

Miss Cushman

THE NATIONAL SPIRIT IN THE NEW YORK WORLD

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A BRIEF REVIEW OF IRISH LITERARY HISTORY.

That the national mind of Ireland turns spontaneously to literary effort may readily be shown by a rapid survey of the literature of Ireland during the ages that succeeded the centuries in which Ireland was an acknowledged power in the literary world: it will then be seen that the recent Irish Literary Renaissance - of which the Irish drama is part - is the natural outlet of the national and patriotic spirit that always existed among the Irish people though it was often checked and occasionally silenced by external forces over which the nation had no control.

Ireland's importance in the literary world from the fourth to the ninth century is universally acknowledged and needs no comment here. It is worthy of note that throughout the entire period of the merciless Norse attacks (A.D. 791-1014), literary effort was not interrupted; books still preserved, among them the Book of Cashel and the Martyrology of Angus amply testify to the fruitfulness of this age of strife and bloodshed. The period of the contest of the provincial kings for supremacy (a contest that lasted from the expulsion of the Norsemen at the Battle of Clontarf 1014 to the coming of the Normans 1168) was - in spite of representations to the contrary - a period marked by great activity in the domain of literature and art. A sense of nationality and a growing desire for political unity is seen throughout the works of this period, among which may be mentioned the Book of the Dun Cow and the Book of Leinster.

The Norman invasion 1169-72 "thoroughly arrested Irish development and disintegrated Irish life" says Dr.

Douglas Hyde, and this is not to be wondered at for the Norman feudal system was directly opposed to the Gaelic clan system and the attempts to settle disputes by feudal law threatened the destruction of the social and political system of the Irish people. Yet even then, respect for scholars and learning was not extinguished but - except for the work of some few scholars such as Danough More O'Daly and Mac Nee - initiative and creative power no longer flourished. But the Normans were not long destined to remain a separate entity among the Irish nation for, like most Celtic races the Irish have the power of absorbing scattered foreign elements into themselves unless these foreign elements are helped by influences from without to resist those at work from within. Gaelicisation of the Normans was quickly effected for the vigorous national life of Ireland was not opposed by an equally strong resistance from the Normans' English home.

The thoroughness with which this Gaelicisation was effected aroused the fears of the English Government. To combat this tendency, Lionel, Duke of Clarence on his third visit to Ireland in 1367 summoned a Parliament in Kilkenny and passed the decree known as the "Statute of Kilkenny". This statute decreed among other things that any of the King's subjects "who used the Irish language, assumed an Irish name, adopted Irish apparel, practised Irish customs was to forfeit his property". The Statute was inimical to the production of Gaelic literature for the Norman settlers had by this time become so identified with the original Gaelic stock that the statute would, if strictly enforced, effect the suppression of national literature. We find indeed that the decay of literature which followed upon the advent of the Normans continued, and during the two

centuries that followed there was no trace of original literature, though learned books - mere compilations - were produced. The Statute of Kilkenny was beginning to have effect: but learning was still held in esteem and history assures us that hereditary bards and historians still held their rights and privileges. But Ireland was thrown back upon herself and upon her past, and this at a time when it was of vital importance to her literary status that she should participate in the world activities that followed the Renaissance. "At the time," say the authors of a 'Short History of the Irish people' "that the new nations were developing popular literature, the Gaelic voice was suppressed. While England, France, Spain and Italy were creating their national languages and the Renaissance was spreading over Europe, the cultured mind of Ireland was forcibly turned back upon the past. The old intimacy with the Continent was broken in upon and destroyed. The modern nations of Europe were only then being formed, and with them was being created their national literature. But in Ireland with its long and glorious tradition of culture and learning, national progress and literary expansion were alike being thwarted by a foreign element which lacked strength and spirit to provide a substitute".

The war on learning that took place in the 16th and 17th Centuries precluded Irishmen from the possibility of producing works that could take their place in the new intellectual world that the Renaissance had opened out for the other nations of Europe. Those who remained in Ireland at this time, Mrs. A.S. Green tells us, were "deprived of all the aid that knowledge, association in learning or cultivated

leaders could give them" Yet this period, that saw the bards and teachers of the nation attacked, witnessed also the production of the "Annals of the Four Masters" and the first History of Ireland written in narrative form - the work of Keating. But Gaelic was a proscribed tongue and such opportunities as the people felt free to use were not forthcoming for the acquiring of the English language that alone could unlock the treasures of European culture. Yet even during the years when the Penal Laws were in force (1697-1746) the literary instinct of the people which lasted through centuries of oppression burst forth in song. "The Irish" says Dr. Douglas Hyde, "deprived by the penal laws of all possibility of bettering their condition, or of educating themselves, could do nothing but sing, which they did in every county of Ireland, with all the sweetness of the *Glynne swan*". These songs are distinctly national in theme and spirit but being denied the privileges of the printing press they lacked the publicity necessary for literary fame. We may in truth say that the decline in Irish literature that marked the advent of the Normans continued till the Irish literary revival; occasionally however outbursts of literature marked the continuance of the national and patriotic spirit, until with the Famine 1846-7 it is heard no more.

During the centuries that intervened between the banning of the Gaelic tongue, 1367, till its disuse by the people as a nation, Ireland had been slowly and painfully learning the language forced on them by law. It was only after an interval of nearly five centuries that the Irish nation got that command of the foreign tongue that enabled them to use it with the precision and force necessary for the production of work that is worthy of the name of literature. No literary work will stand the test of time however weighty.

the thought or intense the passion, if these things are not allied to the religious phrase: such work is impossible to the writer whose command over the medium of expression is not that of a master over the strings of his harp, whether moved by the poignant touch of sorrow, the keen thrill of joy, or the "light note of gladness". That power was for the Irishman, as we have shown, the slow toilsome work of centuries and the first use made of the power now acquired was to demand emancipation from religious and political thralldom, to ask for some alleviation of sorrows long endured: this was the cry of the "Nation" poets, and hence it was that their work was inspired by nationalism rather than nationality, although even in those times of acute distress and suffering we see the star of nationality shine with a splendour that centuries of suffering had not dimmed; indeed in the time of the Parnellite struggle we find Parnell himself exhorting the Irish people to national effort not in terms of hunger and profit "but in terms of tradition and the sacred gift of the ideal: Keep the fires of the nation burning". But political effort on which great hopes were founded were doomed to failure: the hopelessness of effecting Ireland's emancipation by political intrigue was brought home to the thinking minds that had come to manhood in the early eighties, when the Parnell split of 1887 crushed the hopes of the nation. Lovers of Ireland saw that the hopes of her redemption, of her nationality lay along a different path - a path which led from England to Ireland herself. Propagandist literature was for the time being banned, and the Irishmen of the

Righties directed their efforts to the fostering of the love of Ireland and the dissemination of the knowledge of her glorious past. Vituperation was put aside; mainly effort was directed to reveal Ireland in her dignity and beauty to Irishmen. Standish O'Grady in the glowing pages of his History where he united the scholarship of a Ferguson and the poetry of a Mangan - stirred profoundly the minds of the people. He revealed to them a past in which as a nation Ireland directed her own destiny untrammelled by outside interference. O'Grady's History was a revelation - Irishmen came to a knowledge of their country's heroes and learned of the achievements of Conchobar, of Cuchulainn, of Maere, of Deirdre. To the impulse thus given Yeats and those associated with him readily responded; Irishmen now turned to the study of a land where they saw was worthy of the best their manhood could give; they came to a consciousness of their entity and were proud of that consciousness; a fever of enthusiasm for things national possessed their souls; the Irish language was studied for the watchword "no language no nation" rebuked their indifference and fired the youth to remove that reproach, nerved them to unlock the historical treasures - the "hundred spics" of O'Grady's story - which the Gaelic tongue hoarded; ancient arts were revived, manufactures encouraged, a hundred peaceful industries sprang into being: the work of de-Anglicisation had begun. Speaking of this national movement, this lyric movement that put as it were new blood into the Irishmen of the Righties, an Englishman writing in the "Contemporary Review" says "Ireland is rebuilding her shattered temple, as the ancient Jews rebuilt theirs, after their return from captivity to the sound of music. Simultaneously and side by side with her

reorganisation of agriculture she is reviving her ancient literature, her ancient drama, her ancient games, even her ancient dress and her ancient architecture. It is a lyric movement, a movement of the heart as much as of the brain". The Literary Renaissance fanned this enthusiasm to a steady glow: of this Renaissance, this re-awakening, the Irish drama is a very vital part.

That the instincts of the Gael make him turn readily to dramatic expression - though drama in its modern form is an unknown ~~gala~~ in Ancient Irish Literature (its nearest approach being "gallamh, Oisín agus Padraic") - is evidenced by the presence in the pages of very ancient documents of the "dán díreach". This dramatic-lyric form is almost as old in Ireland as poetry itself: early Irish poems of this kind begin with the simple announcement of the speaker's name and then in vivid, passionate phrases express emotions of anger, sorrow, joy: - so clear and elemental is the language that it is capable of easy translation into any tongue. The primitive instincts of a race survive amongst those who were not subjected to a foreign culture. History records that at the period the Cromwellian settlement 1652-53, the evicted landowners of the West and South were driven to Connacht and the Islands off its coast: and there - where there is no alien strain, long established customs and primitive instincts have been preserved in all their ancient vigour. It is then to the West we must look for the accent and gesture into which Ireland has put her very soul. The "craic" whose origin has been lost in the mists of the past shows that the Irish have always been possessed with an instinct for dramatic expression - a sense of the theatre. Synge in his "Arctic Islands"

describes the crying - the very basis of grief - in these words: "Much old woman as she took her turn in the leading recitative seemed possessed for the moment with a profound ecstasy of grief, swaying to and fro, and bending her forehead to the stone before her while she called out to the dead with a perpetually recurring chant of woe..... these round the graveyard rocked themselves with the same rhythm and intoned the inarticulate chant that is sustained by all as an accompaniment..... This grief of the keen is no personal complaint for the death of one woman over eighty years of age, but seems to contain the whole passionate rage that lurks everywhere in every nature of the island. In this cry of pain the inner consciousness of the people seems to lay itself bare for an instant, and to reveal the world of beings who feel their isolation in the face of a universe that wars on them with winds and seas. They are usually silent but, in the presence of death all outward show of indifference or patience is forgotten, and they shriek with pitiable despair before the horror of a fate to which they are doomed". Later on Synge shows that the scene is still more dramatic when personal grief for the tragic end of a young man is added to the universal sorrow experienced by the Islanders in the presence of death. The women of the young man's household throw themselves on the ground in a paroxysm of woe, and rising bent the coffin, with "magnificent gestures" calling upon the dead. This expression of wild sorrow is no mere external display: the low moan that gradually rises to a wild cry gives "their sorrow words". This agonising grief left the face of the "Keener" tense and white and the body crushed with the intensity of the passion. In the same book Synge tells us of the remarkable power of entering into the spirit of dance music possessed by this primitive people. No

observes "After listening to the first few bars of the 'Red Rover', a tall, lithe dark-complexioned islander stepped from his place near the fire, and with a lightness, freedom and boldness that perfectly accorded with the musical interpretation maintained the character of the piece to the end". The rich glow of Irish oratory, too, is enhanced by the expressive gestures that invariably accompany an outburst of patriotic fervor, while the restrained but telling movements that strike home a chain of clear, logical reasoning are not without their influence on the popular mind. It will not then be denied that to give expression to internal emotion by external gestures and movements is characteristic of the Irish race; in other words, Irish genius tends to dramatic expression. Again, while some nations are slow to grasp dramatic situations - the Romans were such - the Irish are swift and sensitive in the perception of ideal situations; such a power of connecting the ideal with the real has several times been evidenced, in these latter years, by the rapidity with which the symbolism underlying such a play as Martyn's "Maev" made itself evident to the Irish audience: to them Maev O'Haynes athirst for the ideal was but the embodiment of Ireland and her aspirations.

Besides the impetus given to the creation of Irish drama by the opportuneness of a reform of drama, calls among English-speaking peoples towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Irish Literary Revival brought to light prose epics; these according to Aristotle's definition of the Epic were dramatically constructed and had for their subject one entire and perfect action. The actions in these prose Epics were the deeds of the great cycles of Ancient Irish

History: of the cycle of Danann, of Ossian, of Finn, of Conn. Each one of these hold rich possibilities for dramatic production and it was but natural that Irish dramatists should exploit the material ready to their hand in the Ancient Literature of their country. The decline of the English drama, too, suggested to Irishmen the possibility of trying their strength in creative literary drama while at the same time (as we have said) the Gaelic Renaissance came with a new stirring of national consciousness "that gave to the new drama the peculiarly national form it was henceforth to assume." Besides all this, Ireland had by this time attained to "that point of literary consciousness that she could not afford to contribute somewhat of her treasures to enrich the English language" by giving it as Yeats points out a dialect that had the "abundant, resonant, beautiful, laughing, living speech" without which literature is impossible.

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THE ESSENTIALS OF A NATIONAL LITERATURE.

Forces external and internal, then, turned the minds of Irishmen to the production of a literature of their own - a literature for the most part written in the English tongue but (with this single exception) as national as spirit or theme could make it. A National literature imposes certain obligations and must conform to certain ideals and points of view from which a literature not claiming to be national is free.

A National Literature - hence a National Drama - must make its appeal to the distinguishing racial characteristics of the Nation. Every nation may be regarded as possessing a National soul, and it is this national soul working through the medium of the national mind that gives rise to a national literature. Corresponding to every true nationality there is a spiritual tradition, elusive and intangible to the outsider but perfectly palpable to anyone who by birth, education and sympathy belongs to the nation. And Ireland, too, has her spiritual tradition, her national soul. P.H. Keenan has said that the spiritual entity "resides in the language" but it shows itself in all the arts, all the institutions, all the inner life, all the actions and goings forth of a nation. Nationality may then be regarded as the sum of the facts, spiritual and intellectual that mark off one nation from another. The spiritual tradition of Ireland is essentially different from that of England; the wide divergence there is in the language and literature of the two nations and leads one to the conclusion that the spiritual tradition, which is embodied in literatures so different, must needs be different; the customs, arts,

inner life in which this spiritual tradition makes itself felt show that the motive power of these external acts is not the same for both nations. And even now when English is almost universally the medium of expression for the Gaelic mind, that language is modified by an Irish-speaking person so as to give voice to feelings and thoughts which, being essentially Gaelic, cannot find adequate expression in standard English; thus it is that the generality of these writers when Mac Dornagh speaks of as writing in the "Irish mode" make use of an English vocabulary but of a Gaelic idiom. "The new wine is placed in new vessels" Besides the different spiritual tradition that marks off the English from the Irish race, there are intellectual differences that necessitate a literature bearing the impress of this peculiar intellectuality. A fiery imagination characterises the Celtic races - This imagination has many facets and places its impress not only on the intellectual powers but also on the moral qualities. This ardent imagination brings with it the power of placing oneself in situations of which no previous experiences furnish the prototypes; it enables the Celt so to visualise the truths of religion that they become to him a powerful impetus to right action - not the weakly motive force they might be to others with different intellectual endowments. So real are these truths to the Irishman that present benefit is rejected for the spiritual good his imagination so vividly portrays to him. The powerful, constructive imagination of the Irishman is fed from childhood - from babyhood almost - with fairy lore. Those in Ireland who have kept in touch with Gaelic traditions know that to the rustic population these preternatural beings - though beyond the range of touch and sight - are as

real and demand as much considerate respect as the next-door neighbour whose good will must be won and kept. These fairies have a distinguished origin, inhabit 'raths' and are inexorable in wreaking vengeance on foolhardy folk who have the temerity to interfere with 'raths' and 'lone'-trees which are their especial property. These festivals commemorate ancient customs - Samhain, St. Brigid's Day and St. John's Eve; then certain rites must be observed certain warnings attended to if one would pass these days with luck, and at the same time learn from the future what he would know. Witchcraft even in a land so wholeheartedly devoted to religion is not unknown, but the 'witches' confine themselves to such mild ways of exercising their spells as "drawing" off the cream from a neighbour's milk or the butter from his churning. In an atmosphere such as this, the Irish boy and girl grow to manhood and womanhood; to them these preternatural beings of 'rath' and 'lone'-tree have power for good or evil; this power they exercise most commonly in substituting a fairy changeling for a child in the cradle and in spiriting away a newly-wed bride who has allowed them to gain power over her by giving them drink and fire on May-day Eve. This fairy lore so gracious and imaginative belongs in a peculiar way to the Irish people "it adds" says Colman "vividness to their imagination, grace to their literature". Here also it may be remarked that "mysticism is the very growth of the soil of the pessimist, contemplative character of the people so long-enduring and so certain of the right of the good". Of this peculiar Irish intellectuality, this peculiarly Irish

atmosphere National Literature - National Drama - must take cognisance.

"To have a real success" says Lady Gregory "and to come into the life of the country, one must touch real and eternal emotion, and History comes only next to religion in our country". Prior to the Irish literary Renaissance national history survived for the rural classes chiefly in their folk-songs and folk-lore. Chronological accuracy was often sadly wanting, and in different districts, different heroes and different facts of history found favour. The dissemination of historical literature as a result of the Irish Literary Renaissance has done much to dispel the mists of ignorance that too long left the true depositaries of Ireland's glory ignorant of her worth. Folk-lore in connection with the various settlements and plantations and with the rulers of England who have been intimately connected with Ireland - Elizabeth, Cromwell, William III, James II, - is abundant and accurate, especially in the estimation of character in so far as it revealed itself to Irish minds. Nor are the leaders of the various "risings" allowed to lapse into oblivion. Tracks taken by these when fleeing from their pursuers, houses where they were sheltered, details in connection with their last moments - for such popular heroes invariably died for the "cause" - are all matter of common knowledge. It follows then that such knowledge must find a medium of expression in the drama, that the drama must moreover voice the awakened interest of the people in their glorious past. What themes could indeed be more fitted for dramatic exploitation than the great epochs of Irish history, the age of Conquest, of Fionn, of Ossian, the dawn of Christianity, the Gaelic-Roman period - the whole constituting an almost unparalleled poetic lineage as Sigerson in his learned "Bards of the

Gael and Gail" so forcibly present

Into the literature of a people, the life of that people must enter; here again, the traits that distinguish Ireland's national life are peculiarly her own. In this connection it must be remembered that the Irish are essentially an agricultural people, a people to whom the call of the land has been a powerful factor in the moulding of national aspirations. Its literature will then be replete with the breath of the soil. Agrarian troubles have contributed their quota to the history of Ireland during the years of English rule, and now that the ideal of peasant proprietorship has been attained, other and new difficulties confront the student of Ireland; the land for which the older generation struggled and fought no longer maintains its sway over the hearts of the younger generation who have in the years of their childhood and early manhood felt only the poverty, the distress that life on the land entailed.

Besides the problems connected with the land, the anomalous position existing between the portion of Ireland that is, in religion and politics Catholic and Nationalist, and the portion that is Protestant and Unionist (though all equally claim to be Irish) demands unprejudiced exposition if the motives that actuate the adoption of a course of action by either side are to become evident. Again, in a community in which the upper highly-salaried officials have until very recent years belonged to the minority in religious persuasion, were English by birth and education and Unionists in politics, political problems peculiar to such anomalies arise. All this

social and political life of the people - the relation of party to party, of class to class, must find unprejudiced expression in the Drama that claims to be National.

To all these peculiarly national traits of the Irish nation - its spiritual and poetic idealism, its sense of the preternatural, its powerful imagination, to the Nation's awakened interest in her past, to the portrayal of Irish character in its various details and in so far as it has been moulded by domestic and political situations, the Irish Drama must give expression if it is to substantiate its claim to be National. It goes without saying that such national expression - except in the very rarest cases - is not possible except to those Irishmen who have complete knowledge of the essentials of Irish nationality. Irishmen who have by personal observation studied the details of Irish life, and have finally, by complete sympathy formed one spirit with the people in their noblest aspirations. "Our movement" said the editor of Sambian "is to return to the people"..... the play that is to give them a quite natural pleasure should either tell them of their own life, or of that life of poetry, where every man can see his own image, because there alone sees human nature escape from arbitrary conditions".

If then a truly national literature is to be founded, the playwrights must apply themselves to the creation of the life of poetry that will envisage Irish spiritual and intellectual characteristics; there must be the imaginative re-creation of history and legend coupled with

the study of life among the classes whose national characteristics are most marked. If these demands of a National Drama are not satisfied the Irish Drama has not the seeds of immortality.

112. THE NEW DRAMA: PLAYS - IDEALISTIC, HISTORICAL, REALISTIC.

"The intellect of Ireland" said Yeats on one occasion, "is romantic and spiritual rather than scientific and analytical".

To the poetic idealism which is an offshoot of this romantic and spiritual intellect, Yeats's earliest and finest poetic conception "Shadow Waters" gives expression. The longing for an unalterable and highest good makes itself felt in the poet's mind in his boyhood days, but it found voice much later when Yeats gave to the Irish a drama which in his opinion suited this "unspoilt and unsophisticated people".

Forgeal, in quest of his ideal - an unalterable and undying love that has been promised him by the "ever-living", the grey birds of his story - typifies the perseverance of the Celt in the pursuit of his ideal in the face of difficulties, in face of the disapproval of friends, even of the disapproval of his best friend, Aibrie, who urges Forgeal to discontinue the quest for what his more prosaic friend believes to be unobtainable. To put Aibrie's doubts to rest, Forgeal reveals his ideal and describes the impulse which urges him to follow in its quest even to the land of death.

Aibric, Aibric,

We have fallen in the dreams of the ever-living
Breathe on the burnished mirror of the world
And then smooth out with ivory hands and sigh,
And find their laughter sweeter to the taste
For that brief sighing"

.....

Now the secret's out

For it is love that I am seeking for,
But of a beautiful unheard-of kind
That is not in the world"

Faithlessness even on the part of the immortals who
seem to desire to satisfy him with less than he hoped
for does not deter him from his quest: a lowering
of the ideal will not be tolerated by Fergaal who
thus voices his disappointment on beholding Dectera
but a mortal -

"O, no, no, no !

Who brought you to this place

They would not send me one that casts a shadow".

He determines to pursue his quest farther, for Dectera
"who casts a shadow" does not satisfy this idealist -
then the Queen recognises the nobility of the pertinacity
of Fergaal's pursuit, and making her will accord with his
and together with him she abandons all for love - the
immortal unalterable love promised by the "ever-living"
saying -

"The world drifts away,
And I am left alone with my beloved
Who cannot put me from his sight forever"

And as all material things pass away from their vision,
Forgeal addresses Deceira who now is one with him:

"Beloved, having dragged the net about us,
And knitted mesh to mesh we grow immortal;
And the old harp wakens of itself
To cry aloud to the grey birds, and dreams
That have had dreams for father, live in us".

- and so is his ideal attained. The story is founded
on the well-known love story of Maoin and Angus, while
the poet's conception voices that pursuit of the unsullied
ideal which is a marked characteristic of Irish mentality.

The heroine of Yeats's "Countess Cathleen" well
understood St. Peter's teaching on the value of the human
soul which was "not redeemed with corruptible things as
gold and silver", therefore was she willing not only to
"lay down her life for the brethren" but to do what cost
her infinitely more, for to save the souls of the many
who through dire hunger had sold their souls for gold to
two merchants who "did not cast a shadow", she delivered
up her own soul to the demon. The wealth of poetic detail,
the hush of expectation, the calm selflessness of Countess
Cathleen gave the play an ethereal beauty seldom attained
in dramatic art.

The love of God and man that inspired so great a

sacrifice is seen in the words of Cathleen to the weeping
(Gone with a weal just before death claims the Countess
as his own:

"Do not weep
Too great a while, for there is many a candle
On the high Altar though one fall"

For she would comfort them in their grief and would fain
assure herself that the glory given to God by the many
souls who would, through her heroic self-sacrifice, worship
at His throne far outweighed the honour that would accrue
to Him from her presence there. The calm majestic
utterance of the Angel who comforts the mourners round
the Countess's mortal remains by assuring them of her
eternal happiness, fittingly close our vision of her whose
heroism could not but win the happiness so beautifully
described:

"The light beats down; the gates of pearl are wide,
And she is passing to the floor of peace
And Mary of the seven-times wounded heart
Has kissed her lips, and the long blessed hair
Has fallen on her face: the Light of Lights
Looks always on the motive, not the deed
The shadow of shadow on the deed alone".

Here we have the genuine Irish temper of mind.
Countess Cathleen will sell her soul for no material gain -
Mammyra dies, her lips green with the dockweed with which
she tried to assuage the pangs of hunger, but with a heart
confident that in sacrificing her life she had found "the
greater treasure".

The Land of Heart's Desire introduces us to the fairy world whose existence no Irishman ever wishes to question. In the soft twilight of May-day eve we watch with a sense of awe - for we knew what will happen - the newly-wed bride giving food and drink to the "Good People" who ask these things from her. No sooner has she done so than the spell begins to have effect; the power of the Fairies triumphs and so great is this power that not even the bride's love for her husband - Shawn - can keep her with him. Irish beliefs in these inhabitants of wood and hill, belief as to their mode of life and their power over mortals is well summed up in the lines of the song that closes the play.

"For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair
And even the wise are merry of tongue
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say
'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung
The lonely of heart has withered away' "

Closely connected with Yeats's in a like sensitiveness to beauty and delicacy of charm are the works of Lord Dunsany. "The background of Dunsany's plays is the vague but glorious Orient - a land of mists and dreams; - yet the plays are Irish in that they provide the Irish imagination with the food which, according to Synge, it is the dramatist's mission to provide. Dunsany has accomplished this in "If". How the imagination runs riot when the underworking crystal is placed in John Bull's possession! "Take this crystal in your hand - thus -, and say 'Let it be so', and with your mind concentrated on what you desire, wish yourself back - eight, ten, or even twelve years and so it will be done." In how many ways will not the ten years, that John Bull's wish

pute it in the crystal's power to raise him relive, he spent in what region of wild fancy will not the Irish imagination luxuriate: what would have happened not only 'If' he had caught the train (as Dunsany develops the plot) but 'If' in the lapse he had married Mirelda, 'If' he had not followed the advice of Dryad!

A profound satire of religious beliefs as moulded by early habits and practices is found in Dunsany's "Glittering Gate". Out of such simple elements as the chain of reasoning pursued by the two dead burglars, Jim and Bill, before the Gate of Heaven, Dunsany has furnished a unique contribution to Anglo-Irish Drama.

"You see there isn't any hope here" says Jim, "And when there isn't any hope here isn't any future. And when there isn't any future there isn't any past. It's just the present here. I tell you we're stuck. There ain't no years here, nor no nothing"

.....
"Cheer up Jim" says the younger late-comer Bill, "There's plenty of hope there, isn't there?" (Points to the gate of heaven)

"Yes", says Jim "and that's why they keep it locked up so. They won't let us have any."

.....
the bliss of heaven for Jim is the uninterrupted enjoyment of the bottle and the sight of 'Jane' again.

"She'd be the other side of that door now, with lamplight in her hair among the angels, and the old smile on her lips if one of them chaffed her, and her pretty teeth a-shining.

She would be very near the throne; there was never any harm in Jane. Oh, I don't want to see angels, Bill - but if I could see Jane again."

"I shouldn't be surprised" says Bill "if my old mother was there: she was a good mother to me. If they let all the good ones in she'll be there all right." Then suddenly a fear seizes him, "Jim! They won't have brought me up against her, will they? That's not fair evidence Jim" "It would be very like them to" answers Jim, "Very like them:

These two friends are ever disappointed in finding the constantly descending beer bottles empty. "How many have you tried, Jim?" says Bill. "Oh, I don't know," says Jim wearily, I have always been at it, working as fast as I can, ever since.....ever since.....why, ever since, Jim" Their petulant agnosticism is shown when they are at length disappointed of heaven. Bill has been working at the lock of the Glittering Gate, old 'Nut-Cracker' has been successful and the gates swing heavily open, revealing empty night and stars: then, bewildered, Bill exclaims "Stars - Blooming Great stars: There ain't no heaven, Jim" "That's like them. That's very like them," says Jim "Yes, they's do that". In this play Dunsany, using the slightest of themes, makes a powerful appeal to the intellect and imagination.

In Fitzmaurice's "Pandy Dolls" and "Magic Glasses" (both of which are essentially works of the imagination) an exuberant fancy is clothed in language of a vigorous brilliance and expert phraseology which is in perfect harmony with the subject matter. At the time of the production of these plays Fitzmaurice's command of the Anglo-Irish idiom had reached its apogee, this consummate skill of his enabled him to use words and phrases which "by their intellectual savour and strength

powerfully stimulate the intellectual palate". The strange exotic world presented to us find their perfect expression in the weirdly wonderful beauty of Fitzmaurice's style. The doll-maker is a masterpiece of imaginative art. Fitzmaurice with his extraordinary power of fantasy and grotesque vision has provided the Irish imagination with scenes and characters which their acquaintance with fairy lore and their sense of the preternatural make them well fitted to enjoy.

Edward Martyn in "Maev" makes an entirely original use of fairy lore and shows how Maev O'Mayne gives herself up to the pursuit of the ideal which her nurse (who, many an Irish woman would tell us! ought to have more sense) Peg Molnerney, persuades her awaits her in Tir-na-n-Og, while the young girl is utterly forgetful of the (to her) distasteful reality of a marriage with a young Englishman, a marriage which is to repair the shattered fortunes of her noble but poverty-stricken house. There is in this play - as in others of the same author - the clash between the real and the ideal which ever impetus the Irishman in the attainment of present good: the play readily typifies to the Irish audience on its first presentation, as Yeats suggested "Ireland's choice between English materialism and her own natural idealism".

It may perhaps seem strange that "Cathleen ni Houlihan" should be placed among these plays whose appeal is to the Irish imagination. A moment's reflection will, however, show that round no subject has the Irish imagination so lavishly played. The imagination of the people fired by their

affection and visualised by their old-world chivalry has represented Ireland to her sons and daughters as a woman beautiful, majestic, pure, - adorned by those wonderful graces which make a woman above all things womanly. For the love of the ideal, even under the guise of old age and ugliness they are ready to sacrifice the joys of life, the comforts of Home as did Michael Gillane in Yeats's beautiful and pathetic "Cathleen ni Houlihan". But it is not the hope of present material comfort that wins this adherent for "Cathleen", rather is it a patriotism that is not abashed even by the sorrows that Cathleen predicts will be the lot of her followers. She warns Michael Gillane of the trials that await him in her service. "It is hard service they take 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 rushes, will be sent to walk hard streets in far countries; many a good plan will be broken; many that have gathered money will not stay to spend it; many a child will be born and there will be no father at its christening to give it a name. They that had red cheeks will have pale cheeks for my sake and for all that they will think they are well paid." But Cathleen knows that the ardour of the devotion of her followers is not to be cooled by such considerations and confident in their fidelity she goes forth "with the walk of a queen".

The men and women of Ireland are heirs of a common past, a past full of experiences which knit them together indissolubly. In a great measure this past is stored

up in the consciousness of noble tradition and high achievement, of dangers endured and victories won for their common land. This consciousness is in Ireland voiced in the Ancient Irish Literature that the magic touch of an O'Grady or the learning of a Hyde unlocked; it is found too in the folk-lore that the Irish playwright's found ready to their hand on every mountain-side, in every valley. "To live dangerously" says Daniel Corkery in the Hounds of Bane "is I suppose to live lyrically," and this lyrical atmosphere has been materialised into a wealth of legend, song and folk-lore among the peasant population of Ireland.

According to Synge, Lady Gregory "made the writing of historical plays possible" She declared her intention in the preface to her *Historical-Comedies of Vivifying the peasant historical legends into Historical Drama*. The "The Canavans" is a tale of the time of Elizabeth who is represented as exacting that excessive flattery, which fits in with Irish tradition of the "Virgin Queen", while to the Englishman the whole thing is a broad farce. It is a comedy founded less upon history than upon popular Irish tradition.

The "White Cockade" - the badge of the followers of James the Second in Ireland - shows how the love of the Irish Catholic aristocracy (typified in Lady Margaret) was evoked by the persons of the Stuarts. In this play there is gradually unfolded to us the disgust of the Irish at James' betrayal of them in his desire to save his own life by escaping to France; the love of the people for

Sarsfield (a love that to this day has no whit lessened) "a great general that killed thousands of the English", the man who offered after the Battle of the Boyne "to change Kings and fight the Battle again" is brought home to us in a way that the mere reading of history could never effect.

"Kincora" shows us the inner workings of Brian Boru's family, his own desire for power because he believes in his ability to wield that power better than Malachi the then Ard-ri, the intrigues of Brian's Queen, Gormleith, in favour of her son the Danish Sitric; the contest; Brian's death in the moment of victory; all these are faithfully depicted for us in "Kincora". But the play disappoints Irish readers - for Boru is here a man subject to the ordinary temptations of ambition and greed - and Irish tradition makes him of more than common stature of mind and character.

Lady Gregory's greatest contribution to historic drama is the little known heroic tale of the cycle of Finn - "Grania". The fact that there are but three characters Grania, Diarmuid and Finn gives the author ample opportunity for emphasising the salient characteristics of each, yet the play is really a character-sketch of Grania - a woman "as beautiful as the blossoming of the wild fume on the hill" but as fickle as the changing lights of dawn, who has no sooner gained the object of her desire than she tires of it, and being deprived of it, turns to win admiration from sources once scorned. Diarmuid realises when he has given

his all to the woman who is now his wife that he "was no better than a fool, thinking any woman at all could give love which would last longer than the foam upon the stream". The fidelity of the young Diarmuid to his former friend and lord "It was your voice he obeyed and listened to" says Grania to Finn "the time he had no care for me") gives that touch of tribal fidelity which is eminently characteristic of the life of the heroic cycles.

IN "Dervorgilla", the Connaught singer's verse epitomises the attitude of every Irishman to the most hated name in Irish history - Dermot Mac Morrough - "My curse upon all that brought in the Gall Upon Diarmuid's call, and on Dervorgilla". Lady Gregory shows us in this, the most Irish of her plays - Dervorgilla - an old woman who hidden and retired devotes herself to prayer and good works in order to win forgiveness for the wrong doing of her earlier years for she has been instrumental in bringing the English to Ireland. She is loved by the poor and looked upon by all as a saint; she tries to persuade herself "there may be a good end to the story after all". The wandering Connaught singer rudely awakens her to the fact that her name is held in opprobrium among the people, and although she can say with truth "For every day or night of pride or of pleasure, I have spent a day and a night of pain".... yet she doubts the forgiveness of the people she has wronged. "But the people, the people" she says with anxious fear, "will they ever forgive me what I have done!" Her fears are well

founded for when the young people, who have just won the gifts offered by their benefactors for excellence in games find out that their patroness is Dervergilla, they - with the cruelty of youth, return the gifts they received with so much pride. "There has come upon me this day" says Dervergilla sadly, "all the pain of the world and its anguish, seeing and knowing that a deed once done has no undoing". As Mamie, the last of those who returned the gifts to Dervergilla, turns away, the repentant Queen of Erefney comforts herself in the loneliness and anguish of her soul "There is kindness in your unkindness, not leaving me to go and face Michael and the Scales of Judgment wrapped in comfortable words, and the praises of the poor and the lulling of psalms, but from the swift, unflinching, terrible judgment of the young".

In the well-known bardic tale of "Deirdre", a tragic story of the cycle of Conn, the essential underivativeness of Irish playwrights is evident. The story was used for dramatic exploitation by Yeats, "K. J.", and Synge in turn and yet the production of each owes nothing to the genius of the other. Yeats's play has a dramatic movement that his poetic dramas often lack. A single vital incident is the matter of his play. Every phrase, every line makes directly for the denouement. "K. J.'s "Deirdre" has the distinctive individuality of its author, but his work is insignificant in comparison with the product of Synge's powerful and independent genius. Synge with his innate sense of drama and his profound intuition of the Gaelic spirit, retold the tragedy of Naisi and Deirdre - who enjoyed together "seven years without roughness or growing weary; seven years as

sweet and shining, the gods would be hard set to give seven
days like the like of them" - in terms pulsating with heroic life.
"His sure instinct for what is virtually national in the story"
says Boyd, "prompted him to attune it to the note of contemporary
nationality most in harmony with the old Celtic origins of the
epic romance". Deidre is in Synge's hands no longer a
shadowy poetic figure: she is a woman, who rather than marry
Conchubar declared she would "turn the men of Ireland like a
wind blowing on the heath", a wild passionate woman who struggles
helplessly against the fate which is to deprive her of life
and love. The passionate outburst that voices her desire for
unfaltering devotion has all the fiery imagination of the
Celt, all the poetry in which he pours forth his most ardent
emotions. "There are as many ways to wither love as there
are stars in a night in Samhain, but there is no way to keep
life or love with it a short time only. It's for that
there's nothing lonesome like a love that is watching out
the time most lovers do be sleeping". Not only is the
Celtic spirit the framework on which Synge has laid this
glowing picture of Ireland's heroic age, but the canvas is
enriched throughout with all that in Synge is nearest to the
Celtic tradition. The fear of death and the consciousness
the dying Synge has of the harrowing details that accompany
one's dissolution is heard in Deidre's lament that "death is
a poor untidy thing at best, though it's a queen that dies".

But it is as an exponent of Irish peasant life that Synge
is best known in Irish drama, and it is his powerful portrayal
of Irish life and character that has raised the peasant play
to the position of supreme importance that it holds.
European culture - more particularly French drama
moulded Synge's mind in such a fashion that

"certain excessively anti-Irish elements intruded themselves into his Irish brain" yet he was by birth, association and sympathy essentially Irish. He is one of the few who "Europeanised Ireland" (as E. Bourgeois says) "without denationalising it," for to the intense national spirit that the trend of the times fostered, his own personal feeling added strength; this national spirit was based upon a broad foundation of international culture that gave him a breadth of outlook and a perfection of technique that made his position unique among the peasant dramatists of Ireland. His peasant characters though they have the external characteristics of the Irish peasant of his age, are yet representative of human nature in every land, while more particularly they "evoke the colour, the tragedy, the comedy of a corner of the world unspoiled by industrial civilisation". In the Preface to the "Playboy of the Western World" Synge acknowledges his indebtedness to the peasant and beggar folk of Ireland whose language he uses, whose imagination lights his way, whose words and phrases, striking and beautiful as he acknowledges them to be, he found ready at his hand. During his stay in Aran he listened, says Yeats "to the beautiful English which has grown up in Irish-speaking districts and takes its vocabulary from the time of Malory and of the translators of the Bible, but its idiom and its vivid metaphor from Irish." Thus Synge verifies F. McDannagh's assertion that the contribution of every master to literature is twofold - the matter given and the form of its presentation.

Synge's "Riders to the Sea" is undoubtedly the greatest of his contributions to Irish peasant drama. His book the "Aran Islands" proves it to be "the spiritualised expression of the tragic realities of the life of the seafaring folk of these islands." This one-act play begins on a low note and gradually swells to a storm of grief and passion - the keen being evident throughout. It is not only the work of a master in dramatic production but of one who has a delight in language, in the sheer beauty he could evoke from its use. "Who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?" says Cathleen of Maurya, for the young girl does not realize that true sorrow has but one theme - itself. The richness of the language in which Maurya voices her freedom from the dread that has always overshadowed her life, now that Bartley the last of her six sons has been claimed by the cruel sea, has all the poetry that is characteristic of Synge's expression. "They're all gone now, and there isn't where the sea could do to me..... I'll have no call now to be 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." The play ends on a note of restraint that is almost pagan in its hopelessness. "It's great rest I'll have now. It's great rest I'll have now and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain..... They are all together this time and the end is come..... No man can be living for ever and we must be satisfied."

Never before has the life of the peasant of the Aran Islands found truer expression than in this one-act play; the consciousness of a fate that is ever impending, a fate escape from which is impossible even though it may be deferred, the inevitability of the death that is to come, the hopelessness of resistance against that powerful adversary - the sea - are all admirably shown in the "Riders to the Sea." "This perfect tragedy" says G.B. Shaw, "shows the quintessence of the spirit of the Aran Islands."

The impulse to protect the criminal, an impulse that is perhaps fostered by the consciousness that he is fleeing from a law that is alien to his protection, is dramatised in the "Playboy of the Western World". The play has been decried as "non-national" and by some severer critics as "anti-Irish" but the "Aran Islands" shows that Synge's material and sources have been mainly Irish; yet while the play shows that impulse to protect the criminal which is universal in the west, probably because of Irish aversion of English law, yet G.B. Shaw shows that besides this national aspect it expresses "a universal tendency of mankind; the habit of admiring bold scoundrels."

Synge once declared (as has been mentioned before) the measure of serious drama to be "the degree in which it gives the nourishment, not very easy to define, on which our imagination lives." This test suffices to reveal the excellencies of the "Playboy". Its imaginative strength, enhanced by felicity of expression constitutes its charm for the language is the perfect complement of the emotional intensity of the dramatist's conception. "The Playboy" says Yeats

is the strongest, the most beautiful expression in drama of that Irish fantasy which overflows through all Irish literature that has come out of Ireland itself and is the unbroken character of Irish genius." The poetry of the speech when the passions are excited, as in the love passages of Christy and Peggy Hike, is a faithful reproduction of the effect of intense passion in making an Irishman's speech reflect the glow of his feelings. Before the actual love passages Christy begs Widow Quin's help to aid him "for to win Peggy".

CHRISTY: Aid me for to win Peggy. It's her I'm seeking now. Aid me for to win her, and I'll be asking God to stretch a hand to you in the hour of death, and lead you short cuts through the Meadows of Ease, and up the floor of Heaven to the footstool of the Virgin's Son."

Then there is the wealth of language of the love passages.

CHRISTY (to PEGGY) I'll have great times if I win the prize I'm seeking now, and that's your promise that you'll wed me in a fortnight, when our banns is called

PEGGY: And it's that kind of poacher's love you'd make, Christy Mahon, on the sides of Belfin when the night is downy

CHRISTY: It's little you'll think if my love's a poacher's or an earl's itself I'd feel a kind of pity for the Lord God in all ages sitting lone in His golden chair.

PEGGY: Any girl would walk her heart out before she'd meet a young man was your like for eloquence, or talk at all

CHRISTY: If the mitred bishops seen you that time,
they'd be the like of the holy prophets, I'm thinking
do be straining the bars of Paradise to lay eyes on the
Lady Helen of Troy, and she abroad, pacing back and for-
ward, with a messegay in her golden shawl.

FRANK: And what is it I have, Christy Mahon, to make
me fitting entertainment for the like of you, that has
such poet's talking and such bravery of heart.

CHRISTY: Isn't there the light of seven heavens in your
heart alone, the way you'll be an angel's lamp to me
from this out

FRANK: And to think its me is talking sweetly,
Christy Mahon, and I the fright of seven townlands for
my biting tongue. Well the heart's a wonder; and
I'm thinking there won't be our like in Mayo, for
gallant lovers from this hour to-day.

In the quarrel scenes the language has a vigorous, a
picturesqueness, and passion surpassed only by the
English of the Elizabethan days.

In the "Shadow of the Glen" Synge shows the
consequences arising from the 'made' marriages of the
Irish peasant, and this he does, not from any intention
of using drama for didactic purposes, but because the
story had come to him from Irish sources and the back-
ground was such as experience had made him thoroughly
conversant with. Here also Synge gives the touch of
transcendentalism that raises his work above the sordid
realism that would otherwise take from its value as
literature. In Nora Burke "his woman of the glens
as melancholy as a curlew, driven to distraction by her

own sensitiveness, her own fineness", we see less "the love-lorn woman than the portrayal of the poetic desire for something new". She has a poetic soul, she is "a grand woman to talk". The shattered ideals and aspirations of all humanity speak through this "inscrutably sad woman". In this play Synge reveals the tramp life he loved so much. The call of the road which, no doubt, Synge himself often obeyed is voiced by the tramp who says to Nora when her husband turns her from her home "You'll be hearing the herons crying out over the black lake, and you'll be hearing the grouse and the owls with them, and the larks and the big thrushes when the days are warm."

Yet the lure of the open road, the beauties of the world, the song of the bird, the soft balmy air, the scent of meadows borne on the breeze, to all of which the blind pair are sensitively conscious - are nowhere so vividly depicted as in the "Well of the Saints". Synge shows us the blind couple - Martin Bhéal and his wife, - athirst for beauty, seeking it at all costs, - for their life has been passed "hearing the birds and the bees humming in everywood of the ditch and the swift flying things racing in the air". And a beggar folk to which such details bring joy is possible only among a pastoral people unspoilt by industrial civilisation.

The Tinker's Wedding is the least popular of Synge's plays. It paints the wild drunken life characteristic of the tinker class in Ireland, but the brutal wedding up is representative of Synge's caustic humor and illustrative of the author's peculiarly pagan attitude.

While Synge's genius created types, Padraic Colum's observation and insight revealed local peasant types, whose appeal is subordinated to the dramatist's declared purpose of revealing the peasant types of the Midlands from the agrarian and Catholic standpoints, a task for which his tradition and sympathy admirably fitted him. In "The Land" Colum touches one of the vital problems of rural life - the keeping of the whole rustic population, not the inefficient only, (as represented by Sally Cosgar and Cornelius Douras) on the land. The land for which the older generation has struggled, the generation whose efforts peasant proprietorship has crowned, is seen in Colum's play to be unable to keep the efficient free from the attraction of America. Hence we find Matt Cosgar relinquishing the land that his father is willing to make over to him because Ellen Douras whom Matt wishes to marry believes that "It's a poor story, the life of a man on the land", she asks Matt to have thought of her, for she reminds him of a fact that he might otherwise easily forget "You can offer the sights of great towns, and the fine manners and the fine life." Thus in spite of the old man's passionate protest "Boy, your father built this house. He got these lands together. He has a right to see that you and your generations are in the way of keeping them together," Matt Cosgar goes from the land for which his father had toiled so that Ellen Douras may find "the freedom she wants".

In "Thomas Muskerry" we are brought face to face with the fact that "among people of the Gaelic stock the family, not the individual, is the unit that is considered".

In this way we see the victimization of Thomas Muskerry, the master of the local workhouse, by his daughter and her family for their own pecuniary advantage, while he is cast aside and neglected when he is no longer in a position to help them. Here is a family in which the virtues of a peasantry of a generation gone by are lost in the ambitions and meannesses of town life; they have the worst traits that develop from such a union. Colum was perfectly conversant with the under-currents of existence in the provincial towns in Ireland, and this knowledge he has embodied in a way few writers have been able to accomplish in "Thomas Muskerry".

It is a well known fact that among the rural population of Ireland artistic aspirations are looked upon with suspicion; the artist, the musician in the family meet with but scant consideration for "small profits and quick returns" not monopoly and immense profits is the motto by which the small farmer regulates his business. The family is unable or unwilling - often both - to give the gifted son or daughter the training that would turn that gift to a family asset. The would-be artist or musician is urged to forget his gift, the artist is lost and an indifferent farmer won: what has been good enough for a young man's father and grandfather before him ought to be good enough for him.

The peasant in his artistic and spiritual manifestations is admirably depicted by Colum in the "Fiddler's House". Conn is a study of temperament. The inability to remain settled, (the road for the fiddler" says Conn) the desire for praise, the ambition to show

himself superior to others in his art - all these things denote the artistic temperament that is strong in Colum's fiddler. Marie's conviction of the hopelessness of conquering her father's roving spirit is seen in the words "You have only your fiddle, and you must go among people who will praise you" Then with a daughter's loyalty she undertakes to accompany her father on the roads, while her motherly care for her younger sister leads her to make over to Anne - in whom the call of the land is strong - the land that will enable her to marry the man of her choice, James Moynihan. Together with Marie, Conn sets out to enjoy the freedom and the praise that are to him the elixir of life. The fiddler who represents the southern peasant in his artistic manifestations is uninfluenced by material considerations in taking to the roads. Conn's entire artistic being is summed up in his own reflection on leaving his home "I'm leaving the land behind me, too; but what's land after all against the music that comes from far, strange places, when the night is on the ground, and the bird in the grass is quiet?"

Very different is the peasant-artist of the north so ably sketched in Rutherford Mayne's admirable play "The Turn of the Road". The theme is almost identical with that of the Fiddler's Haven: it is a fine exposition of Robbie John Graham's attempt to stifle the artistic impulse in deference to the wishes of his family. "I wish some one would stop that boy's fool nonsense w' his fiddle" says his mother with an air of long suffering. "He's far too fond of playing. It would stand him better to mind his work". "Take heed till

yourself" says his grandfather more kindly "I know what's going on better nor you. Take an old man's advice. Settle yourself down and give up that string instrument.....And your father" he adds confidentially "I heard him say himself, if you make your bed you'll lie on it, for he'll never help you out once you take to the fiddling". Later on his father induces him to burn the fiddle by reminding Robbie John that "there's a bonny wee lass waiting for him at Graeme's". For a time he does violence to his feelings and keeps his promise to abstain from playing the grand old Cremona that a tramp had given him after he had burned his own. "Robbie's indeed been very good" says Mrs. Granahan with self-satisfied complacency to Jane Graeme "He's never played on it to my knowing, and keeps his promise." Robbie John tells Jane Graeme the struggle it cost him to have the old Cremona always hanging before his eyes for his family would not let him destroy the tramp fiddler's gift "because they think they can make a few miserable pounds with it". But the thought of the brilliant career that the judge at the Newcastle Fairs predicted for him, and the encouragement given him by Jane Graeme who believed in his ability urge him to seek fortune with the fiddle. The anger of his father in seeing Robbie John desert the settlement he had that very day made for him, makes him turn Robbie out of doors. "Then stick to your fiddle" he says passionately, "And know that if ever you are waa or ahungered or in want ye need never look to me for any help". In both the "Fiddler's House" and the "Turn of the Road" the artist in the man triumphs, but from motives as widely different as the gentle influences that mould the

southern, and the unbending Puritan influences which shape the northern mind. Rutherford Mayne has admirably portrayed the well-to-do Protestant in the one case, and by implication has emphasized the points that differentiate the Northerner from the Southerner.

Lady Gregory's Gael Gate depicts the Southerner's aversion to the informer. The disgrace that hounds the informer makes itself felt in Mary Cahil's remark when she believes her son to have purchased his life at the cost of his honour. "It's only among strangers, I am thinking, he could be hiding his story at all. It is best for him to go to America where the people are as thick as grass"..... Her own attitude to her son's supposed perfidy shows in her refusal to make use of the money she supposes the authorities have paid him. "I would sooner sell the holding than to ask for the price paid for blood" she says to her daughter-in-law. "There'll be money enough for the two of you to settle your debts and go". The play shows the simple readiness of mother and wife to lose son and husband rather than feel that the slur of having an informer in the family is on them. "To have died" means his mother "and left a great shame on his child! Better for him to have killed the whole world than to give any witness at all" The joy of both women on learning at the gael gate that, far from being a traitor to his fellows, Denis Cahil had suffered the supreme penalty rather than betray those associated with him, is supreme. The mother's keen is now a

peacen of triumph. "Tell it in the streets for the people to hear, Denis Cahel from Slieve Nahtga is dead! one word to the judge and Denis was free, they offered him all sorts of rickse. Denis would not speak..... he would never be an informer" This little tragedy perfectly embodies the Southerner's aversion to the political renegade, his pride and joy in suffering something for the "cause", as well as the honour paid to the descendants of such political sufferers, for says Mary Cahel "The child he left in the house that is cheek, it is great will be his boast in his father. All Ireland will have a welcome before him and all the people is Boston".

In the Troth R. Mayne shows us the Ulster peasant in circumstances of distress and poverty that were the common lot of the peasant of the South and West. To effect the destruction of a common foe - the harsh landlord Colonel Fotheringham - Francis Moore a Catholic and Ebenezer Mac Kie a Protestant unite, pledging themselves that should harm befall either of them in the attempt the sufferer will not betray the identity of the survivor. "I swore to do it (i.e., to kill the Colonel) this night" says Moore "and I swore he would not escape. That's why I came to you. Listen. We can get him as he comes through the glen. We can each take a side of the road. One side has a hedge with brambly land and the other across from it is most whins with the douane wall behind. Its the only two places you can get him from. But I warn you. Him that takes the whinny side runs a chance of the rope. Fair do. Well toss for it. If you win, you can have the pick."

Author Curham Mary J

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