

PRESS OPINIONS—J. M. SYNGE

"To have invented—or discovered rather—a new form of English prose of strange and haunting beauty, to have revived the drama in a realistic form, yet with full attention to charm and dramatic truth, to have outlined a theory of poetic material, and to have accomplished a few things that put him indisputably among the artists of this century—such is the record of John M. Synge. . . . The writings of Synge are worthy of a place of honour on the shelves of every student of British literature and every lover of the English language and of the Irish genius. . . . That marvellous love-scene in the third act of *The Playboy of the Western World*, a passage unequalled, and we believe unapproached, in poetical beauty and exalted tenderness in the whole range of modern British drama."

—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

"Synge brought such a wealth of imagery and idiom to the old hard-worked English language, as to make it almost a new tongue. He certainly made a new instrument on which no one has yet learnt to play as well as he, though many are trying hard. . . . It is hard to think this play (*The Playboy*) can ever fail in its appeal—it is fresh, and humorous and poetical, whilst its conclusion epitomises romance. . . . his last two plays are the work of a genius, and that every line he ever wrote, of poetry or prose, was inspired by strong and original imagination—these are facts that will become recognised more and more widely every year."

—A. P. in *The Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette*.

"These four volumes, handsomely printed in dignified covers, contain the collected work of the greatest dramatist that modern Ireland has produced . . . and in them nothing whatever to regret—nothing even that can be passed off as dull or indifferent, nothing that is not both a hard basis of actuality, and yet an intensity of imagination that lifts it into the region of poetry . . . one of the most singular qualities of Synge is the extraordinary common sense which branches out to sustain the gruesomeness of his tragic imagination on the one side, and his no less gruesome humour on the other. It holds together this humour and this grimness so happily united in his work. It is the common sense of the old-fashioned poet, the common sense which is all pervading in Homer's *Odyssey* . . . in all there is character, dramatic force, fulness of imagination, and a fidelity also to that folk-life which he discovered in a manner so delightfully set forth in *The Aran Islands* and *In Wicklow*."

—R. A. Scott-James in *The Daily News*.