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SLÉO NA SCÁT.

The Need of the Hour.

—M. John Sweetman has misunderstood a reference to him which was made in our last issue. He writes to us the following:—

"You state in one of your editorials that 'Mr. John Sweetman complains that his want of Irish prevents him assisting the League.' I certainly never wished to make such a complaint. You must have misunderstood something I have written in a contemporary of yours. You then ask whether I have ever troubled the League. I suppose you mean whether I have ever done anything for the revival of the Irish language outside the Coisde Gnotha. I am certainly not going to boast of any little I have been able to do. If you did not approve of my arguments in your contemporary, it would have been more to the point if you had replied to them instead of indulging in a cheap sneer."

Let us state at once, and we ask Mr. Sweetman to take our word for it, that we did not mean to sneer at him. We are not in the habit of sneering at friends of the Language movement or even at possible friends. The movement has been made, and its life depends on the voluntary work of the people who help. That being so sneers from us would be in very bad form. Our query was but a suggestion that there are places for work other than the Coisde Gnotha. In Dublin itself we have Coiste na Siamsai which is doing excellent propagandist work in addition to the raising of substantial sums for the Language Fund. We have Coiste na Feise which is just now conducting the Feis competitions for 1915. We have still another Coiste which is doing valuable work in providing entertainments in Irish for the Irish-speaking children of Dublin. We have the Collection Committee which has already done fine work for the present year, and there is the Deputation Committee which is badly in need of assistance. All of these committees require the counsel and active assistance of people with leisure and influence. The Ardaraobh annual meeting recommend the taking up again of propagandist work through the press. There is dire need for such work at present, but all the active workers in the City have their hands full, and if the work is to be carried on new helpers must put their hands to the pen. Propagandist press work requires freshness and the virility of the missionary spirit. These essential things are not always at the command of the steady workers. Will a dozen of our good friends outside the League committees take up the work? Those who imagine that a Coiste Gnotha can run the League, and keep the movement effectively going throughout the country, have a very inadequate conception of the needs of the present hour. A policy, however, fine, and resolutions—in a resolution-ridden country, are not enough. The generals do not make the army. We require a League army and we require officers to keep the units at work, and we require shells, and more shells, in the shape of teaching and propagandist activities. Work by the League itself is now more important than ever, because the strongholds of Gallidachas appear again to have gained a new

lease of life. We can do a great amount of good effective work for Ireland for we have now more good teachers than at any time in the history of the League. We have many summer colleges. The political outlook, however dark, should make things more favourable for our propaganda. The saving of Irish nationality is surely as dear to Irish hearts as the saving of Belgian freedom. Irish people are talking, and some of them working for the latter. There are many more who will work for the former. There must be hundreds of people who know of and appreciate to the full the League's mission, but who are not active missionaries. Now is the time for them to come in. Many have concluded that because the Educational systems have not been forced into better ways the League has been a failure. Recent events should show those on whom such despair has fallen that Government departments are very strongly entrenched, and that full reform cannot come before the fall of the whole Castle system. But the League work has not been a failure. Real work, apart from agitation, is seldom a failure. The Feiscanna show year after year that Irish is getting a hold in most unexpected quarters, and that the quality of the teaching is steadily improving. It may appear useless at the present time to expend our strength on an attack on the boards, but the teachers and managers are ready to listen to our demands, and to help our movement. Let us approach them in every part of the country. The training colleges are practically closed against Irish, but there is room in our Irish colleges for many thousands. Let us induce the teachers to go to them. Workers are the need of the hour.

An Craoibhin and the War.

In reply to a leading article in the "Irish Times" criticizing An Craoibhin's speech at the opening of the Wexford Feis, the Ard-Runaidhe sent the following letter:—
"To the Editor of the 'Irish Times.'
"Sir,—With reference to your leading article of to-day upon Dr. Hyde and the Gaelic League, I should like to refer you to the President's speech in Cork on the 15th of last December (since published as a pamphlet), in which he laid down a self-denying ordinance both for the officers of the Gaelic League and for himself—namely, that nothing except the Irish language movement, and its various phases should be spoken about at public meetings of the League.

"In pursuance of this policy he was able to bring together the Volunteers of both sides in that city. His life-long aim has been to bring all Irishmen together upon the simple and attractive platform of the national language and industries, and he believes that a Gaelic League meeting ought to concern itself with the interests of the Irish language and industries, and nothing else. To make it anything else would be to go back upon his own words, and to establish a precedent which, in the long run, would be certain to do more harm than good, because it might be availed of to the serious detriment of the language movement. The only way in which he has referred to the war has been to point out that the legend 'Made in Germany' is now less and less to be seen, and to hope that Irish manufacturers may take full advantage of this fact; it certainly is a French part of which at least they

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ought to occupy, during this appalling war, which, to repeat the words of our President on Sunday last, 'may God in His mercy soon bring to a close.' I enclose a copy of his address in Cork. —Yours, etc.,

P. O'DALAIGH, General Secretary,
"The Gaelic League, 25 Parnell Square,
Dublin, May 25th, 1915."

An Oige ag an bhFeis.

"The children of the town schools," says the Wexford "Free Press" "gave an interesting marching display in the Show Grounds. The little girls were attired in varied coloured costumes, while the boys wore sashes of different hues. They went through a course of figure marching which excited a considerable amount of interest, and which in the handsome costumes worn, was very pretty to look at. The figures were executed with military precision, while the display generally was a remarkable success, and served the useful purpose of impressing on the children the value of being alert and attentive."

Announcements.

Coiste Ceannair Bhaile Atha Cliath announces an acridheacht for June 20th, in St. Enda's College grounds.

Craobh na gCuig gCuigi will have its first summer turas to Luanan on 12th inst. Trams depart from Park Gate Street at 2.30. Cyclists should set out from same place at 2.15.

The Una Ni Dhubhlaigh scholarship announced in our columns last week is to be tenable in an Irish college, and is worthy of support. The treasurers are An Dr. O Murchadha, Muiris O Hiccadh, and Sean O Floinn, Carraig na Siuire.

Iolscoil na Rinne has issued its syllabus. Application for copies should be made to An Runaire, An Rinn.

The June number of "An Breagan" an article on Michael Angelo, with an etching by Maire Nic Dhonnacha. The subscription is only one shilling a year, and the irisleabhar may be had from Craobh na gCuig gCuigi.

An Ard-Chraobh.

A Seilg will take place on Sunday next to Ticknock. Members meet at 3.15 p.m. at Branch premises; those preferring to go by train meet at Harcourt Street Station to catch 3.15 train to Drumdrum. Tea will be had at Mrs. Mulligan's, Ticknock, at 5.30 p.m.

"The National Student."

The latest issue of "The National Student" is more courageous and more national than many of its predecessors. In his leading article the editor calls on the students to play a leading part in Irish National Movement: "We have a people to lead, a nation to build, and a whole life time to do it in. How often have young men had a better opportunity offered to them? If the national students were to rise to the spirit of this article then, indeed, would University College rise to the dignity of a true university, and become a vigorous and important factor in the life of the nation. This number also contains a splendid article by Professor Eoin Mac Neill; a short story in Irish by Froimsias O Conghaile, book reviews, poems, and articles

of its usual good quality. A correspondent in its columns attributes 'the deplorable plight' of the College to the lack of "Ginger."

ST. ENDA'S MIRACLE PLAYS.

The Miracle Plays presented last week by the students of St. Enda's College were a fitting sequel to the rare solemnity and beauty of the Passion Play of 1911. The two plays were the work of Mr. P. H. Pearse. The delightful and effective grouping, the fine colour and scenic effects, the capable and gracious acting of the youthful players were of a kind not usually found in school performances, — delicate, intense, distinctive.

One of the plays "Iosagan" was in Irish, the second, "The Master," was translated by the author from his original Irish. Upon its first production, six years ago, "Iosagan" won the praise of competent critics. The simple tale of the old unbeliever, Sean Maitias, led back to faith in religion by the child Iosagan (Jesukin) because of the old man's love of children leaves an ineffable impression of beauty and child-like pathos with a poignant sense of the Eternal upon one. The West of Ireland setting, atmosphere and thought are made to live before us in this folk drama. But the high merit of "Iosagan" is not alone its simplicity, not its fineness of words but that it is deeply human. Pity, mercy, the ultimate folly of despair, sound upon the lips of children.

The "Master" is of an order more subtle, more profound, more uncommon. As a miracle play it is consistent and true, a miracle-play in the literal and best sense of the words. As such it is without reproach. The charm of the play is a two-fold charm, a charm of words, a clearness of action. The fault of the play, if fault it be, is its, perhaps, disappointing but quite truthful ending—the subjugation of a noble lover of life by a mere angel, however militant, however called for, however righteous. Yet that criticism arises from the play as the play develops. The wonder, the tangle, the pity of life are strong within it, and the mind wanders in search of profound truths behind the slender symbols evident and unmistakable. Two foster-brothers, Daire and Ciaran, had vied in youth for mastery. Daire became the king of his people, "a lover of men and women and the goodly sun," a hunter, a warrior, steadfast and unswerving in his Pagan creed, a crafty, subtle, but winning Pagan. Ciaran travels in search of renown. It eludes him. He embraces Christianity, he becomes a teacher of children, yet the old ambition is not dead, he fears himself, he doubts the truth of the gospel he preaches. In vain, he seeks peace in the loneliness of his cloister with a few pupils. They bring him a certain solace. Implicitly they believe his teachings. As the play opens they surround him, and discuss the Twelve Apostles with an airy and winsome reverence. The Master's favourite pupil Little Iollan, a character we regret we cannot dwell upon at greater length, is fervid in his eulogies of "good Peter of the Sword." But Ciaran upholds St. Paul and yearns shamefacedly for "poor doubting Thomas."

The Master asks them for poems of Christ's friends. A pupil, Breasal, chants a song to Mary Magdalene. It has in itself a touch not often found in modern religious poetry. It may be quoted in full:—

O woman of the gleaming hair
(Wild hair that won men's gaze to thee)

Weary thou turnest from the common stare
For the shuiler Christ is calling thee.

O woman with the wild thing's heart—
Old sin hath set a snare for thee;
In the forest ways forspent thou art;
But the hunter Christ shall pity thee.

O woman spendthrift of thyself,
Spendthrift of all the love in thee—
Sold unto sin for little pelf,
The captain Christ shall ransom thee.

O woman that no lover's kiss
(Tho' many a kiss was given thee)
Could slake thy love, is it not for this
The hero Christ shall die for thee?

The news that King Daire is hunting in the woods that surround Ciaran's cell has caused his pupils grave uneasiness. They urge him to flee; he refuses. A messenger brings an invitation to a feast Daire holds. Ciaran refuses. All his pupils except Little Iollan go out to Daire's ale feast. Then we see the profound doubt of Ciaran and Little Iollan's trusting faith in his Master, and in his master's teaching. The clash between the two foster-brothers is nearing its climax. Little Iollan believes God's great angels will uphold Ciaran against Daire's power incited to enmity by the Druids fearful of the strange new creed. Ciaran would fain believe it. "You will win this time, little Master," says the child confidently. "I hope so," says Ciaran. "I hope so, dear (aside I would I could say) I know so." This seems to me the hardest thing I have tried to do. Can a soldier fight for a cause of which he is not sure? Can a teacher die for a thing he does not believe? Iollan is sure the angels will come, that all "the old chivalry stands harnessed in Heaven." Ciaran's spirit interpreted in soliloquies reveals his thoughts, full of the courage of despair: "My spirit reaches out and finds Heaven empty. The great halls stand horseless and riderless. I have called to you O riders, and I have not heard the thunder of your coming. The multitudinous, many-voiced sea and the green, quiet earth have each its children, but where are the sons of Heaven? Where in all its temple of the world, this dim, and wondrous temple does its God lurk?"

Daire, the King, comes to seek his brother. He taunts him with his unbelief, he waves aside his apologies, his excuses, his defences. "I do not trust these skulking gods," he cries in scorn. He offers to make Ciaran the second man in his kingdom. He lifts up his sword and shield to Heaven as a challenge to God's great captains to come down to wage battle for the souls of his people. Like Thomas he must see ere he believe. Martyrdom will not move him. Have not men and women died for foolish and incredible things, for ghosts, and errors and vile causes? He calls Iollan to him. He raises his sword calling upon God to rescue the child while there is time. Ciaran stands silent and aghast. "Fear not little Master," cries Iollan. "I remember the word you taught me. Young Michael stand near me."

The figure of a mighty warrior, winged and clothed in light seems to stand beside the child. "I am he that is Captain of the Host of God," he proclaims to the kneeling king. Ciaran falls forward dead—a Master in very truth. "O Splendour!" he exclaims.

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