The Irish Dramatic Movement

squeezed dry generations ago. One saw everywhere the shadowy mind of a woman of the Irish upper classes as they have become today, but under it all there was a kind of life, though it was but the life of a string and a wire. I do not know who Miss...is, but I know that she is young, for I saw her portrait in a weekly paper, and I think that she is clever enough to make her work of some importance. If she goes on doing bad work she will make money, perhaps a great deal of money, but she will do a little harm to her country. If, on the other hand, she gets into an original relation with life, she will, perhaps, make no money, and she will certainly have her class against her.

The Irish upper classes put everything into a money measure. When any one among them begins to write or paint they ask him, "How much money have you made?" "Will it pay?" Or they say, "If you do this or that you will make more money". The poor Irish clerk or shopboy, who writes verses or articles in his brief leisure, writes for the glory of God and of his country; and because his motive is high, there is not one vulgar thought in the countless little ballad books that have been written from Callanan's day to this. They are often clumsily written, for they are in English, and if you have not read a great deal, it is difficult to write well in

1 The mood has gone, with Fenianism and its wild hopes. The National movement has been commercialised in the last few years. How much real ideality is but hidden for a time one cannot say.—March 1908.

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a language which has been long separated from the 'folk-speech'; but they have not a thought a proud and simple man would not have written. The writers were poor men, but they left that money measure to the Irish upper classes. All Irish writers have to choose whether they will write as the upper classes have done, not to express but to exploit this country; or join the intellectual movement which has raised the cry that was heard in Russia in the 'seventies, the cry, 'To the people'.

Moses was little good to his people until he had killed an Egyptian; and for the most part a writer or public man of the upper classes is useless to this country till he has done something that separates him from his class. We wish to grow peaceful crops, but we must dig our furrows with the sword.

Our plays this year will be produced by Mr. Benson at the Gaiety Theatre on October the 21st, and on some of the succeeding days. They are Dr. Douglas Hyde's Casadh an t-Sugain, which is founded on a well-known Irish story of a wandering poet; and Diarmaid and Grania, a play in three acts and in prose by Mr. George Moore and myself, which is founded on the most famous of all Irish stories, the story of the lovers whose beds were the cromlechs. The first act of Diarmaid and Grania is in the great banqueting-hall of Tara, and the second and third are on the slopes of Ben Bulben in Sligo. We do not think there is anything in either play to offend anybody, but we make no promises. We thought our plays inoffensive last year and the year