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The Day's Burden: Studies, Literary and Political by T. M. Kettle

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NEW BOOKS

does not reach his height he gives us beautiful sound and finely-wrought form—

“The songs that I sing
Should have told you an Easter story
Of a long sweet spring
With its gold and its feasts and its glory.”

“In the Storm,” “In Absence,” “After a Year,” are the love poems of the book. We think “After a Year” is the finest in this group, but “In the Storm” has a movement that leaves it memorable.

In this new book Mr. MacDonagh breaks away from the rhythm familiar to himself and he plants his flag in new territories. Poetry is an inspiration and an art, but it is also a conquest. In “Envoi” and “John-John” there is conquest of outlying dominions—

“I send these creatures to lay a ghost
And not to raise up fame,
For I shrink from the way they go, almost
As I shrink from the way they came.
.
So I send on their way with this crude rime
These creatures of bitter truth,
Not to raise up fame for the future time
But to lay the ghost of my youth.”

“THE DAY’S BURDEN—STUDIES, LITERARY
AND POLITICAL.* By T. M. KETTLE. Dublin: MAUNSEL
& Co. *Price, 2s. 6d.*

IN Ireland we discuss literature on one plane and politics on another. “The Day’s Burden” is the first book in which Young Ireland discusses politics and literature as being on planes equally intellectual. The book is a mark of returning seriousness. To Mr. Kettle the literary statements and the political statements, the system of Anatole France and the economics of Otto Effertz are different glimpses of a philosophy of life. The book may not have a close unity, but it has a clear tendency, and this tendency is indicated in the few lines prefatory to the essays. “If this generation has, for its first task, the recovery of the old Ireland, it has for its second the discovery of the new Europe.”

The adventures of the mind behind “The Day’s Burden” is part of the performance of our second task. “The Fatigue of Anatole France,” “Otto Effertz, Gentleman Socialist,” “International

* We were not favoured with a copy of this book for review.

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Socialists," and, indeed, "Young Egypt," are glimpses of discovery. The book has not a very close unity. "The Philosophy of Politics" troubles one in reading because it has been left in the form of a lecture, and "A Frenchman's Ireland" is inconclusive without the book for which it was written as an introduction. The personality of the author is best revealed in "Body *v.* Soul" and "The Fatigue of Anatole France." Such a title as "The Day's Burden" is suggested in a passage that reviews Francis Thompson's case for the body. "The human frame has . . . under this burden and under the complications of modern life suffered a radical diminution of sheer vital power. No faculty has increased except the faculty of suffering, for, in the elaboration of its nerves it has become as it were soaked in mind." And this sentence has its complement in another essay: "A pessimism stabbed and gashed in the radiance of epigrams, as a thunder cloud is stabbed by lightning, is a type of spiritual life far from contemptible." But these must be read with the profession made in "The Philosophy of Politics." Cynicism, however excusable in literature, is in life the last treachery, the irredeemable defeat. We must be content, or try to be content with little. But we must continue to be loyal to the instinct that makes us hope much; we must believe in all the Utopias.

From this on Mr. Kettle's work will be social and constructive. But we hope he will not silence altogether that part of himself which has affinities with pessimistic literature and pessimistic philosophy.

"CELTIC WONDER TALES."* Re-told by ELLA YOUNG.
Illustrated and Decorated by MAUD GONNE. Dublin: MAUNSEL
& Co. *Price, 3s. 6d.*

THERE are certain books needed in Ireland. One is an anthology of Gaelic poems, the other is a book of Gaelic stories written for young people. We have now got the second book. For these tales of the De Danaans and the Ultonians there could be no better shanachie than Miss Ella Young. For her Ancient Ireland is a spiritual reality that continually feeds the imagination. Her heart is in the stories, and she tells them in a manner that is natural, simple, and distinguished. We feel that like the older stories, Miss Young's versions were told first and written afterwards. Some are humorous, some heroic, some mystical. "The Eric-fine of Lugh," "Conary Mor," "The Children of Lir," are the finest and the most elaborate. There

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