MEMOIRS

Have you made greatness your companion.
Although it be for children that you sigh.
These are the clouds about the setting sun
The majesty that shuts his burning eye.

Wine comes in at the mouth
Love comes in at the eye
That's all we shall know for truth
Before we grow old and die
I lift the glass to my mouth
I look at you—and I sigh.

May 25, 1911. At Stratford, *Playboy* shocked a good many people, because the Stratford is a self-improving, self-educating audience and that means a perverted and commonplace one. If you set out to educate yourself you are compelled to have an ideal, and if you are not a man of genius your ideal will be a commonplace and prevent the natural impulses of the mind, its natural reverence, desire, hope, admiration, always half unconscious, almost bodily. That is why a simple round of religious duties, things that escape the intellect, is often so much better than its substitute, self-improvement.

1 "These Are the Clouds", *Collected Poems*, pp. 107-8. The friend is Lady Gregory.
2 "A Drinking Song", *Collected Poems*, pp. 104-5. The song was written for *Mirandolina*, Lady Gregory's adaptation from Goldoni's *La Locandiera*; it was first performed at the Abbey on 24 February 1910.
3 The Abbey players began a two months' tour of England with a performance of the *Playboy*, *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, and *The Rising of the Moon* at the Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, on 1 May 1911. Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh has written of that evening: "Synge's play, produced now as a rapid comedy, went well with a distinguished audience." *The Splendid Years* (Dublin, Duffy, 1955), p. 106.