

**LITERATURE IN
IRELAND: STUDIES IRISH
AND ANGLO-IRISH**

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Literature in Ireland: Studies Irish and Anglo-Irish by Thomas MacDonagh

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THOMAS MACDONAGH

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STUDIES
IRISH AND ANGLO-IRISH

BY
THOMAS MACDONAGH, M.A.
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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TO VISU
AMBOTLIAO

TO
GEORGE SIGERSON

PATRIOT AND SAGE, BARD OF THE GAEL AND GALL,
TEACHER AND HEALER, OLLAMH OF SUBTLE LORE,
WHOSE WORDS AND WORKS TO IRELAND'S PAST RESTORE
THE GLORY THAT WAS LOST WITH LEARNING'S FALL
IN OUR DARK PASSION, THE IMMEMORIAL
KIND KNOWLEDGE WEARS TO US THE MIEN SHE WORE
TO YOUR YOUNG GAZE ; AND, MASTER, LOOK BEFORE,
SEE WHERE THE CHILDREN WEAVE HER CORONAL,

YOUR HONOUR IS YOUR COUNTRY'S : STILL YOU GIVE
YOUR LIFE'S GREAT SERVICE UNDER GOD TO HER,
AND SHE REPAYS IN FULL, EARLY OR LATE.
SO, THAT SOME WORD OF MINE A WHILE MAY LIVE,
SET WITH YOUR NAME IN HER LOVE'S REGISTER,
THESE TO YOU I INSCRIBE AND DEDICATE

PREFACE.

THESE Studies in Irish and Anglo-Irish Literature are frankly experimental. In them I have tried to clear away certain misconceptions, to fix certain standards, to define certain terms. I trust that as a result the Irish Mode will be better understood and appreciated than the Celtic Note for which I substitute it.

My exclusion from the scope of these inquiries of the Hiberno-English writers of the eighteenth century has already provoked protests from my friends. They do indeed form a band apart in English Literature, with the common characteristic of adventurous and haughty individualism. But to me, who look rather from the Gaelic stand-point, the attitude of Swift, Steele, Sheridan, Burke, Goldsmith and the rest, for all that they have in common and for all that they owe to their Irish birth or upbringing, is an attitude rather of dissent from an English orthodoxy than of consent in an orthodoxy of their own or of Ireland's. Æ has claimed, in conversation with me about this, that all these emigrants, down to Oscar Wilde and Shaw, have that Irish mien of

aristocracy that marked our great in the days of the clan system—an aristocracy not of the talents merely, but of character, of self-confident and often self-made leadership. I would not deny their claim. I would not abate their praise. But the two literatures of my choice here have other claims and are worthy of other praise. If I have done a little wrong to the emigrants in one of my Studies, this will undo it.

My subject is Literature in Ireland. My business as regards Gaelic is simple—to show the value of the old literature, the prospects of the new. To this business I have devoted the last and longest of these Studies and portions of others. My theses as regards Anglo-Irish are these three, restated in Study V and dealt with in detail in the rest of the book:—

That an Anglo-Irish literature, worthy of a special designation, could come only when English had become the language of the Irish people, mainly of Gaelic stock, and when the literature was from, by, of, to and for the Irish people.

That the ways of life and the ways of thought of the Irish people—the manners, customs, traditions and outlook, religious, social and moral—have important differences from the ways of life and of thought which have found expression in other English literature.

That the English language in Ireland has an individuality