

**THE STAGE IRISHMAN
OF THE PSEUDO-CELTIC
DRAMA, PP. 7 - 45**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649298419

The Stage Irishman of the Pseudo-Celtic Drama, pp. 7 - 45 by F. Hugh O'Donnell

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

F. HUGH O'DONNELL

**THE STAGE IRISHMAN
OF THE PSEUDO-CELTIC
DRAMA, PP. 7 - 45**

The Stage Irishman of the
Pseudo-Celtic Drama

By the Same Author.
THE MESSAGE OF THE MASTERS

A Legend of Killeach.

Crown 8vo. Cloth Gilt and Gilt Top, ss. 6d. net.

SECOND EDITION.

- "A striking and melodious poem."—*Bookman*.
"Poetry, and poetry of a high order."—*New Ireland Review*.
"Vivid pictures."—*Sheffield Telegraph*.
"Melodious treason."—*Aberdeen Free Press*.
"Stately and stirring."—*Western Mercury*.
"A book to make one think."—*Leeds Mercury*.
"A stirring narrative of the historic clans of ancient Ireland."—*Aberdeen Journal*.
"Written in the rhythm of Macaulay's ballads, there are verses the Master might have been proud to have penned."—*Punch*.

LONDON: JOHN LONG, 23 and 24, Norris St., Haymarket.

THE
**RUIN OF EDUCATION IN IRELAND
AND THE IRISH FANAR.**

THIRD EDITION.

- "Destined to mark an epoch in the Education controversy."—*Belfast Northern Whig*.
"A tremendous and convincing indictment . . . It should be studied by every Member of Parliament."—*Morning Post*.
"Intimate knowledge. The characterisation of Mr Balfour very clever."—*Irish Times*.
"This book makes impossible the establishment of a sectarian University in Ireland."—*National Review*.

LONDON: DAVID NUTT, 57 Long Acre.

The Stage Irishman of the Pseudo-Celtic Drama

By

F. Hugh O'Donnell

"No normal Irishman would have expected an Irish audience to regard with equanimity an Irish peasant kicking about, no matter in what extremity, an image of the Virgin. The mind of Mr Yeats and his artistic sympathies had been moulded away from Ireland."

—MR STEPHEN Gwynn.

"To speak of Mr Yeats's verse or of his prose tales as an interpretation of Irish character is profoundly to misinterpret that character."—*Cyclopedia of English Literature*.

"An Irish audience which could sit at such a play must have sadly degenerated, both in religion and patriotism."—CARDINAL LOGAN.

London

John Long

13 and 14 Norris Street, Haymarket

1904

Contents

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	7
MR W. B. YEATS'S OFFENSIVENESS ON IRISH RELIGION	12
MR STEPHEN GWYNN'S INDICTMENT OF YEATS'S DRAMA AND CELTICISM IN 1901	32
CONCLUSION	43

The Stage Irishman of the Pseudo-Celtic Drama



INTRODUCTION

THE following Notes had their origin in the ardent panegyric of Mr W. B. Yeats's "Irish National Theatre" pronounced by the Hon. Secretary of the Irish Literary Society of London a couple of months ago. What made Mr Stephen Gwynn's sudden paroxysm of enthusiasm over the Yeatsite Drama somewhat peculiar was the fact that "it was not always so." Only three years ago the Yeatsite Drama was to Mr Stephen Gwynn, as to more consistent people, an "exotic" product, "alien" to the Irish genius as to the Irish soil, and too often a desecration of national legend and an outrage to national sentiment. I had not much



knowledge indeed of Mr Gwynn previous to the occasion on which he produced himself for my benefit last February. But I had heard of his indictment of the Pseudo-Irish Theatre, just as I had heard that he had written a pleasing volume in a picturesque series of county guide books promoted by a leading publisher. I was quite unaware whether he was literary artist or literary operative. I own my misfortune. But I am a busy man. Most of my interests are out of England. I have neither time nor inclination to observe the printed output of one in a hundred of that new generation which, like Mr Stephen Gwynn, had hardly quitted its baby petticoats long after I had taken my Master's degree and had been elected a parliamentary representative of my nation.

I have a good deal more knowledge of Mr W. B. Yeats. He is nearer my contemporaries. He is on the brink of that sedate rubicon of middle age, the Fortieth Year. Besides, Mr W. B. Yeats is a much better advertised as well as more distinguished person than Mr Stephen Gwynn. He takes care of that. The rapt gaze and the ethereal contemplations of the Mystic Minor Poet are quite compatible with sound commercial principles. But that is

Mr Yeats's affair. Why should he hide his light? I should not have troubled even about his combination of Professor of Extreme Nationalism and Dramatic Entertainer to Dublin Castle.

Unfortunately Mr. W. B. Yeats has not been content with expressing his own visions. In his plentiful innocence of ancient and modern history and literature, some impish fate drew him to select his innocence of Irish history and letters as the special sphere of his advertisements. He sought to make the legends of the Gael and the ancient heroes and heroines of Gaelic Ireland the vehicles, or the pretexts, of the most un-Gaelic and un-Irish conceptions which it is possible to conceive. He proclaimed to the British public that he had a message to deliver from the Celtic Past, and too often his Celtic Past never existed anywhere outside his own productions, except, perhaps, somewhere between the *Theatre Libre* and the *Chat Noir*. His occult mission, it seemed, was to celebrate the wedding of Madame Blavatsky and Finn MacCumhail. A sort of witch's cauldron of aboriginal superstition and Ibsenite neo-paganism was declared to be the permanent spring of Celtic genius and Celtic religion. Sometimes