

LE PRIX NOBEL

By

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Specially written for "Der Querschnitt"

The spectacle of impoverished England howling over the loss of the only thing literary England can understand namely a sum of moneys, to wit le Prix Nobel, sterling 7500, is so touching that the springs of thought are thereby set working. One is moved to speculate upon causes.

And it seems quite possible that the apeeved British committee has been for years so silly and petulent and overbearing, that they have, like swine, cut their fat throats with the little sharp hooves of their forefeet.

Im any case if the award had not gone to Mr Yeats it should have been given to his most distinguished compatriot, the author of "ULYSSES"; who is younger and who has approved the Nobel Award, and who was very propably not recommended by the Irish committee.

The more tempered english yowl to the effect that Thomas Hardy deserves the award does not apply to the year 1923 in any way which has not been applicable for the last twenty years, or since the founding of the Prix Nobel.

It is incontestable that Hardy is an author in the Nobel Prize class; and that an award made to him, at any time during the Nobel period would have been widely applauded, but there is no special reason for it's having happened this year and we are open to speculate upon earlier awards, from data gained by twelve years residence in his island.

In the first place it seems likely that british literary politics has been so tangled and murky that the English committee has tried to put over all sorts of deals on the Swedish academy, and that that body has very properly rebelled, or even gone into a chronic state of rebellion against insular dictates.

This prize has been going on for some time, they the Britannics, are perfectly capable of having recommended their Laureate, or Mr Gosse, or Mr Dobson, or even the late Dr Nicoll. If they haven't howled about the non-acceptance of Hardy in the past, we must remember that it was only this year that the Prince visited Mr Hardy on a motor bike. In fact the English spent a number of years condoning Mr Hardy; and they have never induced him to London. He was for years considered a terrible fellow, and a pessimist.

They can't expect foreign opinion to veer in an instant because of a prince and a motor bike.

Some shrewd Swede may even have investigated the nature of their committee, and their Academic Committee, which used to call itself, or be loosely called, their "Academy".

This sub-division of the Royal Society of Literature (the latter a sort of palmes academique institution with no licence to give palmes) was founded about twelve years ago when an American lady married to a Frenchman decided to give ONE HUNDRED POUNDS per annum as a reward to litterchure in them islands.

Like the French Academy it was composed of forty members, mostly old dodos. It roped in a few estimable characters who thought England ought to have an intellectual life; they did not enjoy it.