

of social reform which leaves out the assistance of God's grace can never be more than a dream of a dreamer.

## NOTES

### Joseph Conrad

We have before now recommended our readers to try Mr. Conrad's novels when they are in search of good light literature. He is the foremost Catholic novelist of our time; and that he is Catholic is already a guarantee that he is safe reading for all. His love of the sea, and his marvellous power of painting it in all its multitudinous moods, endears him to ourselves who could never be happy away from the sight of the flowing tides that wash round the world. In his prose there is a great vigor, and a magnificence that recalls the fine English that some of the old writers could wield with such apparent ease: he has that indefinable and subtle quality that makes style in the writer and arrests the attention of the reader who recognises that, when it is present, the words glow and are radiant with a light that is hidden in them as the sunshine in fluorescent substances. One passage may be quoted as a specimen of Mr. Conrad's mastery over English prose:

"The end of the day is the time to gaze at the kingly face of the Westerly Weather, who is arbiter of ships' destinies. Benignant and splendid, or splendid and sinister, the western sky reflects the hidden purposes of the royal mind. Clothed in a mantle of dazzling gold or draped in rags of black clouds like a beggar, the might of the Westerly Wind sits enthroned upon the western horizon with the whole Atlantic as a footstool for his feet and the first twinkling stars making a diadem for his brow. . . . The West Wind is too great a king to be a dissembler: he is no calculator plodding deep schemes in a sombre heart; he is too strong for small artifices; there is passion in all his moods, even in the soft mood of his serene days, in the grace of his blue sky whose immense and unfathomable tenderness reflected in the mirror of the sea, embraces, possesses, lulls to sleep the ships with white sails. He is all things to all oceans; he is like a poet seated on a throne—magnificent, simple, barbarous, pensive, generous, impulsive, changeable, unfathomable—but when you understand him, always the same. Some of his sunsets are like pageants devised for the delight of the multitude, when all the gems of the royal treasure-house are displayed above the sea. Others are like the opening of his royal confidence, tinged with thoughts of sadness and compassion in a melancholy splendor meditating upon the short-lived peace of the waters. And I have seen him put the pent-up anger of his heart into the aspect of the inaccessible sun, and cause it to glare fiercely like the eye of an implacable autocrat out of a pale and frightened sky."

One need not be a professional critic to recognise that this man can write. Magnificence, strength, and romance you will find in his novels, and over all his writing there hang a poetic glamor and an enchantment such as you will seek in vain in most of his modern rivals. Read *Lord Jim*, *Chance*, *Typhoon*, and *Almayer's Folly*, and you will get in them a feast of fine English prose.

### Walter Besant

One of the writers of the last generation whom we are too prone to forget is Besant. Among a host of old novelists, any one of whom was as good as our best to-day, Besant ranks very high. In other days Miss Braddon and Mrs. Sadlier were considered as mere story-tellers as compared with the classics—for in those days men and women appreciated the classics still. Yet, such writers can well stand comparison with our most popular novelists, whether in matter of style or of technical knowledge of their trade. Besant was in a class above those whom we have named, and consequently in a class far above even the best we have nowadays.

If you have not read *Ready Money Mortiboy*, *The Chaplain of the Fleet*, and *The Orange Girl*, there is a treasure awaiting you in those old books. Wilkie Collins was perhaps Besant's closest rival as a good story-teller.

### Seumas O'Sullivan

In a class apart from the other poets of the Irish Revival stands Seumas O'Sullivan. One could hardly say that he belongs to any particular school, and while in others we find trace of the inspiration of Yeats or of A.E. we must confess that Seumas O'Sullivan has in the sphere in which he is at his best no master and no rival. His originality is unquestionable, and the personality of the writer is strongly marked in his work. He revels in quiet landscapes and in the "sadness of summer evenings" with their unspeakable suggestions of old lost things and memories. As A.E. has said of him, he is always snatching after vanished loveliness. He lacks nothing in technical knowledge, and he has the gift of musical language to an extraordinary degree. A few short poems will bear quoting:—

#### THE STARLING LAKE.

*My sorrow that I am not by the little dun  
By the lake of the starlings at Rosses under the hill,  
And the larks there, singing over the fields of dew;  
Or evening there and the sedges still.  
For plain I see now the length of the yellow sand,  
And Lisadell far off and its leafy ways,  
And the holy mountain whose mighty heart  
Gathers into it all the colored days.  
My sorrow that I am not by the little dun  
By the lake of the starlings when all is still,  
And still in the whispering sedges the herons stand.  
There I would nestle at rest till the quivering moon  
Uprose in the golden quiet over the hill.*

#### THE SEDGES.

*I whispered my great sorrow  
To every listening sedge:  
And they bent, bowed with my sorrow,  
Down to the water's edge.  
But she stands and laughs lightly  
To see me in sorrow so,  
Like the light winds that laughing  
Across the waters go.  
If I could tell the bright ones  
That quiet-hearted move,  
They would bend down like the sedges  
With the sorrow of love.  
But she stands laughing lightly,  
Who all my sorrow knows,  
Like the little wind that laughing  
Across the water blows.*

## DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

Rev. Father F. Cullen, late chaplain to the N.Z. Expeditionary Force, and who returned recently from the Front, was a visitor to Dunedin last week.

A gold wristlet watch was last week raffled for the benefit of the funds of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the winning number being 95, held by Miss Mary Lascelles, Castle Street, Dunedin.

The following pupils of St. Philomena's College have been awarded prizes in the Navy League Essay Competition:—Senior: Ida O'Regan, Phyllis Cheyne. Junior: Margaret M. Faulks, Florence Walsh, Mary A. Garr.

The Right Rev. Dr. Brodie, Bishop of Christchurch, arrived in Dunedin by the express on last Friday night. His Lordship officiated at an ordination ceremony at St. Patrick's Basilica on Sunday, in the presence of a crowded congregation. He preached at the evening devotions, when the Basilica was again crowded in all parts. On Monday his Lordship visited Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, and on Tuesday the Catholic schools of the city. On Wednesday Bishop Brodie paid a visit to Milton, and left this (Thursday) morning on his return to Christchurch.