INTERNATIONAL PRESS-CUTTING BUREAU
19, GROSVENOR PLACE, LONDON, S.W.1.

Extract from
Scotsman, Edinburgh

Vol. I

Artist-Writer's Diary

THE JOURNALS OF ANDRE GIDE. Vol. I (1899-1913.) (25s. Secker & Warburg.)

The publication of the journals of any author is in itself an act of recognition. But it is a form of recognition which has its dangers, for if the journals are the bona-fide day-to-day jottings of a busy writer they must inevitably include a great deal of matter which can only be considered valuable on the assumption that every word of the master, no matter how trivial or insignificant it may seem, is worthy of preservation. And as that is, even in the case of the greatest masters, manifestly a false assumption, one is forced to choose between accepting the worthless with the valuable, and selecting such passages as might well have been written with publication in view.

The diarist is under no obligation to assume a reader of any kind, yet he cannot be certain his words will not in the end come under the scrutiny of friend and enemy alike. He may begin, as André Gide apparently did in the present case, with no further desire than to teach himself to write more easily. He may before long find himself writing: "The desire to compose the pages of this journal deprives them of all worth, even that of sincerity. They do not really mean anything, never being well enough written to have a literary value. In short, all of them take for granted a future fame or celebrity that will confer an interest upon them. And that is utterly base."

Gide as Philosopher

If Gide were a more wordly man he might get some satisfaction out of the reflection that the assumption of future fame has now been abundantly justified. But even a little acquaintance with his works shows him to be the last to whom such thoughts would come, and, indeed, the journals alone, by their obvious sincerity, their self-searching, and the wideness of their range and appeal, may be regarded as bringing with them their own justification.

This English version of the *Journal*—to be completed in two further volumes—has been prepared by Professor Justin O'Brien, of Columbia University, who has had the advantage of consultation with Gide himself. In an admirable introduction he outlines the work of the novelist, dramatist, and critic. "The definition of virtue and the problem of self-realisation," he says, "are so fundamental in Gide's work as to make of him a *moraliste* or moral philosopher in the best French tradition."

The volume is well annotated, too; and this is necessary for the English reader, who in most cases is likely to be unfamiliar with many of the names and incidents mentioned. On the other hand, there are many intensely interesting passages which require no special knowledge of Gide and his literary circle. One comes upon such profound statements as: "To be a poet, one must believe in one's genius; to become an artist, one must question it. The really strong man is the one in whom *this* augments *that*."

There are several passages that will make the reader marvel at the amount of time Gide has spent at piano-practice, and these are given point by the subsequent observation, which could never have come from any mere piano-player: "Importance of the instrument; as soon as it is a good one, you discover in yourself some new skill in using it. A good pen is responsible for a fourth of my genius."

But whether it is about music, about literature, or about the day-to-day happenings of a varied if somewhat severely directed life that Gide writes, his Journals are always intensely alive, personal, and stimulatingly reflective. One is absorbed by them, not because of the many famous names which crop up in their pages, but because, like the Journals of Delacroix, they give a vivid account of the gradual and conscious development of an artist-writer.