

THOUGHTS—

FROM A NOTE-BOOK*

WHEN I speak of Criticism, I speak not of the more or less deft use of commentary or indication, but of a rare and fine art: the Marriage of science that knows, of spirit that discerns.

The basis of criticism is imagination: its spiritual property is sympathy: its intellectual distinction is balance.

Without imagination, there is neither the art that creates, nor the art that discerns: without sympathy there is neither interpretation nor even understanding: without balance, which is the exercise of the controlled imagination and ordered intellect, there is neither measure nor harmony, the fundamental ideas of architecture, which is itself the fundamental art.

The truest literary criticism is that which sees that nowhere, at no time, in any conceivable circumstance, is there any lapse of intellectual activity so long as the nation animated thereby is not in its death-throes. Death is a variation, a note of lower or higher insistence in the rhythmic sequence of life. The psychic sense of rhythm is the fundamental factor in each and every art.

Poetry is a glorious re-birth of prose. When a beautiful thought can be uttered in worthy prose, best so. But when it moves the mind in music, and shapes itself to a lyric rhythm, then it should find expression in poetry. The truest poets are those who can most exquisitely capture, and concentrate in a few words, this haunting rhythm.

WILLIAM SHARP.

*From the hitherto unpublished MSS. of William Sharp (Fiona McLeod); contributed to CAMERA WORK through the kindness of Mrs. William Sharp.—Editors.