the most remarkable products of the whole movement, *The Well of the Saints*, by Mr. J. M. Synge. Of the plays I saw, *On Baile's Strand*, by Mr. W. B. Yeats, was the most ambitious, but not the most successful. It is, I understand, an early work of the author, who has now withdrawn it for reconstruction. Criticism, therefore, had better be withheld for the present. Let me only say that I cannot think Mr. F. J. Fay well suited to the heroic

characters of Irish legend. For such a part as Cúchulainn the company ought to find and train an actor of somewhat more impressive physical resources. Of the other novelties, I saw one, *The Building Fund*, by Mr. William Boyle, and read another, *The Land*, by Mr. Padraic Colum. Both are nominally three-act plays, but contain little more matter than many a one-act play of the ordinary stage. They are able and I have no doubt faithful reproductions of peasant life and character; Mr. Boyle's play being humorous in tone, Mr. Colum's serious. In both the art is simple, unaffected, pleasing, like that of the actors who present them. They are, in fact, unsophisticated plays for an unsophisticated stage—preferable a thousand times to the ordinary vulgarities of the commercial theatre, but not, on the other hand, to be mistaken for really great, elaborate, and masterly creations. These Irish authors have distinct dramatic feeling, and a store of fresh, unhackneyed material to which to apply it. Negatively, their pieces have great merit, for they attempt nothing that they cannot do. They portray very lively the simple humours and emotions of simple souls; but great dramatic art is that which lays bare to us the workings of complex souls in complex crises. All this I say not to disparage a style of drama which gives me great pleasure, but merely to keep alive that sense of proportion which is sometimes apt to fail us in dealing with unfamiliar art-forms. Another agreeable novelty which I was fortunate enough to see was *Spreading the News*, a spirited and lightly diverting droll by Lady Gregory. In all these pieces that admirable comedian, Mr. W. G. Fay, took a leading part, and was ably seconded by his brother, Mr. F. J. Fay, Miss Sara Allgood, Miss Emma Vernon, Miss Maire Ni Shuailbhaigh, and other comrades. There is very little change, from year to year, in the acting of the company. They remain entirely free from stereotyped professionalism; or, to put it in other words, their simplicity of expression is neither helped nor hindered by the ordinary "tricks of the trade." Perhaps one may say that they have attained to something like the *Giottoesque* stage of accomplishment. Their draughtsmanship is slow and constrained, their art of composition primitive. They have no crispness of attack and little brilliancy of execution. But there is observation and instinct, sincerity and dignity, in all that they do.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

Black & White Jul 2

It is a very long time since we had so superior a West End week's entertainment as this just past. The Irish National Theatre, the New Zealand spirit against which Mr. St. John Hankin has lately protested, and which seems to be the badge of all the tribe of casual as well as many of the regular theatrical managements—were bunched together into two short days. During Monday and Tuesday we professional drama tasters were called upon to sample six plays produced by the Irish company from Gregory, Mr. Synge, Mr. Boyle and Mr. Colum. Most of them we procured good and well-acted, and viewing the Philistines to whisper of show, brightly the new light that is over Ireland, to the deep distress of the people in those things that really matter to their distressed country.

THE Irish National Theatre Society is coming again to London, an event of interest to all lovers of art. On the 27th and 28th of this month they will give afternoon and evening performances at St. George's Hall, the old home of the English amateur, producing seven plays in all, of which five are new to London. The two already known here are that beautiful little play by Mr. W. B. Yeats, "Kathleen ni Houlihan," which has been fifty called a "sigh of '98," and Mr. Synge's much discussed "In the Shadow of the Glen," which, on its first production in Dublin, in October, 1903, aroused a storm of disapproval, when he was accused of impugning the honour of every woman in Ireland. The play has, nevertheless, withstood the storm, and Mr. Synge's genius as a playwright is receiving recognition abroad, for the play is shortly to be performed at the National Theatre, Prague; and his third play, "The Well of the Saints," which was produced in Dublin in February last, has been translated, and accepted by the Deutsches Theater, Berlin. The other plays announced at St. George's Hall are W. B. Yeats's "On Baile's Strand," "Spreading the News," by Lady Gregory, "The Land," by Patrick Colum, and "The Building Fund," by W. Boyle, all of which have been added this year to the company's repertoire.

The Irish National Theatre Society is an important feature of the so-called Irish Revival, and was a scheme originating with Lady Gregory, Mr. Yeats, and Mr. Edward Martyn, who had the cause much at heart, and were all anxious to help forward that movement which was to restore the ancient language to its people, and by so doing revive the old songs and legends, and bring to life again the long-neglected arts. With a dead language much of what is beautiful and important in the history of any nation is lost to the world, and to lose touch with the heroic age of one's country is to lose a certain individuality in the nation at large. The Dramatic Revival began with Irish plays written in Irish, of which the best known and best loved are those by Dr. Douglas Hyde, President of the Gaelic League, whose wide knowledge of the legends and traditions of his country is well known, and everywhere the people are quick to understand and appreciate his plays. The "Twisting of the Rope" was the first Irish play ever given in a Dublin theatre, and on that occasion Dr. Hyde himself took the part of his hero, Hanrahan. The little company that played it was composed entirely of amateurs, under the stage management of their present leader, Mr. W. G. Fay. He alone had any professional experience. The rest were amateurs in the truest sense of the word, "labouring with high hearts, though it may be sometimes with weak hands." Pursuing their various avocations by day, they devoted their evenings to study and to acquiring by long and patient rehearsals a knowledge of their art. To this they have added occasionally the painting of scenery and the making of costumes and properties.

It is known that in ancient days dramatic verse was intoned to a simple notation, and to the loss of that art we owe, among many things, the loss of what should have been a great epic-drama from the pen of William Morris, who refused to write a play, as men had forgotten the half-chant in which poetry should be spoken. Among the Irish peasants and lower classes in Dublin there still lingers an inclination to chant and a sense of rhythm in the common speech, and in these Irish plays much effect is gained in certain characters by speaking in notes, while even through the ordinary dialogue of the peasant players, in which the players are perhaps seen at their best, they express values of light and shade in sound almost unknown on the English stage. Moreover, they cultivate a simplicity of gesture and an entire absence of that busy restlessness to which we are accustomed. Simplicity is also the keynote of the scenery, which is regarded merely as a background, in no way distracting the eye to the disadvantage of the ear.

The Dublin Actors in London.

THE actors from Abbey Street had the unpleasant experience of appearing before a cultured English matinee audience during their visit to London recently. Even at the evening performances in St. George's Hall, the audiences seemed to be very cultured, very English, and painfully matinee. There was, I hear, both warmth and intelligence shown by those who went to the plays at Oxford and Cambridge. In London, however, the audiences were stupid, perplexed, and frigidly appreciative. Indeed, if the Irish in London had not been so eager to see Mr. Colm's play, "The Land"—many of them put themselves to a great inconvenience on Tuesday afternoon, and, in their delight, compelled the author to stand up and show himself to the house—the visit of the National Theatre Company would have had to be written down a failure, so far as an appreciative reception was concerned.

Personally, I think the management was largely to blame for this. The performances of the plays were so badly advertised that many people did not know anything definite about them; and, besides, the prices were beyond the pockets of hundreds of playgoers who have been accustomed to see dramas by Ibsen and Shaw, and actors like Irving and Forbes Robertson, and to pay no more than a shilling for the privilege. The moral of the recent visit of the Abbey Street actors to London is that, if the so-called National Theatre is to succeed, it must make its appeal to the Irish democracy, not to an English or an Anglo-Irish aristocracy either of wealth or of (alleged) culture. One has only to live in England six months or so to realise that the people who look down on Ireland with such a good-humoured and insolent patronage are mere dilettanti in their appreciation of the arts, and have no continuing or vital interest either in the drama or in poetry.

If the National Theatre could only bring within its walls the "rabble" that can afford nothing higher than gallery prices, it would at once be put in contact with an audience that counted, an audience such as alone could inspire fine artists to express the sincerest and the most beautiful that is in them. And no one can deny that both those who write the plays for the Abbey Theatre, and those who act in them, are very fine artists indeed. It is Mr. Yeats' own suggestion—in his preface to *Gods and Fighting Men*—that the fine life is something played finely before fine spectators. Surely the description applies equally to a fine work of art. Might not Mr. Yeats, reflecting upon this, make it impossible that his plays, and the plays of his brother artists, should ever be offered again before audiences so philistine and so far from fine as those which by no means crowded St. George's Hall in London last week?

The achievement of Mr. Colm (who made the one hit of the London visit), in "The Land," as in his few published poems, seems to me to be especially remarkable, because he alone of our writers in English seems to express the modern Irishman in the large and simple way which a man ought to write about his contemporaries. Mr. Yeats has laid us all under a debt because, when we had grown weary and had almost resigned ourselves to mean and ugly things, he reminded the world of beauty; and there will always be praise waiting for Mr. Synge wherever men love to see life woven into new and curious patterns. One feels, however, regarding Mr. Yeats and Mr. Synge, that each of them in his work has been merely projecting his own self-consciousness against an Irish background. Padraic Colm, on the other hand, seems to be attempting to make his self-consciousness one with the self-consciousness (or rather with the sub-consciousness) of Ireland. He has, first of all, seen and studied the men and women about whom he writes, and afterwards (to use a commonplace simile) prepared them in the dressing-room of his spirit for a fit and beautiful reappearance in the world. Mr. Yeats and Mr. Synge, for their part, seem as a first step to have imagined their characters in their own souls, and only afterwards to have fitted them with speech and garments suited to an Irish atmosphere. It is impossible to say that on this account they cannot be artists of high rank and worthy of all honour. It means,

however, that they have no necessary place in the direct line of evolution of Irish literature conceived as the expression of the general sorrows and hopes and laughter of the Irish people. They are, rather, wonderful lonely figures, standing apart from their fellows, as Baudelaire stood, as Villiers de l'Isle Adam stood, as (in their different ways) Maeterlinck and Huysmans stand. As such, they must win the applause of the fastidious, but their work cannot be made a healthy basis for a school of literature in Ireland.

Padraic Colm has pushed out the boundaries of literature further into Irish life than have any of his companions in the National Theatre. That is why he is nationally the most precious possession that the Abbey Street Theatre now has. He may not have expressed the eternal things more wonderfully than the others have expressed them. He has expressed them, however, in a more distinctively Irish way. Consequently, Irish audiences, feeling that he is a truthful and beautiful interpreter of themselves, will continue to rise up and praise him, as they did in St. George's Hall last week. His progress as a dramatist, as anyone may see by comparing "The Land" to "Broken Soil," has been quite remarkable. Where he was sentimental and halting in expression in the earlier play, he has now become emotional on the exalted plane upon which alone art becomes possible, and his dialogue has a suggestive natural flow. One feels that in his future plays he will develop his characters more fully—that is, as it were, he will put more modelling into the faces. He will advance, too, in clearness of stagecraft. The present ending to "The Land" comes rather as an accidental appendage, a kind of moral tag, than as a crowning necessity. The long absence of the old men in the second act, too, rather makes one lose the sense of their continuous tragic impotence which should never be allowed to disappear for a moment. Mr. Colm, however, like every true artist, is seeking to put a new statement of the phenomena of life before the world, and the flaws in his work are mere minor accidents to which every man of original vision and utterance is at first liable.

There is no need, however, to review the different plays in detail again. That has already been done fully enough. It is curious, however, to note that some of the Londoners who saw them inferred that, because the people in Mr. Boyle's "The Building Fund" were sordid and miserly, and the people in Mr. Synge's "Shadow of the Glen" mean, and hard, and faithless, this must be not only a faithful, but a complete picture of Irish life. The critic of the *Globe*—a comic penny evening paper—rushed with an especial delight to this conclusion. One realises all the more clearly what a muddled vision the majority of Englishmen, even of educated Englishmen, have when they approach the arts. Even an instructed mind ought to know that the comic artist deals not with normal characters but with certain interesting abnormal types of people that call for whipping. The pretentious man, the hypocrite, the miser, the fop, the braggart, the blue-stocking—these, and men and women like them, are the inhabitants of the world of comedy, at least of satirical comedy. One could not introduce St. Francis of Assisi, or the mother of the Gracchi, or Sansfield, into this atmosphere without detriment.

It was interesting, also, to observe the intelligence of the spectators labouring to get at the meaning of Mr. Yeats' Kathleen in Houshian. One of them frankly interpreted it as the story of a young man who, at the pitch of his emotion, went out to help to repel a French invasion of British territory. I doubt if spectators of this sort, having never heard of Cuchullain, understood "On Baile's Strand" at all. And, indeed, Mr. Yeats himself is partly to blame for this, for Cuchullain's ultimate battle with the waves is not suggested with sufficient dramatic and imaginative force in the story told by the fool at the door. I was surprised, however, that "On Baile's Strand" proved so dramatically interesting as it did.

Personally, I do not like to see great men who come out of the legends, or have really lived, thrust before us on the stage. In the Greek Theatre, with its lofty conventions, the thing may have been possible. Nowadays, however, I should not care to see Owen Roe O'Neill, or

Wolfe Tone, or Robert Emmet the central figure of a drama, and the same objection holds good in the case of Cuchullain, or Maedhbh, or Ossin. With us, the personality of the actor is so obtrusive and so continually present to our consciousness that it would require a Napoleon to represent a Napoleon with justice, a Cuchullain to personate a Cuchullain. It is easier, indeed, for a dramatic writer to conquer our imaginations with the portraiture of a Hamlet or a Lear whom we do not know than to make real to us afresh a Lord Mayor of Dublin, say, whom we do know.

The chief honours of the London visit—once we have said our say on "The Land"—fell to the acting of Mr. W. G. Fay and Miss Maire Ni Gharbhugh. As Ellen, indeed, in "The Land," Miss Ni Gharbhugh opened windows, as it were, upon a character that had been but an outline and an affair of half-hights to those who had only read the play. The acting of the whole company was very good, however, because it seemed to be a reflection not of mere artistic formulae, but of life itself. Personally, I should prefer that "The Well of the Saints" had not been acted in the spirit of a realistic comedy. It would gain us a drama if the spectators were made more sensible of the distance that separates the life that is represented there from the life that one reads of in the newspapers. "The Well of the Saints" was not accepted with enthusiasm in London. I cannot see, however, that that is in any way a reflection on "The Well of the Saints."

Riobárd na Fhlann.

Academy Dec 2

The National Theatre Society, which gave two performances at the St. George's Hall at the beginning of the week, is the result of an earlier experiment on the same lines, called the Irish Literary Theatre, a band of amateurs, keenly interested in the revival of the native drama, and willing to devote much of their time to the propagation of the work. This was some six years ago, and the venture succumbed after a brief and gallant struggle. But Mr. W. B. Yeats and others, nothing daunted, made a fresh start three years ago, and found an enthusiastic ally in Miss Horniman, who purchased the Abbey Theatre, in Marlborough Street, Dublin, and presented it for the use of the Society, which was shortly afterwards registered as a limited company.

Nature Dec 7

Irish Drama in London.

The visit of the National Theatre Company, Ltd., to Oxford, Cambridge, and London, has been, we believe, a commercial success. According to the promoters it was undertaken in order to raise money which would enable the Company to tour the provinces of Ireland.

We should be written down quixotic to object to this arrangement, since the Abbey Theatre, in which the Irish National Theatre Company has been located and, we may add, lost, owes its establishment to British money. It is to be regretted that the performances of the company on tour do not seem to have reached a high level of excellence—if we may judge from the Press notices, which have been generally unfavourable. After all, if England is to pay the piper she ought to bear a worthy tune. We regret also that what is probably the best—and certainly the most characteristically Irish—play in the Company's repertory, should have been obscured. We refer to Mr. Cohn's play, *The Land*, which was only produced at one matinee, and

this on the second day in London, when Mr. Bernard Shaw's new play was also seeking the verdict of the critics. This treatment of such a play is, we submit, not quite fair, considering that Mr. Yeats' *On Baile's Strand* was played on each night in London. One night certainly might have been given to *The Land*.

What is the next move of the National Theatre Company, Ltd.? It is now, of course, a commercial company, and, therefore, very properly, the actors are to be paid. It would be well if we could receive information on some points, as, for instance, what connection, if any, has the new company with the old Irish National

Theatre Company? Are there any of the old company's funds on hand, and, if so, who holds them? To what are they to be applied? How many of the members of the old company are joining the new company as amateurs, and how many are joining as ordinary professionals? We ask these questions that we may know how far this new venture is a National Theatre and how far it is a speculation run for the aesthetic benefit of some members who have plays to produce.

One argument for these visits to London, etc., has been exploded. It was at one time suggested that the necessity for criticism demanded these visits. We assert, without fear of contradiction, that the criticisms received by the company from Dublin are infinitely more valuable than those contained in any of the English papers we have read.

Mr. Yeats and Aristophanes.

Of course there is really no deterioration in the acting of the company. Those critics who thought they saw some were merely free to criticise this time—which they were not previously when they were using the Irish National Theatre as a pretence to point out the necessity of a repertory theatre in London. That theatre exists now in the Court Theatre, and we can gauge the attitude of London towards the drama in Ireland from the action of the *Daily News*. On the second day of the plays it sent its principal critic to Mr. Shaw's play, its second critic to a performance of an Ibsen play by an amateur dramatic society, and some uninitiated member of its staff to St. George's Hall. We have no objection to this company going to London, or for that matter to Hong Kong, but we must resent being told that we have not in Ireland capable critics. Does not much of this attitude arise from the painful lack of scholarship which characterises the leaders of the company? In this year's *Southern*, for instance, Mr. Yeats again refers the critics to the tolerance for Aristophanes in Athens. Where is the parallel? Athens went to laugh with Aristophanes, and it gave him great licence. His plays, above all, were topical, and he used them frequently to vent a personal spleen or to forward a political opinion; and we may hope that in Athens a certain reverence for an immortal spirit would have kept us apart from the scurrilities which made the rabblement so cheerfully accept *Cloudcuckoo-land*. Aristophanes, like Rabelais, was an Homeric buffoon, but Mr. Yeats will pardon that public opinion which he so despises for asking—What is Homeric in the theatre in Abbey Street?

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



Lady Gregory
 Nassau Hotel
 Nassau St.



The National Theatre Society is about to tour the small country towns of Ireland. This has always been the ambition, and the success of the English tour has given it the necessary capital. The peasant plays of these Irish players will be a surprise to audiences who are accustomed to the conventional villain and hero of the blood and thunder melodrama, which is the only form of drama that ever comes to them in the natural course of things. The Society has been invited also to visit Leeds and Manchester, and will probably add Liverpool, where there is a large Irish population.

Dec 11

THE WHITE COCKADE.

GREGORY'S NEW PLAY AT THE ABBEY THEATRE.

Verdict of the soldier of James's army for the battle of the Boyne exclaimed, "We leaders and we'll fight again," might motto of Lady Gregory's new play, "White Cockade," which was produced for the first time at the Abbey Theatre on the first night before a fairly well filled house. Lady Gregory has not spared James in her play. Her object, indeed, seems to have been to show how useless a man was fighting for one so worthless as James II. is depicted as a miserable man, full of effeminacy and cowardice, a more soliloquy about his conversion to his assassination. The play is in the form of a comedy. It is unconventional in its respects. There is no romantic love such as is usually found in historical plays and it is not a drama in which, as is usual in such works, there is a story for its kernel the historical event, and Handfield are the central figures, for the purposes of efficient contrast are in association all through. The contrast is effective. The trust placed in James by the Irish people of all classes, the willingness of the aristocrat and the peasant to place in him, are pictured with skill. With object in view, the characters of Lady Gregory, the aristocratic belle in the play, and the peasant woman, Mary Kelly, her husband, and son, are selected, character of the old lady is strikingly alive. The great dignity of the aristocrat lady who has lost her status, her even-tempered, hope expressed in stirring and



MAUREN SULPHUR AS GORMERITH IN "KINCORA," BY LADY GREGORY.

First Produced at the Abbey Theatre, March, 1904.

NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

Photo: Chamberlain.

King Brian, very much as we have seen them used them to have come about. The present work is rather the spirit of history than the

this on the second day in London, when Mr. Bernard

Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

THE WHITE COCKADE begins
at 8.15

on Saturday Evening, 9th December,
1905, and at same hour each Even-
ing during following week.

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THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN
HERE

ABBAY THEATRE.

The National Theatre Society, Ltd.,
will present "THE WHITE
COCKADE," a new comedy
by Lady Gregory, on Saturday, 9th
December, Monday, 11th Decem-
ber, and every evening up to Satur-
day, 16th December, at 8.15

STALLS, 1/-; BALCONY, 6/-; PIT, 4/-

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MAIRIE NIC SIURHLAIGH.



have sent the remainder any to any more and go in a world of dreamy to me, which seems to have come straight out of the old Jacobite songs and stories of the cottage scene. The old song, "The White Cockade," and "The White Cockade" drift into the story from time to time, with the importance of actual characters in the tale. The whole thing is described as very unlike other plays, and is meant to put the tragedy of a generation into the comedy of an hour.

The company has just returned from a very successful tour in England. They played in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and drew very large houses. At Oxford, the Corn Exchange, where the performances took place, was crowded morning and evening, and at Cambridge members were turned away, being unable to gain admittance. The players were entertained by the professors at each town, and at Oxford a supper was given to them, as at one of the college halls. Lady Gregory's "Spreading the News" was so well liked at the afternoon performance at Oxford that it had to be repeated in the evening, at the end of a very long bill. In London the selection of dates turned out unfortunate, for the Society's performances coincided with those of the Stage Society and of Mr. Bernard Shaw's new play. Nevertheless, the audiences were larger than during either of the previous London visits of the Society. The National Theatre Society is about to tour the small country towns of Ireland. This has always been its ambition, and the success of its English tour has given it the necessary capital. The present plays of these Irish players will be a surprise to audiences who are accustomed to the conventional villain and hero of the Island and thunder melodrama, which is the only form of drama that ever comes to them in the natural course of things. The Society has been invited also to visit Leeds and Manchester, and will probably also Liverpool, where there is a large Irish population.

Freeman Rev II

"THE WHITE COCKADE."

LADY GREGORY'S NEW PLAY AT THE ABBEY THEATRE.

The verdict of the soldier of James's army who after the battle of the Boyne exclaimed, "Change leaders and we'll fight again," might be the motto of Lady Gregory's new play, "The White Cockade," which was produced for the first time at the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night before a fairly well filled house. Lady Gregory has not spared James in the least. Her object, indeed, seems to have been to show how such a lack it was fighting for and so worthless. James II. is depicted as a miserable poltroon, full of effrontery and cowardice, who is more solicitous about his cosmetics than his ammunition. The play is in the nature of a comedy. It is unconvincing in many respects. There is too much romantic love affair and it is really based in historical plays, and it is not a drama in which, as is the vogue in such works, there is anything for us to learn the historical event. James and Sarahfeld are the central figures, and for the purposes of effect contrast are kept in association all through. The contrast is so effective. The first placed in James by the Irish people of all classes, the willingness of the aristocrat and the peasant to place faith in him, are pictured with skill. With this object in view, the characters of Lady Deven, the aristocratic belle, in the Stuart, and the peasant woman, Mary Kelleher, are contrasted and so selected. The character of the old lady is strikingly pathetic. The great dignity of the aristocrat lady who has lost her position and her power, expressed in stirring and poetic pathos, are insignificant features of the play, which raise it to a high level in the dramatic art.

The opening scene is a kitchen in the house of Mary Kelleher at Dromore. Mary is an unfortunate peasant who is bent on making pork for shipment in the morning, and is living in the harbour. At the first her son, Owen, a dreamy, lazy youth, who is amusing himself playing the game of Jackstones. There is some good dialogue between them which brings out the character of the peasant woman very well. She is busy with the pork, but her tongue is as active as her hands. Mary has a strong leaning for old saws. She talks in proverbial, and with that proverbial original sloquence which all men strive home and become answer impossible. Poor old Lady Deven enters, and is welcomed. She is big and stout and worn, and shows all the tragedy of a life of sorrow. Her curly locks, which are in a lady dignity, she now wears with her sorrows. But in spite of her looks in James, who will restore her status. The aristocratic Owen, for his lineage there is a very genuine touch of nature in his defence by the mother who had just been sending him home. Later on Mary Kelleher comes along, talking and gay. There are French colors also on the scene, for James is engaged in a cup of wine. There is a rumor that James has won the battle of the Boyne, at which there is joy and delight. At Lady Deven's request, Owen goes to search news of the King, adopting the white cockade for his journey. In the next scene we find James, accompanied by Sarahfeld and Ger. They are discussing plans. Sarahfeld is full of vigor, and is eager to wipe out the memory of the Boyne by another rally. James admires his curly locks in the mirror, and speaks of nothing but his personal safety. Other persons are introduced, and the powers of the powers. Owen comes on the scene, and from him it is ascertained that there is safety in the sell offered by his mother, and that there is a French ship in the harbor. James, who has named Sarahfeld to prepare for the fight again, but he now resolves to escape in the French vessel. Later James and Sarahfeld are found in the inn and are surprised by the Williamite soldiers. James trembles at the knees and points out Sarahfeld as the King. Sarahfeld adopts the role, and so impresses the soldiers that they adopt the white cockade. In a scene further on James is found in the dignified position of concealment in a burial, and the peasants who now discover that he and not Sarahfeld is King renounce him with contempt. James escapes to France, and leaves Sarahfeld to mourn his loss but to sorrow for the betrayal. The poor old lady who is denuded with sorrow, comes alone across at court, and does not cry in James's consolation, believing him to be dead. Her belief in the Stuarts was unshaking. Such is the theme of the play.

As in the last, it will be shown. Foremost in it stands Miss Mrs. St. John, who took the part of the old Lady. There was a ring of pathos in her voice, and the tragedy of the part with such grace and dignity. Mr. Arthur was James, a fine actor, the King. It is a difficult role to fill, but it was fully done, expressing to the central pictures, expressing fear, and the end of the play, the last of some, were admirable. Miss Sarah Algood, as Mary Kelleher, gave a happy rendering of the part. Mr. N. G. Joy was Owen, and Miss Kelleher, and Owen Kelleher was Owen, as played by Mr. P. MacDonagh. The other parts were very creditably performed by the following cast—Mr. J. H. Byrne, French soldier, Williamite; Walter S. Magee, Edward Kelleher; Mr. J. Williams, Mr. A. Power; and Mr. Williams, U. Wright, Williamite Captain. Mr. M. Butler. At the fall of the curtain in the last act the author, the author, and Lady Gregory bowed her acknowledgments.

The plot is published by Messrs. Munnell and Co. Dublin. The National Theatre Society, which has lately been reorganized with fresh capital, is about to start touring in the small towns of Ireland. The monthly performance in Dublin will be given as usual.

The plot is published by Messrs. Munnell and Co. Dublin.

The Abbey Theatre will again open its doors in a week, or two, when a new comedy, "The White Cockade," by Lady Gregory, will be produced. We give a photo of one of the cleverest of the Abbey artistes as Gormleith, in another of Lady Gregory's plays, "Kinacora."

Irish Times Dec 8

IRISH PLAYS.

"THE WHITE COCKADE."

The National Theatre Society produced on Saturday evening at the Abbey Theatre, at 8.15, its first comparatively modern costume play. The play, "The White Cockade," by Lady Gregory, and is historical, though not in the same way as her "Kinacora," the most successful play produced by the theatre hitherto, was historical. "Kinacora" gave one of the great events of history, the Battle of Junaco, the dispute between Mahesh and King Brian, very much as we have supposed them to have been about. The present work is rather the spirit of history than history itself. King James and Sarahfeld are among the characters, but they take part in comedy that is not in any book. These who



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Theatre Society, Ltd.,
Abbey Theatre.

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MARKS BROS.,

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13 South Anne Street, Dublin. . .*

ESTIMATES FREE.

Saturday, 9th December, 1905, Monday, 11th December, and every evening up to and including Saturday, 16th December, at 8.15.

THE WHITE COCKADE, A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS, BY LADY GREGORY.

"I saw a vision in my sleep last night."—JACOBITE BALLAD.

PATRICK SARSFIELD, Earl of Lucan	F. J. Fay
KING JAMES II.	Arthur Sinclair
CARTER, Secretary to King James	J. H. Dunne
A POOR LADY	Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh
MATT KELLEHER, an Inn-keeper at Duncannon	W. G. Fay
MARY KELLEHER, his wife	Sara Allgood
OWEN KELLEHER, his son	P. MacSiubhlaigh
FRENCH SAILORS	Walter S. Magee and Edward Keegan
1st WILLIAMITE	A. Power
2nd WILLIAMITE	U. Wright
WILLIAMITE CAPTAIN	M. Butler

ACT 1. AN INN KITCHEN AT DUNCANNON.

ACT 2. SCENE 1—A WOOD.

SCENE 2—SAME AS ACT 1 (NEAR MIDNIGHT).

ACT 3. THE PIER AT DUNCANNON BY MOONLIGHT.

THE ACTION OF THE PLAY TAKES PLACE BETWEEN MID-DAY AND SUNRISE.

MAUNSEL & CO'S LIST.

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Ev. Telegraph. Bulb

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY,

THE WHITE COCKADE.

The acting of Lady Gregory's "White Cockade" now being given at the Abbey Theatre by the National Theatre Society, is kept at a very high level. This week's "Weekend" in writing of the last evening's scenes of the Society in London, says:—"Mr. W. G. Fay is a born tragic-comedian. His foot in 'The Bull's Head' was a marvel of Shakespearean fancy. His action in the 'Shining Panel,' and his head work in 'The Wall of the Saints' were admirable. . . . The Society in playing the poems dramas of peasant life are most simple and naturalistic in speech and gesture. In the verse plays they are very apt in art to avoid their parts, and to avoid anything of which might distract attention from the word and meaning of the verse. The scenery is as simple as possible. As a scenery, bright and imaginative is a criticism more deadly than critics can bring, of the congested over-staged, commercially cooked-up drama that is played nightly in some of our theatres."

Mr. Arthur Dailly gave between the acts last night and on Tuesday an exquisite rendering of Irish folk music on the violin. To night Mrs. Kenny, the soprano, sang first prizes at the Feis, and, like the author of the play, a Galway woman, will give traditional music on the fiddle, the Saturday Mr. Ralph Burmah and Miss Burke become will give selections from Grieg on violin and piano. Mr. Burmah's opera, "The Drovers," which is to be produced next month at the Metropolitan Theatre of New York, is very highly spoken of. It is a new opera written by a dramatist that has been accepted.

Irish Times
Dec 15

"THE WHITE COCKADE."

"The White Cockade," an attractive little comedy by Lady Gregory, has been running at the Abbey Theatre since Saturday evening last with a large audience, and is to be continued during the remaining evenings of the present week. The chief person aimed at in the picture James, as a memorable red-tail, and the thorough-going soldier, the playwright succeeds leaves nothing to be desired. The effect of the picture is very much enhanced by the contrast between the Royal Stuart and Sandfield, as the latter is shown to be a daring and capable soldier, in whose case a word of "refusal" signifies most unbecomingly. The loyalty and love which the Irish nation of all classes have to the runaway King is clearly demonstrated, and it is also made apparent that the "unorthodox" James is alone was the cause of driving certain Irishmen, who would have intrepidly followed the chivalrous monarch, into the ranks of the United States army. The company was good. All round, especially the company was good. Mr. Arthur Sinclair (James), Miss Sarah Shillibagh (Lady Deven), and Miss Sarah Allgood (Mrs. Kellagher) were good. Mr. Arthur Dailly gave between the acts last night and on Tuesday an exquisite rendering of Irish folk music on the violin. To night Mrs. Kenny, the soprano, sang first prizes at the Feis, and, like the author of the play, a Galway woman, will give traditional music on the fiddle, the Saturday Mr. Ralph Burmah and Miss Burke become will give selections from Grieg on violin and piano.

that he now resolves to escape at the first opportunity. Later James and Sandfield are found in the inn and are surprised by the Williams soldiers. James, trembling, tells the story and points out Sandfield as the King. Sandfield adopts the role, and so impresses the soldiers that they adopt the white cockade. In a scene further on James is found in the undignified position of concealment in a barn and the peasants who now discover that he is not Sandfield in King renounce him with contempt. James escapes to France, and leaves Sandfield not to measure his loss but to sorrow for the betrayal. At the close old Lady who is demoralized with sorrow rarely admits scenes at court and does not join in James's condemnation, believing him to be dead. Her belief in the Stuart was undying. Such is the theme of the play.

As to the cast, it was well chosen. Foremost in it stands Miss Marie Nic Shillibagh, who took the part of the old Lady. There was a ring of pathos in her voice, and she treated the part with much grace and dignity. Mr. Arthur Sinclair was allotted the part of James. It is a difficult role to fill, but it was done far better than the cynical postures expressing fear and the undignified attitude in the barbed scene were admirable. Miss Sarah Allgood, as Mrs. Kellagher, gave a happy rendering of the part. Mr. W. G. Fay was a most effective Matt Kellagher, and Owen Kellagher was cleverly handled by Mr. P. MacShibagh. . . . The other parts were very creditably performed by the following cast—Mr. J. H. Dunne; French sailors, Messrs. Walter R. Magee and Edward Keegan; Sir William, Mr. A. Power; and Williams, E. Wright; Williams Captain, Mr. M. Butler. At the fall of the curtain in the last act the audience called for the author and Lady Gregory bowed her acknowledgments.

The play is published by Messrs. Maunsell and Co., Dublin. The National Theatre Society, which has lately been reorganized with fresh capital, is about to start touring the small towns of Ireland. The coming performance in Dublin will be given as usual, but between these performances, the country will be visited. The dullness of a small country town has always been the opportunity of the travelling company. In Mr. W. G. Fay's Dublin, there are many competing interests, but in a small town there is nothing. The Society, which has now a very large repertory of peasant tragedy and comedy, is looking forward to showing the countrymen, for the first time, his own face upon the stage. Some theatrical enthusiasts have lately invented a portable theatre in the country, where in France with plays of local and legendary life. We believe that like the majority of all theatres and some of the travelling troupes in England and Ireland, it is one of the great wastes of capital and the efforts. We suggest to the National Theatre Society that it adopt some similar means to reach small towns and to give them three or four even a continuous to play in. There, in any case, they will escape the competition of the music hall.

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Mail Dec 11

"THE WHITE COCKADE"

NEW PLAY AT THE ABBEY THEATRE

The mythical fascination which the Stuart dynasty exercised over the mind of the romantic Gael has frequently been exploited in song and story. The best elements of both combine in Lady Gregory's new historical comedy, "The White Cockade," as it is appropriately entitled, was presented for the first time at the Abbey Theatre on Saturday evening, and the National Theatre Society very congratulantly themselves on having introduced a piece well suited to the time and circumstances and at the same time certain to hold the interest of the audience. This

story scenery is a pretended foil for the play is essentially dramatic, and has its basis in the Jacobite legends and ballads current amongst the older peasantry in the West. From these are constructed a story into which are added the warlike figures of Sandfield, who is the hero of the piece, and his loaths, kind-hearted cousin, James, the Stuart King, whose cowardice makes him King of the first pointed armament. . . . On the day of the disastrous battle of the Boyne, an old man at Dungannon is visited by a demoralized Jacobite lady, who has sacrificed all for the Stuart cause, and is left with nothing but the worthless seal of a worthless monarch, attacking her loyalty and promising to repay her "one with interest." When the King comes to his own. In her destruction this lady has never once lost faith in the ultimate success of the Stuart cause, and her efforts have reached the country-side that

Stirring Events are on Foot

the persecuted the stranger's son to go in search of news. In a wood near Dungannon the King himself, Sandfield and Carter, the King's secretary, who are discussing their defeat when the boy succurs across them. While Sandfield, eager to retrieve his loss, is engaged in giving instructions to the remnant of his troops, the latter strikes him without disclosing his identity, arranges that the King shall be received at the inn that evening, and then, being to escape to France on board a humber, which lay at Dungannon, he tells the audience is preparing to receive her Royal Guard two Orange troops stroll in, with the King and James and his company are trapped. Sandfield strikes the soldiers, and, by pretending to be the King, and in that capacity gains over by his gallantry and charm, the former the allegiance of his captives. The piece concludes with the disclosure of Sandfield's identity as he is attempting to strangle himself should the French vessel, the dignity of all present with their large, and the satisfaction of that very worldly wise woman, the King's wife, who, whichever way things turn, console herself with the reflection that after all it may be for profit. The action of the play is quick and the incidents exciting. It is satisfactory to be able to add that the acting attained a remarkably high level, and in some respects was almost flawless, while the scenery and costumes were excellent. The pitiless figure of the stricken Royal lady was

A Study in Itself

and Miss Marie Nic Shillibagh showed herself at throughout sympathetically with the role. As Mary Kellagher, the landowner's wife, whose conversation was garnished with sunny wit, whose most extraordinary dose of provincial error was the typical, irresponsible, good-humoured and unconsciously humorous Irish landowner's wife of tradition, and delighted everybody by his free and easy, unaffected style. Owen, the drummer, his son, was featured in the play. P. MacShibagh to interpret him. Mr. P. J. Fay, the landowner's son, was powerful, vigorous rendering of a horse part, and Mr. Arthur Sinclair was worth considering a long way to gaze at, for his resemblance to the portraits of the Stuart King is quite startling, while his changes of expression from terror to relief, and his sense of the loss of dignity while uttering the words "refusal" and "I am a Stuart" were surely have been better. The music parts were played by Messrs. J. H. Dunne, Wright, and Edward Keegan, A. Power, W. G. Fay, and the success of the piece was such that at its conclusion there were several calls of "A Stan." A telling illustration from the artist's point of view is the shirt and all more ardent termination of the first scene in even the darkened stage. In every other respect the piece was wholly delightful, and if it does not lure crowded houses to the Abbey during its week's run it will not, in my opinion, leave any with the support which is desired.

freeman Dec 16

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY.

"THE WHITE COCKADE."

The acting of Lady Gregory's "White Cockade," now being given at the Abbey Theatre by the National Theatre Society, is held at a very high level. This week's "Standard" is writing of the late performance of the Society in London, says:—

"Mr. W. G. Fay is a born tragic-comedian. His part in 'On Bull's Strand,' was a model of Shakespearean irony. His sister in the 'Bridal Veil,' and his blind man in the 'Will of the Waver,' were admirable."

The Society in playing the great scenes of peasant life are most simple and admirable in speech and gesture. In the same play they are careful not to act and over-act parts, and to avoid emphasis of tone which might distract attention from the mood and meaning of the verse. The scenes are as simple as possible. Art is simple, logical, and imaginative is a criterion, more easily than critics can judge, of the successful over-staged, commercially cooked-up drama that is played nightly in some of our theatres."

Mr. Arthur Darley gave between the acts last night and on Thursday an exquisite rendering of Irish folk music on the violin. Tonight Mrs. Kenny, the winner of three first prizes at the Feis, and, like the author of the play, a Galway woman, will give traditional music on the fiddle. On Saturday Mr. Ralph Burnham and Miss Bourke Irvine will give, according to the Gaelic tradition and song, Mr. Burnham's opera, "The Dream," which is to be produced next month at the Metropolitan Theatre of New York, is very highly spoken of, and is the first opera written by an amateur that has been accepted there for performance.

The Abbey Theatre.

National Dec 14

Lady Gregory's new play is not, as an artistic whole, up to the standard of *Kincora*. The *White Cockade* attempts to mingle comedy and history, but curiously enough, the resulting compound has many of the elements of farce. The politeness of King James II. is so exaggerated as to become caricature; a less extravagant portraiture of royal weakness and worthlessness would be more convincing. The best portion of the play is the first act, where the King does not appear on the stage at all. This is pure comedy, in Lady Gregory's best style—slightly marred, in the acting, by a trace of farcical exaggeration at the moment when the two women vigorously pull the passive Owen from one side to the other. The second scene of Act II. contains a stirring passage, where Sarsfield, impersonating the King, overawes the Williamite soldiers and saves the situation by the magic of his personality. The end of this act, however, falls rather flat, and the same may be said of the close of Act III. There is so much that is delightful in this play, and its faults are so largely of a technical and remediable character, that we should recommend its careful revision by the author. As it stands, it is a pleasant comedy, and we should not be surprised if, even without revision, it were to prove one of the most popular pieces in the company's repertory when played before provincial audiences. We have not space to criticise in detail the acting, which, as usual, was of a high class. Miss Marie Ni Siubhlaigh's impersonation of the crazed Lady Doreen stands out, however, as the most impressive individual performance.

Leader Dec 23

Irish Times 13

"THE WHITE COCKADE."

Mr. Arthur Darley, also well-known violinist, will play Irish folk music between the acts. "The White Cockade," at the Abbey Theatre this evening and on Thursday; Mrs. Kenny, prize-winner at the Feis, on Friday, Wednesday and Friday evening, and Miss Bourke Irvine and Mr. Ralph Burnham on Saturday.

Ev Herald Dec 12

THE WHITE COCKADE

Last night Lady Gregory's new comedy was again produced in the presence of a large audience at the Abbey Theatre with fine success. As on Saturday night, the play was given admirably by the excellent company of the National Theatre Society. The piece will be repeated each night during the week.

Mr. Arthur Darley, the well-known violinist, will play Irish folk music between acts in "The White Cockade" this evening and on Thursday. Mrs. Kenny, prize-winner at the Feis, on Friday, Wednesday and Friday evening, and Miss Bourke Irvine and Mr. Ralph Burnham on Saturday.

A PLAY AND A SOLITUDE.

DO they do it all for their own amusement!—is the question you ask yourself as you walk away from the Abbey Theatre. "The White Cockade," by Lady Gregory, is one of the good things of the National Theatre Society. Unlike some of the compositions they produce—or rather used to produce—it is a play, not a poem or a treatise. Its plot, its dialogue, and its incidents are all excellent, and all the more worthy of praise because an historical play is an extremely difficult thing to write, and even Shakespeare was least successful in that province. Compared with such a drama as the "Breed of the Treshams," for example, which all Dublin was flocking to see some weeks ago, "The White Cockade" was immeasurably superior, for it dealt in realities, and not in stage conventions. Nor was the acting deficient; there was, perhaps, no one actor with the technical skill of Harvey, and a few of the minor characters suffered from amateurish tricks, but the five principals were quite up to a high professional standard. One thing only was lacking—an audience, and that was lacking with a vengeance the night I was there. The most striking thing about the National Theatre plays is the number of people who do not go to them. Seemingly like characters of fable, its members have been taken at their word. They have gone about saying they do not want the public, that they do not wish to make their plays a commercial success, but they desire "fit audience tho' few," and the like. They have also closed their doors in the face of sixpenny patrons. Six pennies will admit you to the Gaiety or the Royal, to the Opera or to Eposito, but the uncommercial theatre must have its shilling's worth of cash. The public has unhappily believed these pretensions, and feeling that it were indelicate to force their company on

a household so exclusive, they have left the players to perform in that Arctic solitude which they profess to love. The result is decreased box-office receipts, and is—rather ought to be—greatly increased cost of heating. Now it is really a pity to see such an excellent performance wasted, and by its unpopularity it defeats its own express object. For the best fruit of a high-class play is that it should be talked about, thought about, and looked forward to. In a properly regulated community the theatre should be a focus of intellectuality, a living criticism of life. To a certain extent the "commercial" theatre fulfils that function, and a play acted by Harvey or Robertson creates for some little time an eddy of shallow reflections in the undeveloped minds of our Britonized middle class. For at and after such an entertainment they sip the philosophy of life with a teaspoon. The function of an Irish theatre should be a noble one. But if the Abbey Theatre maintains its aloofness and its unpopularity, it can never hope to become a potent distributor of broader native ideas.

Lady Gregory's play has an admirable unity. The central idea is the contrast between the man, Sarsfield, who is by nature the leader of his people, and the poltroon, James, whom his lineage and their loyalty have unfortunately placed in that position. The moment is that fatal one when the Catholics of Ireland ruined themselves in the Stuart cause, a blow from which they have never recovered. For Ireland is still paying indemnity for the campaign of the Boyne. The treatment of James's character is similar to that adopted by Douglas Hyde in his little comedy, "Rag Seamus," but is worked out with greater delicacy and skill. Tradition represents that monarch as an abject coward,

and the play even surpasses tradition in that respect. Whether he really was such a disgusting creature in reality, I confess I am not a sufficient student of history to know. The idea of making Sarsfield impersonate the King is a moment of danger, and thus have scope to exhibit his native royalty, is peculiarly happy, and Mr. F. J. Fay in that part fully availed of the opportunity.

A beautiful and pathetic figure is the "Poor Lady"—a distraught and ruined wanderer in the Stuart cause, acted with admirable feeling and delicacy by Miss Theobald. The loyal devotion of this poor female Lear, brings before us all that insane religion of Stuart loyalty which ruined our people in those days. What a terrible thing was that devotion of the many to the worthless one! No doubt, the treacherous royal figure-head was at that time in Irish eyes the palladium of their religion, their freedom, and even their nationality. But we may, in truth, be glad that the drab-lined ideas of American democracy has in our day displaced the deceptive glitter of the English constitution. It is impossible to describe here with what subtle art the poor woman figure and the wandering mind of this withered devotee are made to express the fallacy of those principles which, in their result, annihilated our aristocracy, and gave over our commons to bondage and long-continued persecution.

W. G. Fay and Sara Allgood as tipting Matthew Kelleher and Mary, his practical and energetic wife, gave us those admirable character sketches which we always expect from them. Their parts on this occasion seemed to suit them peculiarly well. The two Williamites represented histrionic talent promising, but still untrained. The scenery was very excellent. In truth, the one thing now needed is to procure spectators, to give courage to the vulgar, and withdraw that artistic interdiction which at present scares them away. Once make them believe these are real plays, and real actors performing for the benefit of a real audience,

and they will come quick enough. As in Russia, the best way to inaugurate reform and restore public confidence might be by an extension of franchise. Let in the sixpenny moralist, and the people will begin to take hope, and feel that the day of oligarchy is at an end.

SPECTATOR.

Irish Herald

We are glad to notice that our sister Countywoman Lady Gregory's new comedy, "The White Cockade," was produced at the Abbey Theatre on Saturday night. It is a clever, vivacious little work, simply but effectively staged, and it was acted with considerable skill by the well known company of the National Theatre Society. The audience, which was of moderate proportions, as the conclusion of the piece called enthusiastically for the author, Lady Gregory, who was sitting in the stalls with Mr John E. Redmond, M.P., and Mrs Redmond, rose and smilingly bowed her acknowledgements. The ignominious flight of James II after the Battle of the Boyne, and his escape to France from Uxancon, constitute the material round which the plot is fashioned. Perhaps the most striking scene is that in which Patrick Sarsfield the gallant Irish general, enters to find King James attempting to escape, without his knowledge, on board a French ship, in an empty beer barrel. Mr William Sinclair played the part of the King to a nicety. Mr F. J. Fay gave a Sarsfield that appealed to the imagination—the antithesis of the King; a dashing, noble-hearted soldier and patriot. As "Lady Dereen," Maire Nic Shuibhlaigh displayed remarkable power and dignity, while Miss Sara Allgood made an admirable Mary Kelleher. Mr W. G. Fay, Mr P. Mac Donagh, and Mr J. H. Dunne were also good in their respective parts. The piece was repeated during the week.

Pollack's Gossip Dec 11

LADY GREGORY'S NEW COMEDY.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

DUBLIN, Sunday.—The National Theatre Society, if one may judge by the audience that assembled at the Abbey Theatre last night to hear Lady Gregory's new comedy, "The White Cockade," is still in the position of not being what is called "a great popular success." Dublin goes on gaily preferring music, comedy and melodrama; and the only prominent Irishman I could see at the Abbey Theatre last night was Mr. John Redmond.

"The White Cockade," has two "big" ideas in it. The first is, apparently, to emphasize the barren loyalty of Ireland to the Stuarts; the second—that is where the comedy comes in—to make James II., who ran away from the Boyne, the most ardent, earnest and ridiculous liver ever known in history. The great point of the play, so far as I could make it out, was to emphasize the fact that, in Irish, in their international dealings, have always made fools of themselves. In doing this, however, it seems to me that Lady Gregory has, on the one hand, exaggerated the devotion of Ireland to the Stuarts, and, on the other, the pusillanimity of James II.

Dec 8

IRISH PLAYS.

"THE WHITE COCKADE."

The National Theatre Society produced on Saturday evening at the Abbey Theatre, at 8.15, its first comparatively modern costume play. The play, "The White Cockade," is by Lady Gregory, and is historical, though not in the same way as her "Kilnara," the most successful play produced by the theatre hitherto, was historical. "Kilnara" gave us of the great events of history, the Battle of Clontarf, the dispute between James and King Brian, very much as we may have supposed them to have come about. The present work is rather the spirit of history than history itself. King James and Sarsfield are living characters, but they take part in a comedy that is not in any book. Those who have seen the rehearsal say that they come and go in a world of irony and humor, which seems to have come straight out of the old Jacobin songs and stories of the cottage Irish. The old men, "Lillibulbin" and "The

artistic imagination in the same way as the work. They wanted to kill all opinion on one hand, and blind prejudice and equality on the other. (Applause.) They had two faces—the Unsettled and the Nationalist. He was lived and he lived amongst the Unsettled and he lived amongst the Nationalists—they, hear—and amongst the Unsettled he found a stupid apathy, and amongst the Nationalists he found a prejudice, and between these two he found a struggle. On the one hand the people who would make use of art work at their practical purposes, and the others who wouldn't be interested in art, especially if it concerned their own country. Before the time of the printed book a free taste was diffused amongst the people—the whole of life was artistic, and the result was songs and plays and stories, which were still available for their beauty. Then they had the Border Ballads, now they had the music hall songs (laughter)—and so the printed book had aesthetic value, rather than improved popular taste. They often said they had attained a wonderful democracy, but he was not quite sure they had created a wonderful democracy, because, having found everything upon the printed book, they had put culture into the hands of a small selected class. He was convinced there was not in the British Empire more than fifty thousand people whose taste in music, poetry and painting was a free taste, in the sense that the musician, poet and the artist understood them. He had never found a poet, a musician or a painter who did not mock at him for saying there were so many (laughter). Those who were producing the National Theatre were not with the argument "You are producing plays for very few people," and said Shakespeare produced plays for everybody; but when a Shakespearean audience went home in the past, they sat by the fire and as they did not say "Barbara Allen"; but when a modern audience went home, if any words were sung, they were not like "Barbara Allen." (Laughter.) They had annihilated imaginative democracy; they had not created it. They were trying to re-create the arts as they existed in the old world. The Gaelic League was doing a great deal in this direction by having the Irish songs sung in traditional form, and they of the National Theatre might one day discover and set before an audience the story-teller, who had existed in the past. It seemed a very odd thing to put back the hands of the clock in the way mentioned, but every movement at the beginning went back, and by trying to re-create something odd they really learned to express themselves simply and truly. He was a rather rough and hasty speaker in some ways, and he was always misunderstood, and if people did not ask questions they went away sometimes with the craziest ideas as to what he said. (Laughter and applause.)

Answering Mr C J Dunn as to how he (the lecturer) proposed to bring about the National drama.

Mr Yeats explained how the National Theatre had been started in Dublin, how it had received financial support from an English lady, and how they hoped to be able to send a company out on tour.

Other questions were also put, which the lecturer answered, and the President having declared to him the thanks of the audience, which he acknowledged, the proceedings ended.

Speaking of the visit of the Irish National Theatre Society to London in May, 1903, a critic in the "Times" said—"A little lord of Irishmen and women, strange to London and Londoners, gave some of us, why, for our sins, are constant frequenters of the playhouses, a few moments of calm delight, quite outside the range of anything which those losses have to offer. It is part of a national movement; it is designed to express the spirit of the race, the 'virtue' of it is in the medium of acted drama. This is an excellent design. The Irish theatre is really of its own kind, and of zone other. The pleasure we experienced was largely a sensation of mind and mood, of rest, and resignation." To-night in the Imperial Hotel, the Cork National Theatre Society will perform two plays called "Sold," and "The Hard Hearted Man." These two plays very aptly represent the two sides of this movement; viz: the artistic and the propagandist. They are both written out of a deep knowledge of the life of the people. "Sold" is an artistic and humorous play, and "The Hard Hearted Man" is purely propagandist. Mr Yeats contends that "the artistic play will influence the life of the country immeasurably more than the play written for a cause."

11. Dec 28

"WHAT IS A NATIONAL THEATRE?"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COOK CONSTRUCTION.
SIR.—I think I read in one of Mr Gregory's essays that when the first witness of Mr Douglas Hyde manipulating a Punch and Judy show in the Irish language, she thought that there was the germ of the Irish National Theatre. Some of the participants in this discussion seem to be concerned in delineating what constitutes a drama, rather than telling us what is a National Theatre, and we have been treated to philosophical digressions into the domain of art as they seem to be hardly relevant to the issue raised. I am not in any way disposed to award an authority on drama or the theatre, and I must avoid a dissertation to fill the theatre critic, but there are to my mind certain obvious considerations that enter into this matter, which can hardly fail to strike even a plain, blunt man like myself, unpossessed of D O C's ability to penetrate the corporal being of Mr W B Yeats, and survey the mind and its contents at that much discussed individual. I trust I will not be accused of laying down the law "if I say that a National Theatre is no more nor less than the portrayal of the moods, humours, passions and life of a people, in so far as they are of a living English National spirit, and the stage, through the medium of the language of the nation concerned. The native language is an all essential part of a national theatre. The works of Shakespeare may reasonably take as the grand standard of English drama, and the English National Theatre, but suppose by some unexpected Irishman progression, it came about that these works were translated into French, and so performed throughout England to the exclusion of the English tongue. They would very soon, in my opinion, cease to bear their English hall-mark, or to be part and parcel of a living English National theatre, and why not the same criterion by which to judge an Irish National theatre? It is the unfortunate predicament of the present generation of Irishmen, however, that, strictly speaking, they are neither English nor Irish, but a kind of hybrid production. We may, perhaps, lay the foundation, "prepare the way, and make straight the path," as you advert later, of an Irish National theatre, but in our inability to direct our selves of our heritage of anglicized traditions and surroundings, we cannot at present

even create one. We are, moreover, faced with the problem that an Irish National theatre, at the present juncture of Irish life and development, is non-existent, and impossible, except in so far as drama in the Irish language has gone; but I think a great deal requires to be accomplished yet in the way of development of drama in Irish before the movement could say to suggest attained anything like the proportions that would entitle it to the proud name of an Irish National theatre. I have put the Irish language as one of the essentials of an Irish theatre, but I think that to give a reality, a permanence and a character to the plays produced, they should deal with situations, personalities, and incidents that would lead themselves to dramatic rendering, that is to say, they should possess a substantial degree of dramatic situation. It is not sufficient to parade the commonplace, however, so accurate a manner on the stage. I think it is quite compatible with natural action and simplicity to rise a degree or so higher than that. This idea comes to me after a perusal of the play "The Land" recently produced and greatly applauded. I have never seen the play staged, and possibly a different impression might be formed from seeing than from reading it. I confess to a feeling of disappointment in the play, in view of so much having been said in its favour. That it is a section of natural and untrained picture of Irish life I readily admit, and as such, I think it perhaps one of the best pictures of Irish life that Anglo-Irish literature has to its credit for a considerable time, but that is not, I think, the entire work of the dramatist. It belongs more to the work of the artist and novelist. At any rate, though it be part of the functions of a dramatist, it is not all. I have no mischievous laughing after "thrills," but the great desideratum in drama is, I think, action. D C says that the work of the Irish dramatist is to give us "reality alive." It should also be to give us "reality in action." However, I hardly think, as D C seems to do, that "reality" is the only element in Irish life that deserves the attention of our dramatists. The present dramatic movement in Ireland seems to me more or less an experimental one and so our experiments develop we are gradually becoming more conversant with the aim and the end of the work in hand. The efforts of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and the Cork National Theatre are of very necessity only transient, all our big failures to the contrary, notwithstanding. I don't say this in any depreciative spirit, on the contrary, I take a born and nurtured interest in the work of the Irish theatre, but I believe that what they are doing, the only thing that they really can do, to include the solvent of a national theatre in Ireland, is to create in themselves, and to create sympathy to the dramatist in the Irish language. I don't share the impression that the present dramatic movement is due to the Gaelic Ireland. I think that the temperament of the country would hardly crumple it now that a literary movement has been started in Ireland.

Regarding Mr Synge, I would say if he saw nothing but dramatists, he would have to seek the Irish public, and I will soon have to seek another market in which to hawk his wares. Yours etc,
MAGGIELLA RHOE.

The National Theatre Society, Dublin.

THIS was formed to continue, if possible, on a more permanent basis, the work begun by the Irish Literary Theatre, and it has grown out of the movement which the Literary Theatre inaugurated. Its objects are to endeavor to create an Irish National Theatre by producing plays written by Irish writers or on Irish subjects, or such dramatic works of foreign authors as would tend to educate and interest the public in the higher and more vital forms of dramatic art.

The Irish Literary Theatre, founded by Mr. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Mr. Edward Marlyn, and Mr. George Moore, which gave its opening performance on May 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th and 13th, 1899, closed its career in October, 1901. It produced a number of excellent plays, and its only real defects were that its operations were conducted on too expensive a scale, and that its plays were acted by English professional actors, who, however excellent, were impossible in Irish plays. But there is no doubt that Mr. Yeats was perfectly justified in saying that the Irish Literary Theatre had "started a dramatic movement which will not die," and that it had "turned a great deal of Irish imagination towards the stage."

The National Theatre Society came into existence in this way. Mr. W. G. Fay, its founder and stage-manager, who was for some years on the professional stage, had, previous to entering the profession, acted as an amateur in Dublin, and formed an amateur dramatic society. This Society, known as the Ormonde Dramatic Society, confined itself to farce, playing such pieces as "The Secret," "Advice Gratis," "The Limerick Boy," "Who Speaks First?" "My Wife's Dentist," "Borrowed Plumes," "Hamboozling," etc., and during Mr. Fay's career as a professional actor, was carried on by his brother. About 1898 the Ormonde Dramatic Society ceased, but its members continued to act together, as "W. G. Fay's Comedy Combination," in the Dublin temperance halls and at concerts, its repertoire being still confined to farce, and Mr. Fay playing with it in such parts as Terry O'Rourke ("The Irish Tutor"), Felix O'Callaghan ("His Last Legs"), Paddy Miles ("The Limerick Boy"), Pat ("That Rascal Pat"), Thomas ("The Secret"), Jacob Earwig, David ("My Wife's Dentist").

In April, 1901, one of the national societies here, with whom his brother was connected, asked Mr. Fay to stage some tableaux of Irish history. These being a complete novelty, were so successful that this society determined to stage some Irish plays, and two pieces by Miss Alice Milligan were handed to Mr. Fay for production. The principal parts in these plays were acted by the chief members of Mr. Fay's company, mentioned above, the smaller parts being sustained by members of the society which gave the entertainment. These plays were produced at the Antient Concert Rooms. Mr. Yeats and the poet-painter, Mr. George Russell (known to lovers of poetry as A. E.), witnessed the performances, and Mr. Yeats told Mr. Fay that he very much liked what he called the "grave" acting of the company in one of these plays.

The result of these performances of Irish plays by a company of Irish amateur actors, under Mr. Fay's direction, was that Mr. Russell read to him and he accepted the latter's play, "Deirdre," and Mr. Yeats entrusted him with his little one-act play, "Kathleen ni Houlihan," for production. Rehearsals began in the hall of the Dublin Coffee Palace. Mr. Russell was frequently present at the rehearsals, and was most encouraging and kind to the actors, who were breaking entirely new ground. He designed the dresses and painted the scenery in conjunction with Mr. Fay for "Deirdre," and the Nationalist society already referred to, provided such

money as was necessary, the wigs being found by a member of the company, and all giving their services free.

On April 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1902, Mr. Fay's Irish National Dramatic Company produced "Deirdre" and "Kathleen ni Houlihan" at St. Teresa's Total Abstinence Hall, Clarendon Street, Dublin, where he and his company had often played, and where he had produced such pieces as "Robert Emmet," and "The Colleen Bawn," the dramatic society attached to the Association. The performances of "Deirdre" and "Kathleen ni Houlihan" aroused considerable interest, long notices appeared in the Press, and the Hall was crowded in excess at each performance. Later on, in the same year, Mr.

Fay and his company produced, for what is known as the Samhain Festival, as well as "Deirdre" and "Kathleen ni Houlihan," the following plays, "The Racing Lug," "The Sleep of the King," by Seumas O'Connell; "The Laying of the Foundations," a comedy in two acts, by Fred Ryan; "A Pot of Broth," by W. B. Yeats; and farces in Gaelic. Shortly after these performances, the National Theatre Society consisting chiefly of the actors of the Irish National Dramatic Company, was formed, with Mr. Yeats as President.

Its objects have been already stated. On 14th March, 1903, the National Theatre Society produced at the Molesworth Hall, Dublin, Mr. Yeats' morality, "The Hour Glass,"

and Lady Gregory's play, "Twenty-five," both one-act pieces. On May 2nd, 1903, the Society visited London, playing at the Queen's Gate Hall, Kensington. The plays acted there were "The Hour Glass," "Twenty-five," "Kathleen ni Houlihan," and "The Laying of the Foundations." Two performances—a matinee and evening performance—were given, and the London Press wrote very enthusiastically

about the plays and players. On 8th, 9th, 10th, and 17th October, 1903, the Society staged also at the Molesworth Hall Mr. Yeats' verse-play, "The King's Threshold," on the decorative method so long advocated by him (already used in staging "The Hour Glass"), and with it Mr. J. M. Synge's little comedy, "In the Shadow of the Glen," which by the way is to be played at the Bohemian National Theatre in January next. Along with these was revived, "Kathleen ni Houlihan." On December 3rd, 4th, and 5th, 1903, at the same hall, "The Hour Glass" and "A Pot of Broth" were revived, and with them was played for the first time a three-act play of peasant life, "Broken Soil," by Mr. P. Colm. On 14th, 15th, 16th January, 1904, Mr. Yeats' dramatic poem, "The Shadowy

Waters," was staged also at the Molesworth Hall on the decorative method, along with a one-act folk play, by Seumas MacManus, entitled "The Townland of Tanney." On 25th, 26th, and 27th February, 1904, "Deirdre" was revived and a one-act peasant play, "Riders to the Sea," by Mr. J. M. Synge, was acted, at the Molesworth Hall. The Society next paid its second visit to London on 26th March, 1904, playing at the Royalty, Mr. Yeats' "The King's Threshold," and Mr. Synge's "Riders to the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen," at the matinee; and "The King's Threshold," "Broken

Soil," and "A Pot of Broth," at the evening performance. On 26th April the Society gave a private performance at the Molesworth Hall of "The King's Threshold" and "The Shadowy Waters," so that Mr. Stephen Gwynn, who did so much to make the Society's performances in London a success, but who was too ill to be present at the Royalty, might see these plays.

It is time now that one should say how much the Society is indebted to Miss Horniman, who not only helped to work up the London performances but designed and presented to it the beautiful dresses of her own design used in "The King's Threshold" and those of "The Shadowy Waters," and has now given the Society the use, free of charge, of the completely equipped Abbey Theatre, Dublin, which during the summer and early winter she had built on the site of the old theatre belonging to the Mechanics' Institute.

On December 27th, 1904, the National Theatre Society opened the Abbey Theatre, acting Mr. Yeats' play in verse, "On Baile's Strand"; a new comedy by Lady Gregory, entitled "Spreading the News"; and "Kathleen ni Houlihan," to a crowded house, Mr. Synge's comedy, "In the Shadow of the Glen," being played alternately with "Kathleen ni Houlihan" up to 31st January, 1905. From 4th to 11th February, 1905, a new three-act peasant play, "The Well of the Saints," which has been accepted for production by the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin, at an early date, was produced, along with "A Pot of Broth." Lady Gregory's three-act historical play, "Kincora," with dresses and scenery designed by Mr. Robert Gregory, was produced on March 25th, and ran to April 1st. On April 15th the Society gave a performance for the proposed Dublin Gallery of Modern Art, the bill consisting of "The Hour Glass," "Spreading the News," and "A Pot of Broth." From 24th to 26th April "Kincora," "The King's Threshold," and a new three-act comedy, by William Boyle, entitled "The Building Fund," were produced. "The Hour Glass," and a new three-act

peasant play, "The Land," by Mr. Colm, were played from 9th to 16th June, and from October 2nd to 7th "The Building Fund" and "The Land" were revived and played each evening.

The Society visited Oxford on 23rd November, producing at a matinee, "On Baile's Strand," "In the Shadow of the Glen," and "Spreading the News," and in the evening "The Well of the Saints," and "Kathleen ni Houlihan," at the Corn Exchange there. The Society proceeded to Cambridge, where, on 24th and 25th November, it gave two performances of the same pieces. Afterwards it paid its third visit to London, on 27th and 28th November, playing these pieces, as well as "The Land" and "The Building Fund," at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, matinee and evening performance each day. The Society then returned to Dublin where it will produce Lady Gregory's new three-act comedy, "The White Cockade," now in rehearsal. Later on, a new farce which she has written and her translation of "Le Medecin Malgre Lui" of Moliere will be acted. The Society has also in hand new plays by Mr. Synge, Mr. Colm, and Mr. Boyle. During Lent of next year the Society will probably visit Manchester, Leeds, and possibly Birmingham.

An interesting account of the Society's work appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* of December, 1902, in an article by Mr. Stephen Gwynn, entitled "An Uncommercial Theatre," and in the *New Liberal Review*, of April, 1904, there appeared an interesting article by Mr. J. Campbell, M.P., on "The Rise of the Drama in Ireland." Mr. Walsley, as well as writing about the work of the National Theatre Society in the *Times*, wrote about its work in *Le Temps* of 25th July, 1904; M. Filon has recently written about it in the *Debat*, and Mr. Yeats, as well as writing a little journal called *Beltaine* for the first two years of the Irish Literary Theatre,

and *Sawhain* for the closing year, has continued to write each year in *Sawhain* about the dramatic movement in this country. An extract from an article which he wrote for the *Dome*, reprinted in the first number of *Beltaine*, will give readers of THE ACTOR ILLUSTRATED an idea of the National Theatre Society's aims in acting and staging.

"When the first day of the drama had passed by," says Mr. Yeats, "actors found that an always larger number of people were more easily moved through the eyes than through the ears. The emotion that comes with the music of words is exhausting, like all intellectual emotions, and few people like exhausting emotions; and therefore actors began to speak as if they were reading something out of the newspapers. They forgot the noble art of oratory, and gave all their thoughts to the poor art of acting, that is content with the sympathy of our nerves; until at last those who love poetry found it better to read alone in their rooms what they had once delighted to hear sitting friend by friend, lover by beloved."

I once asked Mr. William Morris if he had thought of writing a play, and he answered that he had, but would not write one, because actors did not know how to speak poetry with the half-chant men spoke it with in old times; verse spoken without a musical emphasis seems but an artificial and cumbersome way of saying what might be said naturally and simply in prose. Even if poetry were spoken as poetry, it would still seem out of place in many of its highest moments upon a stage, where the superficial appearances of nature are so closely copied; for poetry is founded upon convention and becomes incredible the moment painting or gesture remind us that people do not speak verse when they meet upon the highway.

The theatre of Art, when it comes to exist, must therefore discover grave and decorative gestures, such as delighted Rossetti and Madox Brown, and grave decorative scenery, that will be forgotten the moment an actor has said "It is

dawn," or "It is raining," or "The wind is shaking the trees"; and dresses of so little irrelevant magnificence that the mortal actors and actresses may change without much labour into the immortal people of romance. The theatre began in ritual, and it cannot come to its greatness again without recalling words to their ancient sovereignty. That the method of delivering verse on the stage was, in Shakespeare's time, something like that advocated by Mr. Yeats, seems likely, from the description of Betterton's elocution, who was trained by Hart, the son of Shakespeare's sister, given by Colley Cibber in his Apology, and from the description given by Victor of Colley's own declamation, which may safely be presumed to have been modelled on that of Betterton, his idol, and the long-continued practice of the French stage.

Mr. Yeats' views, however, relate principally to plays in verse or in rhythmical prose, like his "Hour Glass," but the Society's actors, even in the peasant plays like Mr. Synge's, which embody in a musical rhythm the actual speech of the Irish peasantry, endeavour, in their diction, to make that rhythm felt by the audience. Mr. Fay, in his stage management, aims at cultivating repose, at concentrating the attention of the audience on what is being said, and the suppression of much of that distracting dumb-show by people who are not speaking, and restless crossing and re-crossing the stage, so much in evidence of late years.

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