

LECTURER

Dr. JAMES H. COUSINS

JAMES H. Cousins was born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1873, and at twenty published a book of verse that, for all its youthfulness, marked him as a poet of distinctive promise. He also became noted thus early as a lecturer on cultural topics.

At twentyfour he removed to Dublin, and found his place as one of the makers of the Irish Literary and Dramatic Revival. His poetry was ultimately classed by *The Nation* (London) as "second only to that of the two leaders of his movement"—W.B. Yeats and AE. At the same time he began to study the philosophies of India and developed his experience in education.

Mr. Cousins, and his wife, Margaret E. Cousins, B. Mus., moved to England in 1913. After two years there he proceeded to India, first as a journalist and later as lecturer in and ultimately Principal of a College for Hindu boys. Then began a life of interaction between the Celtic imagination and the environment of the Orient that resulted in poetry full of new beauty and extended significance. His enthusiasm for the work of the painters of the modern Indian revival took him all over the country with exhibitions and lectures. He organised in 1924 the Chitrasala (picture gallery) in the Jagan Mohan Palace for the Maharaja of Mysore.

A year's interval (1919-1920) was spent by Mr. Cousins in Japan as University Professor of Poetry. The Keiogijuku University and Imperial Ministry of Education of Japan made him a Doctor of Literature. He still enjoys the unique distinction of being the only non-Japanese holder of the degree. From 1922 to 1928 Dr. Cousins was Director of Studies of the Brahmavidya Ashrama (School of Synthetical Studies) at Adyar, Madras.

Dr. Cousins went from India to the United States of America in 1929 and after two lecture tours among universities and cultural organisations became Guest Lecturer in Poetry for a year (1931-1932) in The College of the City of New York, and Extension Lecturer in Poetry for the New York University. The delight of audiences from coast to coast in his recitals of his poetry created a demand for his works, and the Roerich Museum Press, New York, brought out a complete edition in two volumes up to 1933—"A Wandering Harp" and "A Bardic Pilgrimage." These combined his twenty volumes of poetry. He has also published twenty volumes of prose on literature, art, philosophy, religion and education. These have been summarised in his large work "A Study in Synthesis" (Ganesh and Co., Madras).

From 1933 to 1938 Dr. Cousins was again the Principal of Madanpalle College in Madras Presidency. In 1934 he was given the ancient Sanskrit title of Kulapati (teacher of multitudes) by the South Indian Teachers' Association. In 1935 he organised the Travancore State Gallery of Asian Painting, for which he was awarded the *veera srinkhala* (bracelet of prowess) by His Highness the Maharaja, a coveted distinction of which he is the second European recipient, the first having been given in 1783. He also initiated and supervised the organization of the Ranga Vilasam Palace museum, and directed the rearrangement of the Government museum, both in Trivandrum. He is now (1939) directing the renovation, in its original manner, of the ancient seat of state authority, Padmanabhapuram Palace in south Travancore. Dr. Cousins is now designated Art Adviser to the Government of Travancore and Head of the Department of fine arts of the university of Travancore.

