

# **THE CUTTING OF AN AGATE**

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The cutting of an agate by W. B. Yeats

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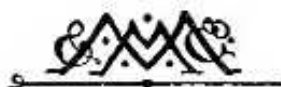
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**W. B. YEATS**

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OF AN AGATE**



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AN AGATE

BY

W. B. YEATS

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## PREFACE

I WROTE the greater number of these essays during the ten years after 1902. During those years I wrote little verse and no prose that did not arise out of some need of the Irish players, or from some thought suggested by their work, or in the defence of some friend connected with that work or with the movement of events that made it possible. I was busy with a single art, that of a small, unpopular theatre; and this art may well seem to practical men busy with some programme of industrial or political regeneration—and in Ireland we have many excellent programmes—of no more account than the shaping of an agate; and yet in the shaping of an agate, whether in the cutting, or in the making of the design, one discovers, if one have a specula-



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tive mind, thoughts that seem important and principles that may be applied to life itself. Certainly if one does not believe so, one is but a poor cutter of so hard a stone.

W. B. YEATS.

*December 1918.*

*P.S.*—I have to thank Mr. T. C. and Mr. E. C. Jack of Edinburgh for leave to reprint the essay I wrote in their selection from Edmund Spenser before the ten years began, and while I had still time to give a couple of summers to *The Faerie Queene*.

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