

# CALM BEFORE THE STORM

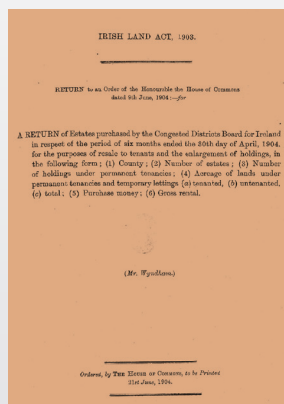


Main Hall of the 1902-3 Cork Exhibition, Fitzgerald's Park

In the early 1900s, Ireland seemed to share the calm of the settled European empires. Great exhibitions and royal visits, the founding of new theatres and arts galleries, urban electrification schemes, and the massive transfer of



George Wyndham



1903 Land Act

freehold land to over 300,000 farming families under the Wyndham Land Acts: all pointed to an incremental but inevitable improvement in Irish life.

The last major public building projects of the British administration were in full swing, from the Fusilier's Arch at Stephen's Green, erected in 1907 to commemorate the Dublin Fusiliers who had fought in the Boer War, to the Government Buildings in Merrion Street, whose foundation stone was laid by Edward VII in 1904 and whose opening was performed by George V in 1911

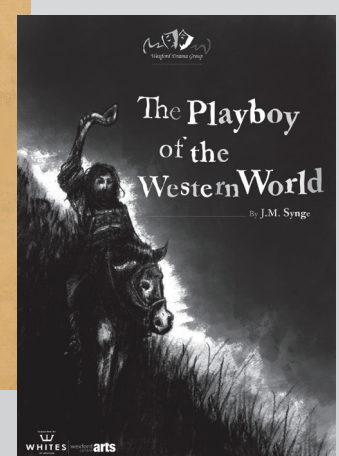
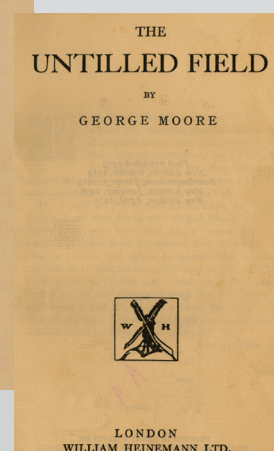
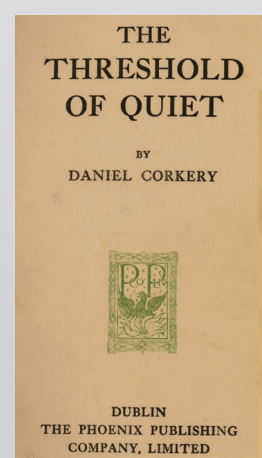


Royal Munster Fusiliers, 2nd battalion, survivors of the Gallipoli campaign



Crowds watching the procession of Edward VII and Alexandra in Cork in 1903

Yet, a certain social anxiety, a map of broken relationships, was already foreshadowed in Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, Moore's *The Untilled Field*, Corkery's *Threshold of Quiet* and D. P. Moran's *Tom O'Kelly*. It was a false calm in the Imperial backwater of Ireland.



LIBRARIES  
LEABHARLANNA

CORK CITY COUNCIL | COMHAIRLE CATHRACH CHORCAÍ