

**PLAYS OF
NEAR AND FAR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649393046

Plays of near and far by Edward Plunkett

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

EDWARD PLUNKETT

**PLAYS OF
NEAR AND FAR**

BY LORD DUNSANY

The Gods of Pegana
Time and the Gods
The Sword of Welleran
A Dreamer's Tales
The Book of Wonder
Five Plays
Fifty-one Tales
Tales of Wonder
Plays of Gods and Men
Tales of War
Unhappy Far-off Things
Tales of Three Hemispheres
If
Don Rodríguez
Plays of Near and Far

Plays of Near and Far

By LORD DUNSANY

The Compromise of the King of
the Golden Isles—The Flight of
the Queen—Cheezo—A Good
Bargain—If Shakespeare Lived
To-day—Fame and the Poet

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

1923

PR 6007

266P6

Copyright, 1923
by
Edward Plunkett



Made in the United States of America

PREFACE TO AMERICAN EDITION

BELIEVING plays to be solely for the stage, I have never before allowed any of mine to be printed until they had first faced from a stage the judgment of an audience, to see if they were entitled to be called plays at all. A successful production also has been sometimes a moral support to me when some critic has said, as for instance of "A Night at an Inn," that though it reads passably it could never act.

But in this book I have made an exception to this good rule (as it seems to me), and that exception is "The Flight of the Queen." I know too little of managers and theatres to know what to do with it, and have a feeling that it will be long before it is ever acted, and am too fond of this play to leave it in obscurity. This beautiful story has been lying about the world for countless centuries, without ever having been dramatized. It is the story of a royal court, which I have merely adapted to the stage. The date that I have given is accurate; it happened in June;

PREFACE

and happens every June; perhaps in some corner of the reader's garden. It is the story of the bees.

As for "The Compromise of the King of the Golden Isles," it is just the sort of play through which those that hunt for allegories might hunt merrily, unless I mention that there are no allegories in any of my plays.

An allegory I take to be a dig at something local and limited, such as politics, while outwardly appearing to tell of things on some higher plane. But, far from being the *chef d'œuvre* of some ponderously profound thinker, I look on the allegory, if I have rightly defined it, as being the one form of art that is narrowly limited in its application to life. When the man whose cause it championed has been elected alderman, when the esplanade has been widened, or the town better lighted or drained, the allegory's work must necessarily be over; but the truth of all other works of art is manifold and should be eternal.

Though there is no such land as the Golden Isles and was never any such king as Hamaran, yet all that we write with sincerity is true, for we can reflect nothing that we have not seen, and this we interpret with our

PREFACE

idiosyncracies when we attempt any form of art.

I set some store by the way in which the three lines about Zarabardes are recited, though it is hard to explain in writing a matter of rhythm. But the heartlessness of it can be indicated by a clear pronunciation of the syllables, as though the people that utter these words had long been drilled in a formula.

The third play, "Cheezo," tells of one of those rare occasions when it is permissible for an artist, and may be a duty, to leave his wider art in order to attack a definite evil. And the invention of "great new foods" is often a huge evil.

"Cheezo" is a play of Right and Wrong, and Wrong triumphs. Were not this particular wrong triumphing at this particular date I should not have thought it a duty to attack it, and were it easily defeated it would not have been worth attacking.

I have seen it acted with a Stage Curate, rather weak and a little comic; obviously such a man could be no match for Sladder. Hippanthigh should be of stronger stuff than that: he is defeated because that particular evil is, as I have said, defeating its enemies at present. Nor could there be any drama in a contest between the brutal Sladder and a

PREFACE

Stage Curate; for the spark that we call humour, by whose light we see much of life, comes as it were of two flints, and not of a flint and cheese.

The three little plays at the end of the book I will leave to speak for themselves, as ultimately all plays have to do.

DUNSANY.