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JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE AT COLBY

REGULAR readers of this quarterly are already aware of the fact that the Colby College Library has been gradually coming into possession of a distinguished collection of the works, letters, manuscripts, and *ana* of modern Irish authors. On the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuala Press, celebrated in the Colby Library on May 1, 1953, Dean Ernest C. Marriner remarked: "Here on Mayflower Hill is a little bit of Ireland." That "little bit" consisted of a complete file of the publications and the hand-colored Christmas cards of the famous Press founded in Dublin in 1903 by the sister of William Butler Yeats. (See "Fifty Years of the Cuala Press" by Ernest C. Marriner, *CLQ* [III:171-183], August 1953.)

Since that date, Colby has received a number of distinguished Irish additions. In our issue for May 1955, Dr. Carlin T. Kindilien remarked, in "George William Russell ('AE') and the Colby Collection," that "over the last two decades Mr. James A. Healy, of New York and Portland, has devoted himself to the task of building an outstanding collection of AE's work," and that he had now given it to Colby College. A detailed check list of the collection was given on pages 31-56. In our issue for February 1956, we noted the gift by Mrs. Hazel G. Littlefield Smith, of Palos Verdes Estates, California, of the manuscript of Lord Dunsany's "In the Mojave," and in our issue for May 1956, the gift by Mr. B. Bacon Collamore, of Hartford, Connecticut, of the works of the Irish novelist J. S. LeFanu (fifty-one volumes) was reported.

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We are now happy to be able to announce that another Irish author has also "arrived" on Mayflower Hill. All admirers of *Riders to the Sea* (1904) and of *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) will join us in greeting the arrival at Colby of Mr. James A. Healy's collection of John Millington Synge. Although Synge died at the early age of thirty-eight, his writings have come to be universally regarded as having been among the most influential in the modern Irish revival, and it is therefore with particular satisfaction that we welcome this Synge Collection into the Colby College Library and devote this first issue of this quarterly in the New Year to the latest Dublin arrival—"last but not least"—to put in an appearance on the Colby campus.



SYNGE AND THE IRISH

By DAVID H. GREENE

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A DUBLIN wit once defined a literary movement as a group of writers who live in the same town and hate each other cordially. One of the ironies of that remarkable movement known as the Irish Renaissance was the mixture of acclamation and abuse showered upon John Millington Synge, in which he was alternately hailed as a genius and a slanderer of Ireland. The tumult with which his plays were greeted not only by the Irish at home but by the Irish abroad—*ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores*—can probably be described as a natural hazard which must be accepted by any writer who belongs to a literary movement founded paradoxically upon nationalist principles and a contempt for the mob. But the creator of *Riders to the Sea* and the incomparable *Playboy of the Western World* was bewildered when half the Irish world called him a genius and the