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Oscar Wilde
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Vol. 8

"THE DUCHESS OF PADUA."

THE DUCHESS OF PADUA: A Play. By OSCAR WILDE.
(Methuen, 12s. 6d. net.)

This is the first volume of the new collected edition of the works of Oscar Wilde. If there were nothing better to follow, we should hesitate about the need for the enterprise. In one way, the publication of this tragedy will benefit the world and the fame of the author, since it will (at least we hope it will) sweep away the prose translation from a translation into German, which has hitherto been masquerading as the genuine thing. We have now for the first time the original text, though here and there it seems to be corrupt, and misprints are not wanting. But those who look to this play for any new proof of Wilde's genius, or indeed for any more than a faint suggestion of a few elements in that genius, will look in vain. *The Duchess of Padua* is an early work; and of all the works of an author whose originality had its root in high-handed borrowing it is the most, and the least masterfully, imitative. A literary artist exceptionally adroit by nature and finely trained by effort, Wilde mastered forms easily, and used them for his own purpose, which was generally for the expression, by one or another kind of brilliant perversion, of ideas which, in their turn, were brilliant perversions of other people's ideas. They were often but "pot-shots" at truth, if we dare call them so; and the surprising correctness with which they were aimed was possibly of less moment to the gay marksman than the style in which they were fired and his determination to be seen shooting in the direction on which the rest of the world had turned its back. There is nothing of this in *The Duchess of Padua*. It stops short at the imitation of a form. True, the wicked Duke, in the middle of a Polonian address of counsel to a young man, remarks:—

Have prudence; in your dealings with the world
Be not too hasty; act on the second thought,
First impulses are generally good.

But such sparks—heralding the showers of rockets to come—are rare. For the present the author is content to imitate as well as he can.

The first impression gained is that he imitates remarkably well. *The Duchess of Padua* is an Elizabethan, or rather a Jacobean, tragedy in five acts of blank verse and prose. On the face of it, the scheme is complete. Here is a fable of blood and poison, murder and suicide, high love and savage hate. Here is a mad scene, and here is "comic relief" with a second this and a third that as wisely foolish as could be, and a Mistress Lucy to do for Juliet's nurse. Only in the act-endings, which are, all but one, worked up to the "situations" unknown to the platform stage, does the scheme reveal at a glance its actual date. Much of the language, too, is even deceptively like (we need hardly say that it is all exceedingly clever). When the duchess, who has murdered her husband and taken poison, is descanting on the "stark winding-sheet" and the grave, she remarks:

I think there are no roses in the grave,
Or if there are, they all are withered now
Since my Lord went there.

This, too, is quite in the period:—

It would be a thing
So terrible that the amazed stars
Would fall from heaven, and the palsied moon
Be in her sphere eclipsed, and the great sun—

but we need not complete what every one can complete for themselves. To take a longer passage:—

O thou eternal heaven !

If there is aught of nature in my soul,
Of gentle pity, or fond kindness,
Wither it up, blast it, bring it to nothing,
Or if thou wilt not, then will I myself
Cut pity with a sharp knife from my heart
And strangle mercy in her sleep at night
Lest she speak to me. Vengeance there I have it.
Be thou my comrade and my bedfellow,
Sit by my side, ride to the chase with me,
When I am weary sing me pretty songs,
When I am light o' heart, make jest with me,
And when I dream, whisper into my ear
The dreadful secret of a father's murder—
Did I say murder? (Draws his dagger.)

Listen, thou terrible God !

Thou God that punishest all broken oaths,
And bid some angel write this oath in fire,
That from this hour—

and so to the oath.

It is a pity that, on further examination, the likeness proves here and there too strong. When a woman who has murdered an old man says:—"I did not think he would have bled so much"; when a dying woman cries:—

Are there no rivers left in Italy
That you will not fetch me one cup of water
To quench this fire?

when we read of "the cold meats of my husband's funeral feast," and find the line:—"You are my lady, and you are my love!" we cannot talk of adroitness in imitation. Nor can we with regard to the conduct of the fable, which has its source and inspiration in a desire to imitate. Guido Ferranti to murder the Duke of Padua, who murdered his father. The deed might be done at any time after the first act, but it must be delayed, partly that he may show a Hamlet-like irresolution, and partly that he and the Duchess may fall in love with each other. Then the Duchess murders the Duke, to make way for Guido, and turns Lady Macbeth for a time. Guido, instead of welcoming the deed, is virtuously indignant, and casts off the Duchess, who thereupon proclaims him the Duke's assassin. So we come to a *Merchant of Venice* trial, in which things sway to and fro and each party mimics the other's expressions of triumph. This act is kept going by the uncertainty—achieved at the cost of any clear statement of motives—whether Guido will tell the truth or not; and his silence leads us to the dungeon where the lovers die as like Romeo and Juliet as may be. Wilde had a wonderful instinct for what would be effective on the stage, and we can imagine that, well acted, the tragedy would be perfectly convincing at the moment—but for one thing.

Over-anxious, perhaps, to make us sympathize with his lovers, the author has been afraid to leave it to the story to explain them. They are constantly looking at themselves from outside, far too often assuring us out of their own

mouths that they are "boyish," "girlish," and "young." They forget themselves, indeed, far enough to make love beautifully; but they are a terribly self-conscious young couple. They pity themselves so much that we can hardly pity them; and they become almost irritating in their conscious simplicity, which shows itself chiefly in a reiterated trick of beginning their remarks with "I think that" or "I did not think that." This is partly due to the inexperienced efforts of youth; it means also that the author was not convinced of his characters himself, and had not the skill to hide it. He saw them from the outside only—just as he saw both the scene and the Duchess from the outside only when he made her, in a moment of agony, call the Madonna's attention to the fact that the artist of her picture had represented her with a "sweet pale face bending between the little angel heads."

The publication of this volume makes the world the richer by a good deal of beautiful verse and some cleverly-managed scenes. It does not add to our stock of great plays. Happily, there are better things to come, things which Oscar Wilde alone could have given us.

Fortney
July 1908

THE POSE OF MR. ARTHUR SYMONS.

THE word "pose" is used without any unfriendly intention, and, indeed, almost as photographers use it. Everybody poses more or less; everybody, that is to say, has some attitude in which he prefers to challenge public attention, whether because he finds it most effective, or because he considers it most characteristic. The differences are mainly of degree, and the great dividing difference is between the writers who pose principally for the gallery, and the writers who pose principally for themselves.

In the former class it is perhaps Mr. Chesterton, Mr. Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Hall Caine who take the prizes. At the close of the most effective passages in their writings they always seem to wave a signal to the *claque*. When Mr. Chesterton protests that only quite incredible propositions can be quite true, when Mr. Shaw recognises in the increasing popularity of divorce a healthy token of a great moral awakening, and when Mr. Hall Caine re-discovers the Christian religion one reads between the lines an implied *Nunc plaudite* as a sort of stage direction. The manner of these writers, if not their matter, is that of the stump orator or the popular entertainer. Not slow self-realisation, but the production of an immediately stunning effect upon a startled and gaping audience appears to be the end in view.

The pose of Mr. Arthur Symons is the other kind of pose. That applause is absolutely a matter of indifference to him, one must not venture to affirm. Knowing that there is a great deal of human nature in people, one would hesitate to say as much as that of anyone. But it certainly is not his first consideration; he does not seek it by compromises or over-emphasis, and has, indeed, the air of being much too self-satisfied to do so. In some of his prefaces he has stated, almost in so many words, that critics who fail to appreciate his work give the measure of their own incapacity. If they do not understand, so much the worse for them. He knows what he means, and has his point of view—his "system of æsthetics" and his philosophy of life. His apparent enthusiasm for non-morality is an integral portion of a comprehensive scheme—one of the irrefragable links in the chain that binds art and life together. The scheme is of more consequence than the world's opinion of it. So is the manifestation of it through his personality. Gaining the whole world is a poor thing beside gaining one's own soul. He will seek that first, whether the rest be added unto him or not. Of course, a man cannot do it without posing. Therefore, he poses. But he

poses chiefly for himself, and the pose is not easily distinguishable from self-realisation.

It is a pose which has one suspicious feature—a certain air of æsthetic omniscience which does not always quite carry conviction: the pose, in fact, of a man extremely sensitive in every tentacle, with each tentacle separately laying intelligent hold upon a separate art. Mr. Symons writes poetry, fiction, and criticism. He criticises not literature only, but also painting, music, and the drama. He pronounces judgment not on one literature only, but on three: the English, the French, and the Italian. His range extends from the Elizabethans to the Decadents. It is true that he is continually saying luminous things on all of these very various subjects, but the circumstance remains suspicious all the same. It is incredible, to adapt a well-worn saying, that any man ever was quite so æsthetically omniscient as Mr. Arthur Symons appears to be. The closest parallel is perhaps to be found in the case of the brothers de Goncourt, and there is an obvious point at which that parallel breaks down. There were two brothers de Goncourt, and there is only one Mr. Arthur Symons to bear the undivided burden of universal knowledge.

After all, however, it is not the knowledge, but the pose, that is the really interesting thing. That, if it were not interesting in itself, would still be interesting, because it is so well sustained, and, at the same time, so well defined. Whatever may be the precise nature of the literary movement with which Mr. Symons is connected—a matter to which we will come presently—he stands towards it in a curiously double relation. He expounds it as well as illustrating it; he is its *Sainte-Beuve* as well as its Victor Hugo. The true inwardness of Mr. W. B. Yeats may be obscure except to the initiated; there is never any doubt as to the true inwardness of Mr. Symons. He is both artist and critic, and the critic lays the artist's soul upon the table, at once, as it were, inviting and defying ribaldry. He presents æstheticism at once in its latest and its most articulate phase, and the historical origin of the point of view and frame of mind which it expresses is worth inquiring into.

Its ultimate source should probably be sought in pre-Raphaelitism. At all events, it is not worth while to go further back than that reaction against the Philistinism and general ugliness of early and mid-Victorian life. It established a new religion of beauty, albeit on what must have seemed to the Philistines a somewhat doleful basis. It lacked laughter. The enemies of Philistinism who laughed, as Matthew Arnold did, were not pre-Raphaelites. The pre-Raphaelites themselves were perhaps a

little too conscious that the overthrow of Philistinism was no laughing matter. Ecstasy was perhaps their substitute for hilarity. It was a disposition to a sort of æsthetic ecstasy which they bequeathed to their Oxford successors, specifically known as *Æsthetes*, who had first Walter Pater and then Oscar Wilde for their prophets.

Plenty of Oxford men not yet middle-aged can well remember that *Æsthetic Movement* and the strange jargon talked by its *illuminés*. They were "utter," they said; they were "too too"; they were "all but." And no doubt the boast that they were "all but" was the best founded, and received the most ironical justification. They had not, that is to say, the sincerity of conviction which could enable them to stand firm in the day of persecution, and that day of persecution came upon them with the suddenness of a thunder-clap.

What happened, to be precise, was this: Towards the end of a certain summer term, and in the midst of the season of bump suppers, a certain *Æsthete* of some notoriety brought forward a resolution at the Union proposing that the Society should discontinue its subscription to *Punch*, because that journal was ridiculing the "New Renaissance." The proposal was rejected, but the end of the matter was not in the Debating Hall, but at the *Æsthete's* college, where a party of boating men were convivially celebrating their success upon the river. The harmony of the evening ended in an attack upon the *Æsthete*. His collection of blue china was thrown out of his window, and he himself was put under the college pump. It was threatened that the same measures would be taken with other *Æsthetes* in other colleges, and in the panic that ensued the *Æsthetic Movement* perished. The leading *Æsthete* hurried as one man to the barber's to get their hair cut, and to the haberdasher's to buy high collars. Men who, on the previous day, had resembled owls staring out of ivy bushes, now cultivated the appearance of timid cows shyly peeping over white walls; and all the available enthusiasm—since Oxford must always have an enthusiasm of some sort—was transferred to Canon Barnett's scheme for conveying the higher life to the lower orders through the medium of University Settlements.

That is the true story of the great Philistine revolt against the tyranny of æstheticism—but it was only a local insurrection. *Æstheticism* was expelled from Oxford, but was not extinguished. Only its exterior affectations were killed by the ridicule of *Patience* and *The Colonel*. If not the mantle, at least a double portion of the spirit of the Oxford *Æsthete* was inherited by the London Decadents, who, to a certain extent, altered the character of the movement.

They were, for the most part, older men, and they were living under a gloomier sky. Consequently, they stood to the Æsthetes almost in the relation of professionals to amateurs. The Æsthetes, after all, had been irresponsible beings, sad as night (when they were so sad) only for wantonness. There was no real temperamental gloom about them; there hardly can be any for youth at Oxford, especially in the summer term. Most of them were only half in earnest, and were, in reality, laughing in their sleeves. Even their leader, Oscar Wilde, was doing so. The Decadents deceived themselves quite as much as they deceived the world. For anything that any of them knew to the contrary, they were thoroughly in earnest. There was a genuine inwardness about their melancholy, and they were under fresh influences, of which the Æsthetes had known little or nothing: French influences, Bohemian influences, alcoholic influences. For Greek moderation they substituted French extravagances, most of them knowing the French tongue well and the Greek indifferently. The Butte Montmartre was their Parnassus, and their culminating hour came when they fished Verlaine out of the Café du Soleil d'Or and exhibited him in London.

One need not insist, however, for the phase did not endure. Of Decadent melancholy, as of all carnal pleasure, cometh satiety at last. Perhaps the era of wars and the call for energy and efficiency helped to put an end to it. At all events, the party of Decadent rhymers who read their verses to one another in a Fleet Street Tavern gradually broke up. Death and division—and in some cases perhaps marriage also—made a difference. One Decadent came to a mysteriously tragic end in Paris; a second drank himself to death; a third was run over by a cab. Others seceded and relapsed into commonplace, orderly courses. Among these are included a distinguished librarian in London, and a distinguished reporter in the United States. To Mr. Arthur Symons, almost alone among them belongs the glory of going on and still to be, and even he has not gone on precisely upon Decadent lines. He does not now call himself a Decadent, if he ever did. Probably he has always, like Sainte-Beuve, stood a little aloof from the movements with which he has seemed to be most intimately associated. That is perhaps the inevitable destiny of the man who is critic as well as artist. Decadentism, at any rate, has been in his case a station on the road to Mysticism. Through the one mental phase, as through the other, he has, as he puts it, been gradually working his way "towards the concrete expression of a theory, or system of æsthetics, of all the arts."

One must beware, of course, of criticising a system of æsthetics

which is as yet only partially expounded. It often happens, however, that a theorist anticipates his conclusions by the reiteration of a phrase or a word, and to this rule Mr. Symons seems to have conformed. His favourite word is "escape"; his favourite phrase "escape from life." Now the one and now the other re-appear continually in all kinds of connections. Of John Addington Symonds, for example, he writes: "All his work was in part an escape, an escape from himself." Of Ernest Dowson's indulgence in the squalid debaucheries of the Brussels Kermesse he writes: "It was his own way of escape from life." Passages of that tenour abound in his writings, and, in one of his papers on "The Symbolist Movement in Literature," he explains his meaning more precisely. The exposition is too long to quote in full, but the essential sentences must be given:—

Our only chance, in this world, of a complete happiness, lies in the measure of our success in shutting the eyes of the mind, and deadening its sense of hearing, and dulling the keenness of its apprehension of the unknown. . . . As the present passes from us, hardly to be enjoyed except as memory or as hope, and only with an at best partial recognition of the uncertainty or inutility of both, it is with a kind of terror that we wake up, every now and then, to the whole knowledge of our ignorance, and to some perception of where it is leading us. To live through a single day with that overpowering consciousness of our real position, which, in the moments in which alone it mercifully comes, is like blinding light or the thrust of a flaming sword, would drive any man out of his senses. . . . And so there is a great silent conspiracy between us to forget death; all our lives are spent in busily forgetting death. That is why we are so active about so many things which we know to be unimportant; why we are so afraid of solitude, and so thankful for the company of our fellow creatures. Allowing ourselves for the most part to be but vaguely conscious of that great suspense in which we live, we find our escape from its sterile, annihilating reality, in many dreams, in religion, passion, art; each a forgetfulness, each a symbol of creation. . . . Each is a kind of sublime selfishness, the saint, the lover, and the artist having each an incommunicable ecstasy which he esteems as his ultimate attainment; however, in his lower moments, he may serve God in action, or do the will of his mistress, or minister to men by showing them a little beauty. But it is before all things an escape. . . .

That is the theory of art—which is at the same time a theory of life—in so far as it has, up to the present, been formulated. No human pursuit is, or is viewed as, an end in itself. All our occupations—except those, perhaps, in which we engage at the bidding of such imperative and elementary impulses as hunger and thirst—are so many devices for diverting our minds from the one great problem which we cannot hope to solve. For this reason the squire rides to hounds; for this reason the smart set play bridge. This is the motive of the indiscriminate debauchery of the dissolute, and of the asceticism of the monk; this is the origin and the use of poetry, painting, music, and the drama. But

the way of the artist is the best, since, by the symbolism of art, the finite may obtain, in the measure of finite capacity, some consoling apprehension of the infinite.

No doubt the formula lacks some of the essentials of a philosophy. It implies that the mass of men are a good deal more self-conscious, and a good deal more prone to the contemplation of the riddle of the Universe than we actually find them. That riddle is, in fact, far more terrifying to those who think they know the answer to it than to those who recognise that they do not. It frightened Bunyan, but it did not frighten Gibbon. Many men live calmly and contentedly in the blind indefinite faith expressed in the "*Alles zal recht komen*" inscribed on the tomb of President Brand of the Orange Free State. To many other men their life upon the earth is so interesting, and their work there, as it seems to them, so clearly an end in itself, that, when the hour sounds for them to drop it, their impulse is to exclaim, with Cecil Rhodes: "So little done! So much to do!" Theirs are clear cases to which the formula does not apply, and there are plenty of others. Some men, indeed, instead of being scared by the mystery, are fascinated by it. Herbert Spencer did not want to run away from it—though it is true that his own generalisations appalled him in the end; nor did Henry Sidgwick; nor did T. H. Green.

The most, in fact, that can be said of the formula is that it is true of the cases to which it applies—of the cases, for instance, of such religious fanatics as John Henry Newman and Frederick Faber, and also of such sceptics as, say, Arthur Hugh Clough, James Thomson, and Edward FitzGerald—and that it furnishes a connecting link between the successive phases of Mr. Symons' own literary career. His work, whatever else it may be, seems intended to be read as the record of a series of endeavours to "escape from life"—life being interpreted to mean the unceasing circle of speculation as to the whence, the whither, and the why. The early poems relate the attempt to escape by means of "the raptures and roses." The writer recounts his voyages to Cythera, and describes the particularities of miscellaneous caresses. He also relates how he has sat up all night smoking and drinking in foul air and unprofitable company. But all in vain. He did not enjoy as mere Philistines might, and there was no escape for him in this direction. The emptiness and the hollowness of it all were too apparent:—

We smoke, to fancy that we dream,
And drink, a moment's joy to prove,
And fain would love, and only seem
To love because we cannot love.

Draw back the blinds, put out the light;
'Tis morning, let the daylight come.
God! How the women's cheeks are white,
And how the sunlight strikes us dumb!

This was the sort of thing that set the reviewers jibing, with the result that, in a subsequent preface, Mr. Symons expressed contempt for them. It had appeared to them, no doubt, that men who took no pleasure in such proceedings might as well refrain from them, and it was, indeed, hardly reasonable to expect them to divine that the poet was only drawn to them as a distraction from the riddle of this painful earth. The motive, more characteristic of French than of English poets, was too subtle for them, and perhaps Mr. Symons himself, looking back upon the matter, would admit that, even in his case, it was not so much express as implied, and that he has even, in part, given us an *ex post facto* glorification of dissolute behaviour.

The ascription of the motive, however, fits in with the general scheme. Somehow and somewhere the escape from life must be found if sanity was to be preserved—that is the consistent pose. We have seen Mr. Symons seeking it in Bohemianism. We then see him seeking it in love, in travel, in every one of the arts from poetry to skirt dancing. The arts lead him on through Symbolism to Mysticism, and therein he finds such release as it is possible for him to achieve:—

The doctrine of Mysticism . . . presents us, not with a guide for conduct, not with a plan for our happiness, not with an explanation of any mystery, but with a theory of life which makes us familiar with mystery, and which seems to harmonise those instincts which make for religion, passion, and art, freeing us at once from a great bondage. The final uncertainty remains, but we seem to knock less helplessly at closed doors, coming so much closer to the once terrifying eternity of things about us, as we come to look upon these things as shadows, through which we have our shadowy passage.

This statement, it must be admitted, does not exactly define a doctrine or do anything more than express a frame of mind, but the language of the most elaborate theologians, when precise definitions are invited, seldom seems to amount to more than that. Whatever some half-educated or muddle-headed clergymen may say, no religion—no solution of the ultimate problem—can rest, in the last resort, upon authority. "You mustn't tell me what the soldier said. It isn't evidence," is the unanswerable retort to whoever presumes to quote on these matters a Council of the Church, or a Bishop, or a Pope, or any other Great Panjandrum. The Great Panjandrums of the past have declared many doctrines, which the Great

Panjandrums of the present do not hold. Any religion which depended solely upon that sort of evidence would long since have been argued out of existence. Yet religion remains, though all the dogmas are in the melting-pot, and the Christian terminology has ceased to correspond to anything definite in thought or definable in language. It remains because men feel that, through some faculty other than reason, they have apprehension of certain truths which they can neither demonstrate nor formulate, because, that is to say, they have, and cannot divest themselves of, the sort of faith which is the evidence of things not seen. It is a faith which results in codes of conduct, though it does not explicitly supply them. It does not make the infinite comprehensible to the finite intelligence, but it does rob the infinite mystery of its terror. In that sense—as distinguished from the sense of the Theosophists with their elaborate cosmogony—it might almost be said that we are all Mystics nowadays, though not all of us use the name, or are even conscious of our title to it. In so far as that is Mr. Symons' meaning, what he says of the uses of Mysticism is more true than new. The individual note is struck rather in his insistence upon the maddening terror which the mystery may inspire. Of this, too, there is perhaps an explanation.

For the origin of the terror, where it is felt, seems to lie, not in the mystery itself, but in the belief in some particular solution of it. In spite of Addison's appeal to his friends to "see how a Christian could die"; in spite of the heroism of innumerable martyrs; in spite of Saint Paul's "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain," it is a common reproach against the Christian religion that it has taught men to be afraid of death. The Christian sinner is afraid to die (at all events in cold blood), if the Christian saint is not. Death is feared by him in a sense in which it was never feared by the Pagans, and as it is not feared to-day by Buddhists, Hindus, or Mohammedans. And for a very obvious reason. To him alone has the doctrine of the terrors of hell been preached.

The intensity of the terror, moreover, does not depend upon, or vary concomitantly with, depravity of conduct. It depends far more upon the shape in which the doctrine is presented, and upon the nervous organisation of the hearer. Some teachers are very vague about hell, and others are very precise; some emphasise and others minimise the danger of going there. The hell imagined by Dante is bad enough, but it can be made still more appalling by the rhetoric of a Spurgeon. A further aggravation of the horror may reside in uncertainty as to the means of avoiding it. According to some teachers, one may be predestined to

it; according to others one may have predestined oneself to it by committing "the unpardonable sin." Theoretically, the way of escape may lie through "grace"; but the granting of grace is a miracle that, in any particular case, may happen to be withheld. The doctrine, expressed in that form, is very trying to the nerves.

Some nerves are proof against it. Some natures lack imagination, and fail to visualise the picture. The doctrine only produces its full effect upon the mind of a child at once literal, sensitive, and imaginative. To such children it causes long hours of agonising dread of which they do not even dare to speak. That way lies madness as every specialist in insanity well knows; and even emancipation from the literal doctrine itself does not necessarily mean that all its effects are nullified thenceforth and for ever. Calvinism and Methodism are creeds which continue subtly to influence impressionable minds long after they have ceased to be believed. May we not perhaps find in this fact a further clue to the philosophy of life, and even to the "system of aesthetics" of Mr. Arthur Symons?

The suggestion is not made on the strength of any personal knowledge—to which, if one possessed it, it would be impertinent to refer—but as the result of a careful reading of the work entitled "Spiritual Adventures." The first paper, called "A Prelude to Life," and written in the first person, is not necessarily to be read as autobiography, and the other papers cannot be so read; but inferences may be drawn from the nature of the emotions which they dissect, and from the kind of insight shown in the dissection. Methodism, and the hell fire which blazes around Methodism, and the madness which is akin to it, are themes to which Mr. Symons recurs as if they had a special fascination for him; themes, too, on which he writes like a man who has acquired his knowledge, not from without, but from within—who has not merely observed but felt. The story of "Seaward Lackland" is specifically the story of a preacher whom Methodism drove to madness. In "A Prelude to Life" we find this significant passage:—

The thought of hell was often in my mind . . . always ready to come forward at any external suggestion. Once or twice it came to me with such vividness that I rolled over on the ground in a paroxysm of agony, trying to pray God that I might not be sent to hell, but unable to fix my mind on the words of the prayer. I felt the eternal flames taking hold of me, and some foretaste of their endlessness seemed to enter into my being.

This surely is neither invented nor imagined, but is remembered. One would say that it is one of those vivid memories

which are also influences, and that much that seems idiosyncratic in the subsequent attitude towards life and creeds may be explained by it. Some men in getting rid of their creeds get rid also of their fears, and, ceasing to believe, become as if they never had believed. That is the impression which one derives from such sceptical writers as Matthew Arnold and Sir Leslie Stephen. But there are also two other classes of sceptics: those who are made melancholy by the obligation to abandon hope, and those for whom a vague is substituted for a definite apprehension. To this last class belong all those who, being sensitively organised, have been thoroughly frightened by Methodist or Calvinist threatenings in their childhood. Unless Mr. Arthur Symons is such a one, then the internal evidence furnished by his writings is singularly misleading. All the indications are that Methodism made him before art and literature began to mould him; and that, when he speaks of an "escape from life," he means, in the first instance, an escape from Methodism, and, in the second instance, an escape from the ineffaceable mark which Methodism has branded on his mind.

FRANCIS GRIBBLE.

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ACTOR BETTERS AUTHOR.

Maurice Barrymore was noted for his inability to remember the lines of a part until he had played it dozens of times. At the first performance of Oscar Wilde's comedy, "A Woman of No Importance," the actor substituted for the author's speech a sentence of his own so witty that it has remained part of the piece ever since. In the first act of "A Woman of No Importance," Lord Illingworth is besought by his son to marry the boy's mother. The reply is nearly a page long, and, at the premiere, Barrymore couldn't remember a word of it. He hesitated only a moment, however, before delivering the sense of the speech in the following line:

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MR. H. B. IRVING'S "FUTURES."

"LORD ARTHUR SAVILLE'S CRIME."

A NEW BENEDICK AND SOME RICHARDS.

IT was at the Garrick Club that I found opportunity for a short talk with Mr. H. B. Irving with regard to his arrangements for the future.

"I start my tour to-morrow at Douglas, Isle of Man," said Mr. Irving, "and after that I go to Llandudno, Dublin, Belfast, Scarborough, and Eastbourne. These towns will account for my first six weeks. Other provincial bookings are pending.

"As a matter of fact, I am not anxious to book a very long provincial tour just yet, as I hope to start another West-End season before Christmas. If not before Christmas, then as early as possible in the spring. For the present tour my repertory will include 'The Lyons Mail,' 'The Bells,' 'Hamlet,' and 'Louis the Eleventh' as old works. I carry also two new pieces, Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy's 'Cæsar Borgia,' and 'The Sergeant of Hussars,' written by Miss Cicely Hamilton, author of 'Diana of Dobson's.' The REFEREE gave such an encouraging notice of this little play when it was performed one Sunday evening by the Play Actors' Society that for some time past I have thought of securing it for my wife—Miss Dorothea Baird—to play the lead, and now I have secured it!

"Any other new plays in view? Yes. I have arranged for what seems to me to be quite a promising and well-written play of the lighter sort, with a splendid part for me and a very nice heroine's part for Mrs. Irving. It has been written by Messrs. Cannan and Peacey, and is a three-act play—a 'society' piece, I suppose you would call it. It has a good deal of the Oscar Wilde æsthetic attitudinising and passion for epigram, and indeed it is somewhat on the lines of that author's comedy, 'The Importance of Being Earnest.' The scene is laid in and around Mayfair. Title? Oh, it at present is called 'Lord Arthur Saville's Crime.'

"Undoubtedly the most important and most picturesque of my new productions will be 'Cæsar Borgia,' which, as you know, I tried in Edinburgh last November. That I *must* do on tour, whether I try 'Lord Arthur Saville's Crime' this time or not. Borgia is a fine acting character, a kind of part to keep an actor thoroughly on the alert right up to its dramatic finish. Mrs. Irving has an attractive part—the heroine, Lavinella. I regard it as a fine drama, almost a fine tragedy. The action is swift, comprising, in fact, a night, a morning, an afternoon, and an evening in Cæsar Borgia's career. I hope London will like it, but, of course, you never can tell.

"For my next West-End season I thought of making a start with 'Cæsar Borgia'—certainly as regards any new play production. But I may actually open that season with 'The Lyons Mail,' as you advise.

"I am particularly anxious concerning my reception as Lesurques and Dubosc, Charles the First, Louis the Eleventh, and Mathias. I have not been seen at the West-End in any of my father's great parts yet—except Hamlet.

"What other Shakespearean characters am I considering? I would like to try Macbeth, but now I must wait until Mr. Tree has given his revival of the play. I had a notion (as the REFEREE stated long ago) of doing Richard the Third. In any case, I think you may safely say that one of these days I shall revive 'Richard the Second.' My father always wanted me to play that character. And certainly I shall attempt the character of Benedick.

"It will give me great pleasure to present several of my father's successful plays in London, not only to see what I can do with them, but also because I think there must be many playgoers who would be glad to see them revived. They should still have a vogue—especially," he added, with something of his father's semi-satirical smile—"especially as some of those plays are being given in condensed form at the variety theatres—'The Bells' and 'The Lyons Mail' particularly.

"You suggest that I should revive 'Becket' and 'Olivia'? I must confess I had not thought of reviving 'Olivia.' Still, as you say, playgoers *might* like to see me as the dear old Vicar and (also as you say) Mrs. Irving as Olivia. I hadn't thought of that. I would like to play Becket; but the play's mournful association with the closing scene of my father's life makes me anxious to delay revival of Tennyson's play as long as possible. Still, I shall, I hope, try to play Becket one of these days.

"I shall certainly take your advice," added Mr. Irving, "as to leaving 'Vanderdecken' and 'Eugene Aram' severely alone. There was always more morbidity than money in them. Now, a *new* play—a really *human* play—on 'The Phantom Ship' legend *might*—Eh? But Time will show—and there is plenty of time yet before showing," said Mr. Irving, as he left the Garrick Club en route to the Court Theatre where he had called a night rehearsal for his company.

OSCAR WILDE'S STORIES.

His Best Achievements.

Only a Sunday or so ago I read in my "Referee" that Mr. H. B. Irving had in his possession a three-act play, "written by Messrs. Cannan and Peacey," which has "a good deal of the Oscar Wilde æsthetic attitudinising and passion for epigram, and is somewhat on the lines of that author's comedy, 'The Importance of Being Earnest.'" When the title of this piece was mentioned by Mr. Irving as being "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime," I rubbed my eyes and asked myself, "Can it be that 'H. B.' is not aware that this is the title of one of Wilde's best known short stories, and that presumably the piece must be an adaptation of it?" The announcement in question served to remind me that I had yet to deal with a certain section, I believe the section which will live longest, of Oscar Wilde's works. In Messrs. Methuen's handsome collected edition these occupy two volumes, being respectively entitled "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Pieces" and "A House of Pomegranates and Other Tales," and along with "The Picture of Dorian Grey," issued by Mr. Charles Charrington from Paris in a uniform shape, they contain all the prose fiction which their author produced. Mr. Irving is right in comparing "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime" with "The Importance of Being Earnest." It is an extravaganza of the most reckless type, with scenes laid in Mayfair and dialogue full of paradox, and its leading idea the attempts, again and again crowned with failure, which a nice boy makes to fulfil the prophecy of a cheiromantist that he will commit murder. The story, however, has a curiously non-moral twist, and I admire much more another tale to be found in the same volume and styled "The Portrait of Mr. W. H."

This exploits in the most ingenious fashion, with a pretty travesty of scholarship, a theory, a highly fantastic theory, that Shakespeare's Sonnets were dedicated to a boy-actor for whom he wrote the most famous women parts of his plays—Rosalind, Juliet, and the rest—and supposes the boy's name to be Master Will Hughes. But this volume also contains a delightful burlesque ghost-story, "The Canterville Ghost," and the memorable and audacious "Poems in Prose." The companion volume is made up of tales more or less designed for children's reading, and here I think we find Oscar Wilde's talent in its most charming, because in its simplest, form. Hans Andersen never wrote a more touching or beautiful story than "The Happy Prince," and only less good are "The Birthday of the Infanta" and "The Young King." The one flaw in them is the affection their author betrays for costly and luxurious things; here, as elsewhere, he shows himself scarcely fond of beauty unadorned. But that one mark of artificiality apart, the art of them is perfect, the fancy delicate, the phrasing fastidiously correct. Compared with them, "Dorian Grey" is but a *tour de force* in morbidity, interesting mainly because it gave a forecast to some extent of Oscar Wilde's own collapse.

REVIEWS.

MANQUÉ.

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Fully to measure that disappointment one must refer to Wilde's estimate of himself, given in his last deeply interesting volume: "The gods had given me almost everything", he tells us; "I had genius, a distinguished name, high social position, brilliancy, intellectual daring; I made art a philosophy and philosophy an art; I altered the minds of men, and the colours of things . . . whatever I touched I made beautiful in a new mode of beauty; . . . I awoke the imagination of my century so that it created myth and legend around me. I summed up all systems in a phrase and all existence in an epigram". That is a large claim to make, made, be it remembered, not in the boastful hour of victory, but by a sad man looking back upon the wreckage of his ambitions and the cynical hypocrisy which had fed upon his friendship. To such an estimate it is easy to understand that the sum of what he left behind him, even could he have seen it in the amplitude of this admirable edition, must have seemed inadequate.

And reviewing in succession these stately volumes, that supreme test of a writer's vitality, one is impressed by that very disappointment which their author has recorded. Reading, as they appeared, those brilliant, often perversely brilliant, essays of his, the stories and studies on which he lavished such fastidious workmanship, or listening to the acute observation, the assured finish of his plays, one was always conscious of an expectation, a prevision almost, that his next work would claim, above the admiration one must lavish, the tribute of a masterpiece. And these volumes, even while they explain the fallacy of that expectation, more than confirm one's remembrance of the wonderful level of accomplishment on which almost all his work was done.

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We are very sorry that Mr. Leonard Cresswell Ingleby has thought it necessary in "Oscar Wilde" (T. Werner Laurie) to supplement Mr. R. H. Sherard's account of the life of this unhappy man. It is true that the greater portion of this book is devoted to a more or less critical examination of Wilde's efforts as a playwright and author, but, almost necessarily, in these latter pages as in the former, Mr. Ingleby cannot refrain from constantly bringing to our minds the unpleasant memory of the manner and nature of Wilde's crime against society. We daresay that the author has been most solicitous to avoid any idea of being an apologist for Wilde's offences, and unreservedly accept his attitude upon this matter; but we would fain ask him, as others, what possible good, either to the reading public or to Wilde's own memory, can be effected by any further biography of the author of "Lady Windermere's Fan" at the present time? Surely it would be a very much kinder act on the part of Wilde's friends if they would allow his name, for a time at least, to be forgotten by the general public. When we are told, as Mr. Ingleby tells us, that "a certain definite and partial insanity" alone explains Wilde's life in certain of its aspects, we long to speak our minds plainly. This Jekyll and Hyde method of explaining lapses from the normal code of truth and morality does not commend itself to us, and is, in our humble opinion, a most pernicious and dangerous doctrine for any writer of standing to advocate, or even promulgate. Why cannot it be frankly admitted that Wilde, although gifted with a certain distinction of style and a certain measure of dramatic art, was yet a sensualist of that kind where the blatant egotism of the individualist is as great as his sense of morality is small? When Wilde was posing as the leader of the Aesthetic movement, which captured certain portions of London Society in the early eighties, Dr. Max Nordau wrote of him: "The ego-mania of decadentism, its love of the artificial, its aversion to nature, and to all forms of activity and movement, its megalomaniacal contempt for men, and its exaggeration of the importance of art, have found their English representation among the Aesthetes, of whom Wilde is the chief." Candidly, we know no better description of the manner of man that we believe Wilde to have been than is to be found in the above words. Mr. Labouchere wrote of Wilde upon one occasion that "clever and witty though he unquestionably is, I have always regarded him as somewhat wrong in his head, for his craving after notoriety seemed to me to be a positive craze. There was nothing that he would not do to attract attention." Having said so much, we do not propose to pursue the unpleasant topic of Wilde's personality any further; but we have noticed this book, and we hope our readers will agree with us, because we think that it is time that any further efforts to minimise the effect of Wilde's crimes should cease, and to induce, if possible, his well-intentioned but indiscreet literary friends to find some other outlet for their own undoubted powers of expression.

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Sept. 9,
1908

We are very sorry that Mr. Leonard Cresswell Ingleby has thought it necessary in "Oscar Wilde" (T. Werner Laurie) to supplement Mr. R. H. Sherard's account of the life of this unhappy man. It is true that the greater portion of this book is devoted to a more or less critical examination of Wilde's efforts as a playwright and author, but, almost necessarily, in these latter pages as in the former, Mr. Ingleby cannot refrain from constantly bringing to our minds the unpleasant memory of the manner and nature of Wilde's crime against society. We daresay that the author has been most solicitous to avoid any idea of being an apologist for Wilde's offences, and unreservedly accept his attitude upon this matter; but we would fain ask him, as others, what possible good, either to the reading public or to Wilde's own memory, can be effected by any further biography of the author of "Lady Windermere's Fan" at the present time? Surely it would be a very much kinder act on the part of Wilde's friends if they would allow his name, for a time at least, to be forgotten by the general public. When we are told, as Mr. Ingleby tells us, that "a certain definite and partial insanity" alone explains Wilde's life in certain of its aspects, we long to speak our minds plainly. This Jekyll and Hyde method of explaining lapses from the normal code of truth and morality does not commend itself to us, and is, in our humble opinion, a most pernicious and dangerous doctrine for any writer of standing to advocate, or even promulgate. Why cannot it be frankly admitted that Wilde, although gifted with a certain distinction of style and a certain measure of dramatic art, was yet a sensualist of that kind where the blatant egotism of the individualist is as great as his sense of morality is small? When Wilde was posing as the leader of the Æsthetic movement, which captured certain portions of London Society in the early eighties, Dr. Max Nordau wrote of him: "The ego-mania of decadentism, its love of the artificial, its aversion to nature, and to all forms of activity and movement, its megalomaniacal contempt for men, and its exaggeration of the importance of art, have found their English representation among the Æsthetes, of whom Wilde is the chief." Candidly, we know no better description of the manner of man that we believe Wilde to have been than is to be found in the above words. Mr. Labouchere wrote of Wilde upon one occasion that "clever and witty though he unquestionably is, I have always regarded him as somewhat wrong in his head, for his craving after notoriety seemed to me to be a positive craze. There was nothing that he would not do to attract attention." Having said so much, we do not propose to pursue the unpleasant topic of Wilde's personality any further; but we have noticed this book, and we hope our readers will agree with us, because we think that it is time that any further efforts to minimise the effect of Wilde's crimes should cease, and to induce, if possible, his well-intentioned but indiscreet literary friends to find some other outlet for their own undoubted powers of expression.

THE FINAL MASQUE.

DE PROFUNDIS. By Oscar Wilde. Edited by Robert Ross. London: Methuen and Co.

The literary "virtue" of "De Profundis" and its value as a human document were both very busily assayed when it made its first appearance some three and a half years ago; and in these columns, quite recently ("The Duchess of Padua" giving us the opportunity), we spoke with some warmth of the beauty and dignity of this new edition of Wilde's Works—of the sensitive aptness of its physique and the scrupulous delicacy and distinction of Mr. Robert Ross's editing. The only point, accordingly, that need now engage us is the difference which divides this "De Profundis" from all the earlier issues. It is a treble difference. Certain passages which it was thought wise to repress when the book was first published have now been restored to their place; a bundle of private letters to Mr. Ross, written from Reading Prison, have been introduced as a sort of prelude; and a couple of passionately reasonable articles on Prison Discipline, produced by Wilde after his release, have been disinterred from the debris of the London Press and served up by way of epilogue.

Every scrap of writing done by the pen which wrote "Intentions" has, of course, a deep and curious value—both as a part-betrayal of a complex temperament and as the effort of a subtle and consummate artist; and all these additions are very welcome. The new Prologue is perhaps the pleasantest: the replaced passages the most significant. One was always aware, indeed, that much of the passion in the book itself was the work of Wilde the artist rather than of Wilde the man, that many of its most magnificently tragic gestures and bravest attitudes were too perfect in their poignancy and beauty to have come without elaborate rehearsal; and some have felt a vague discomfort—some, indeed, a positive resentment, at their inability to square this cultured overstratification with the jerky spontaneity of every-day sincerity. Such readers will find the Prologue doubly reassuring. It will gratify their egotism in the first place; it will solace their altruism in the second. It will confirm their belief in their own judgment by showing how great a gap separated the first hoarse cry of pain from the ultimate harmonious threne; and it will restore their faith in Wilde by revealing how bitter was the actual root of all this richly blossoming remorse. They will read in the first letter such a jangling line as this—

"You must come again next time. Here I have the horror of death with the still greater horror of living, and in silence and misery"

and they will respond eagerly to the emotion that snapped the string. And they will turn from such a passage as this—

I wish I could feel more pleasure, but I seem dead to all emotions except those of anguish and despair.

to the parallel passage in the book itself—

... But I, once a lord of language, have no words in which to express my anguish and my shame. Never even in the most perfect days of my development as an artist could I have found words fit to bear so august a burden; or to move with sufficient stateliness of music through the purple pageant of my incommunicable woe.

And they will point out—if not needfully, at least with perfect justice—how much more poignant is the broken chord in the first phrase, so tuneless and direct, and how completely the canorous rhythms that reverberate so deliberately through the second, muffle and submerge the pitiful central note.

The letters which form the Prologue have thus, it will be seen, a momentous reaction upon the music which follows. As for the Epilogue—well, one would have welcomed it more heartily had it not been an Epilogue. Its interest is great, not only because it reveals a man aflame with actual *saeva indignatio*, but also because it shows how the subtle artist could sweep hyperbole aside and speak plainly and eagerly, hammering the bars of his delicate music into a blunt and passionate rhythm. And, if its personal interest is great, its public value is scarcely less considerable; for, as pieces of social criticism, the pertinence of the two articles which form it has by no means yet quite faded.

But, in spite of these things, it really holds a quite untenable position; and even if its literary qualities were much less broad and plain than Wilde purposely made them, it would still seem a sad anti-climax; for it follows that prolonged and intricate chord, full of a proud solemnity, one of the most perfectly matched to its burden that Wilde ever conceived, upon which the main theme so incomparably ends—

Society, as we have constituted it, will have no place for me, has none to offer; but Nature, whose sweet rains fall on just and unjust alike, will have clefts in the rocks where I may hide, and secret valleys in whose silence I may weep undisturbed. She will hang the night with stars so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my foot-prints so that none may track me to my hurt. She will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole.

No page that bears those words can ever have legitimate successors. The rest ought clearly always to be silence. And even the drudging article which quotes them is constrained to halt reverentially and hold its breath.

D. S.

see page 32

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For the "Electra" of Hofmansthal, produced by Mrs. Patrick Campbell to-morrow at Edinburgh, Mr. Charles Ricketts has designed the dresses and scenery. This should be good news for those who wish to see a

union of step-sister arts, such as was maintained throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance down our days of "Eliza and our James," when arranged the masks and pageants of Ben Jonson. Ricketts is an innovator behind the scenes as those who saw "The Persians" at the National Sporting Club, and His Majesty's will remember. Divergent from the precise qualities of this artist's work, which appeals at present only to the select few, stage decorations there can be hardly two. Lord Howard de Walden's play the scene Mr. Ricketts was, from a spectacular point of view, most successful in the production. R.R.

Wish monthly Sept. 1908

[539]

A THOUGHT FOR EACH DAY OF THE MONTH

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2. There is no place like home, and, therefore, no place like Heaven, the true and everlasting home.—*The Same.*
3. To say "No" pleasantly sometimes gives less pain than to say "Yes" roughly.—*A. W. Thorold.*
4. It is well to have as little self-will and as much obedience as possible in everything that we try to do for God.—*M. R.*
5. Divines also are human.—*Rev. Simeon Singer.*
6. The public has an insatiable curiosity to know everything except what is worth knowing.—*Oscar Wilde.*
7. It would take a long time to build a church if we only employed masons who were in the state of grace.—*F. Marion Crawford.*
8. Many a good cause fails; but the fight is always worth while.—*Alfred Webb.*
9. No great change proves as beneficial as was hoped or as bad as was feared.—*The Same.*
10. Abstinence from the pleasure to be derived from the use of intoxicants is a small premium to pay for assurance against the manifold evils resulting from their use.—*The Same.*
11. There are perhaps now more general human happiness and less acute human misery in the world than ever before. [Perhaps].—*The Same.*
12. There is no nobler career than "politics" honestly pursued.—*The Same.*
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14. We are too apt to pin our happiness upon the accomplishment of the main objects to which we have devoted our lives, and to forget the gain to humanity that has been derived from the accomplishment of great causes to which others have devoted themselves.—*The Same.*
15. Don't wait until your friends are dead to show you value their special talents. Do not flatter. Praise.
16. There is no music in a "rest," but there is the making of music in it. And people are always neglecting that part of the life-melody, and scrambling on without counting—not that it is easy to count; but nothing on which so much depends ever is easy. People are always talking of perseverance and

The Clique August 1st, 1908.

WILDE'S WORKS.—The administrator of Mr. Wilde's estate, Mr. Robert Ross, has issued a circular letter pointing out the error of selling the many unauthorised editions of Oscar Wilde's books which for several years have been produced and sold. Mr. Ross writes: "The Sale of these unauthorised editions prejudicially the interest of the legitimate proprietors. I have no doubt that the prints in question have been sold or sale and otherwise dealt in by members of the book-trade in all good faith under the belief that they were within their rights. . . . I have been that I should now take the necessary steps to put an end to the sale of these unauthorised prints." Mr. Ross then goes on to list all the Editions which may be legally sold: Methuen's Collected Works, Ballad of Reading Gaol, *Smithers* (published anonymously and dated 1891, and one edition with author's name, 1899, and marked "Seventh Ed." on the title); *De Profundis*, *Methuen*; *Prince, Nutt*; *Dorian Gray*, *Carrington*; *Sebastian Melmoth*, *Humphreys*; *Soul*, *Humphreys*; and of course all the editions which are out of print. Mr. Ross takes the opportunity of pointing out that several books persistently attributed to Wilde in some quarters were neither translated, or edited by him; these are: *The Priest and the Acolyte*, *The Satyricon*, *Onius*, *What Never Dies*. It behoves all those who are now therefore to be very careful in buying books of Wilde's they offer for sale.

Wish monthly Sept. 27, 1908

In passing, may I direct attention to the fact that the Pilgrims open a strenuous season's work on October 10th, when Oscar Wilde's trivial comedy for serious people, "The Importance of Being Earnest," will be played at the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms.

... he commenced to speak, that the subject of his lecture was "Sexual Abnormalities." Some persons in the crowd got so angry that they would have assaulted him if they had not been restrained from doing so by the police. The defendant claimed that his lecture was in the interests of science, with the view to the formation of a certain Society in this country, and the words he used were in that connection.

THE FINAL MASQUE.

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The literary "virtue" of "De Profundis" and its value as a monument were both very busy when it made its first appearance three and a half years ago...

Every scrap of writing done by Oscar Wilde which wrote "Intentions" as a part-betrayal of a complex course, a deep and curious venture and as the effort of a consummate artist...

"You must come again next time. Here I have the horror of death with the still greater horror of living, and in silence and misery"

THE IRISH MONTHLY

courage and fortitude; but patience is the finest and worthiest part of fortitude, and the rarest, too.

- 17. God never imposes a duty without giving the time to do it.
18. Do all the good you can in the world and make as little noise about it as possible.
19. We give away nothing so generously, and receive nothing so reluctantly, as advice.
20. To bring up a child in the way he should go, travel that way yourself.
21. What we like determines what we are, and to teach taste is to form character.
22. Children need models more than criticism.
23. He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for everyone has need to be forgiven.
24. A man's happiness consists infinitely more in admiration of the faculties of others than in confidence of his own.
25. The crystal must be either dirty or clean.
26. Patience requires nearly as much practising as music; and we are continually losing our lessons when the master comes.
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29. The great difficulty is always to open people's eyes; to touch their feelings and break their hearts is easy; the difficult thing is to break their heads.
30. Indifference is a determined conformity to the will of God, with a partiality towards what is less pleasing to nature.

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New Age, Sept. 12 1908

I will finish for the present with a letter from a lady whose name I was familiar with as a journalist, but who desires me to disclose only her initials.

In reply to your enquiry, I beg to say that I have bought a book. In fact, I have bought several books, as I will show you.

Let me first say that I am a wage-worker, earning £2 a week by my pen; consequently my purchases have to be carefully spread over the twelvemonth.

The following is a list of the books I have bought during the past two years; the first twelve as gifts for friends, the remaining nine for myself:—

- Walter Pater's "Marius the Epicurean."
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SEPTEMBER 20, 1908.

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Irish Monthly
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dog reverences you, a fly does not ; the capacity of partly understanding a creature above him is the dog's nobility. Increase such reverence in human beings and you increase daily their happiness, peace and dignity ; take it away and you make them wretched as well as vile.

25. The crystal must be either dirty or clean. So it is with one's hands and with one's heart. Only you can wash your hands without changing them, but not hearts, nor crystals. On the whole, while you are young it will be as well to take care that your hearts don't want washing ; for they may perhaps need wringing also, when they do.

26. Patience requires nearly as much practising as music ; and we are continually losing our lessons when the master comes.

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Westminster Gazette.

Sept. 7, 1908

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SEPTEMBER 20, 1908.

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OBSCENE SPEECHES IN HYDE PARK.

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MORNING POST

Sept. 18. 1908

For the "Electra" of Hofmansthal, produced by Mrs. Patrick Campbell to-morrow at Edinburgh, Mr. Charles Ricketts has designed the dresses and scenery. This should be good news for those who wish to see a permanent reunion of step-sister arts, such as was maintained throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance down to the spacious days of "Eliza and our James," when Inigo Jones arranged the masks and pageants of Ben Jonson. Mr. Ricketts is an innovator behind the proscenium, as those who saw "The Persians" at Terry's, "Salome" at the National Sporting Club, and "Attila" at His Majesty's will remember. Divergent opinions exist on the precise qualities of this artist's painting, which appeals at present only to the select few, but over his stage decorations there can be hardly two opinions. In "The Persians" the scene arranged by Mr. Ricketts was, from a spectacular point of view, the most successful in the production.

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A.R.

OSCAR WILDE'S WORKS.—The administrator of the late Mr. Wilde's estate, Mr. Robert Ross, has sent us a circular letter pointing out the illegality of selling the many unauthorised prints of Oscar Wilde's books which for several years past have been produced and sold. Mr. Ross says "The Sale of these unauthorised issues effects prejudicially the interest of the estate I represent. . . . I have no doubt that many of the prints in question have been offered for sale and otherwise dealt in by various members of the book-trade in all good faith and under the belief that they were acting within their rights. . . . I have been advised that I should now take the necessary steps to put an end to the sale of these unauthorised prints." Mr. Ross then goes on to specify all the Editions which may be legally sold. Briefly there are: Methuen's Collected Edition; *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, *Smithers'* editions, published anonymously and dated 1898, and one edition with author's name, dated 1899, and marked "Seventh Ed." on reverse of title; *De Profundis*, *Methuen*; *Happy Prince*, *Nutt*; *Dorian Gray*, *Carrington*, *Paris*; *Sebastian Melmoth*, *Humphreys*; *Soul of Man*, *Humphreys*; and of course all the original editions which are out of print. Mr. Ross takes the opportunity of pointing out that three books persistently attributed to Oscar Wilde in some quarters were neither written, translated, or edited by him; these are: *The Priest and the Acolyte*, *The Satyricon of Petronius*, *What Never Dies*. It behoves booksellers now therefore to be very careful what books they sell.

Birmingham Mail Sept. 23. 1908

In passing, may I direct attention to the fact that the Pilgrims open a strenuous season's work on October 10th, when Oscar Wilde's trivial comedy for serious people, "The Importance of Being Earnest," will be played at the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms.

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THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT IN EDINBURGH.

VISIT TO THE LYCEUM THEATRE.

THEIR Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, accompanied by the Princess Patricia of Connaught, the Countess of Wemyss and party, honoured with a visit on Saturday the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, where Mrs Patrick Campbell and her company were giving a matinee performance. Their Royal Highnesses, who are at present the guests of the Earl and Countess of Wemyss, motored from Gosford House, and arrived at Grindlay Street about two o'clock. A considerable crowd gathered to see them. They were received in the entrance hall by Mr G. Minshull, acting-manager, who conducted the party to the three boxes on the "prompt" or left-hand side of the stage. The Duke and Duchess were in the stage box. On entering they were greeted with a hearty round of applause by a large audience. The boxes had been specially decorated for the occasion, and bouquets of flowers were in each box. The performance opened with a one-act play—"A Florentine Tragedy"—by the late Oscar Wilde, the theme of which was suggestive of the old romance of Paola and Francesca. In this case the lover of the young wife was a young noble, Guido Bardi, and the outraged husband a merchant who talks like a book on philosophy and life. There is an exciting sword and dagger fight in the apartment, in which the merchant kills his adversary. On turning to slay his wife her eyes are opened to the strength of her husband, and he to her beauty, and the curtain falls as he drops on his knee to kiss her hand. A medieval flavour pervaded the cleverly written dialogue, as also the dresses and the beautiful setting. In the piece Miss Stella Patrick Campbell looked charming, and acted with grace, though she had not much to do, as Bianca, the wife, and an excellent obsequious serving maid was supplied by Miss Florence Wells. Interest was also lent to the piece by the appearance in it of Mrs Patrick Campbell's young son, Mr Alan Patrick Campbell, whose performance as the young lord was full of promise. The strong part in the cast was that of the merchant, which was in the able hands of Mr Murray Carson. The chief piece of the afternoon, in which Mrs Patrick Campbell appeared, was that of "Electra," seen for the first time in Edinburgh. The play, in one long act, by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, translated into English by Arthur Symons, is a modern study of the old Greek legend of Electra and Orestes, the children of Agamemnon, used by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Shakespeare has also made it the basis of his "Hamlet." The great Greek King, it may be recalled, had been murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Egisthus, the son Orestes exiled, and the daughters, Electra and Chrysothemis, driven to herd with the serving-women. In the opening scene, in a lovely Greek setting, recalling Lord Leighton's picture, Electra, in black vestments, is discovered by the well outside the palace door, bemoaning the death of her father, and living only for the return of her brother as his avenger. There is a strong scene between her and the Queen, from whom sleep has fled, and there is a touching episode on the return of

Official Scratches. Green Amber Water, Windsor—Flying Thoughts. For Part. Edinburgh Nursery Handicap—Limmer, and 1000. Green Amber Water, Windsor—Flying Thoughts. For Part. Edinburgh Nursery Handicap—Limmer, and 1000. Green Amber Water, Windsor—Flying Thoughts. For Part. Edinburgh Nursery Handicap—Limmer, and 1000. Green Amber Water, Windsor—Flying Thoughts. For Part. Edinburgh Nursery Handicap—Limmer, and 1000.

Liverpool Courier Sept. 15. 1908

THE STORY OF AN ACTRESS.

Ellen Terry's Reminiscences.

PUBLISHED TO-DAY.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE. By Ellen Terry Illustrated. London: Hutchinson and Co. 6s. net.

It is interesting to hear Miss Terry say that beyond doubt the most remarkable men she has known were Whistler and Oscar Wilde. That is not to imply that she liked them better or admired them more than the others, "but there was something about both of them more instantaneously individual and audacious than it is possible to describe." We must, however, resist our irresistible inclination to quote Miss

Memento de France Sept. 16. 1908

MEMENTO. — La Collection Tauchnitz, qui donnait récemment The Picture of Dorian Gray, d'Oscar Wilde, a réuni, sous une seule couverture, De Profundis et The Ballad of Reading Gaol, comme dans l'édition française. Parmi les derniers volumes de cette même collection, nous mentionnons Love and the Poor Sutor, par Percy White, Buried Alive, par Arnold Bennett, The Statue, par Eden Phillpotts et Arnold Bennett, Pauline, par W. E. Norris, An Amateur Adventuress, par Frank Frankfort Moore.

HENRY-D. DAVRAY.

Glasgow Evening News Sept. 28. 1908

MRS PATRICK CAMPBELL'S VISIT.

Mrs Patrick Campbell and her company brought a very successful visit to Glasgow to a close at the Theatre-Royal on Saturday night. In the afternoon there was a change of programme, "Electra," a tragedy from the German of Hugo von Hofmannsthal by Arthur Symons, being the attraction. In the title role Mrs Campbell had a heavy task, but her acting throughout was brilliant. It is the story of a maiden's longing for revenge, and in the depiction of her varying moods Mrs Campbell was excellent, and so heartily appreciated was her acting that at the end the curtain had to be raised repeatedly. Mrs Campbell was excellently supported, a clever performance being that of her daughter, Miss Stella Patrick Campbell. "Electra" was preceded by Oscar Wilde's one-act play, "A Florentine Tragedy," and here again Miss Stella Campbell was seen to advantage, and also Mr Alan Patrick Campbell, a young gallant who is killed after an exciting duel.

Era,

A matinee will be given to-day (Saturday) of Electra, a translation by Arthur Symons from the German of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and the one-act play A Florentine Tragedy, by Oscar Wilde.

DAILY TELEGRAPH, SEPTEMBER 29, 1908.

THE PLAY ACTORS.

The Play Actors will hardly add to their reputation for discernment by their latest production. "The Success of Sentiment," the new piece presented by them on Sunday night at the Court, has not, to put the matter quite frankly, the faintest chance of ever being a success. Its author, Mr. Hugh Cranmer Byng, shows an unfortunate lack of appreciation of stage requirements, while his dialogue may be described as Oscar Wilde and water, with most of the Oscar Wilde eliminated. The story of the play is merely the old tale of the eternal triumph over again, decked out with ornamentation of no particular value. To spend an evening in the company of a writer whose chief aim seems to be to spin phrases like "One man's reformation is another man's degradation," "He resembles the Moonlight Sonata played upon the pianola," "I am like a French novel between the covers of a parish magazine," is simply to court paralysis of the brain, and we confess we have no desire to meet Mr. Byng again until he has learned to chasten his style, and has lost his taste for preciosity. To dwell further upon Sunday night's entertainment would be a waste alike of time and labour, particularly as it is difficult to indicate any feature of the performance deserving mention. A number of young actors and actresses did their best with the material entrusted to them, but save in one or two instances that best cannot be considered sufficiently good to warrant comment.

Sept. 25. 1908

Birmingham Post.

THE SOUL OF CRGESUS. By G. Villiers Stuart.

(Laurie.) 6s. The late Mr. Oscar Wilde imagined a portrait which changed from year to year as its original sank deeper and deeper into degradation, the model retaining the while the charm and freshness of unspoiled youth. Mr. Villiers Stuart has worked on something like the same idea. The magic of Abdul von Tarsenheim makes it possible for young Vandracken to live as he will, secure in the knowledge that the remorse and all the physical consequences of his deeds must be endured by another man. As Vandracken's income is five thousand sterling every day, and he proposes to get the full value of every pound of it in dissipation, one judges that his deputy must have been extraordinarily strong, both bodily and mentally, to have borne the strain for years together; on that point Mr. Stuart is discreetly reserved. He is more concerned with Vandracken, who seems to have found a partner after his own heart in a Parisian lady of such appalling wickedness that other men fall back in terror at her glance. But, of course, Veeda Venestra (or "The Cobra") was not strictly speaking Parisian. She was of Aztec descent, worshipped ugly idols, and devised daily for her protector new forms of saturnalia—all to no avail. One does not quite understand why Vandracken should have wanted to recover his conscience. However, the quest of Tarsenheim, the meeting with the other man, and the fate of the magician make up various exciting chapters. Decidedly Mr. Stuart can tell a fantastic tale effectively.

of them all. And you can be taught how to do these things out of a penny book. So that the tendency of unthinking youth is to be in a hurry to do likewise, with the result that editors' waste-paper baskets are nowadays troubled with essays wherein the Deity is described profoundly as "an eternal schoolboy letting off eternal crackers" and life as an eternal merry-go-round. Nothing exists for the Chestertonians which is not to be reduced to terms of familiarity and "fun." And nothing is so sacred that it cannot be associated with stupid and offensive tropes. To come to the real essence of Mr. Chesterton, it is plain that his "view" of the cosmos and of the whole Divine order of things is that it was specially created for the purpose of providing excruciating jokes for the cheaper comic papers, and that all persons who see in it a grave, far-off Divine purpose are either prigs or dullards, and not worthy of the name of man. On the very last page of Mr. Chesterton's book we find the following scandalous passage:

I say it with reverence; there was in that shattering Personality a thread that must be called shyness. There was something that He hid from all men when He went up a mountain to pray. There was something that He covered constantly by abrupt silence or impetuous isolation. There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth.

Now here, couched in the most delusive and deceptive language, we have the idiotic and wicked content of Mr. Chesterton's mind. Life to this profound theologian, observer, and philosopher, who has written a whole book called "Orthodoxy" on the strength of a casual remark of another profound theologian, observer, and philosopher in the person, not this time of Mr. Hilaire Belloc, but of Mr. G. S. Street, is to be a mere thing of the Fleet Street and Bayswater "sense of humour," and Mr. Chesterton, good, pious, orthodox, canting soul that he is, believes that "He" must have possessed the humour of Shaw and Chesterton, but that "He" was at pains to conceal it. Such blasphemies, however reverently said, are blasphemies, and it is not meet that any person who can read should have to do with the catchpenny, pirouetting, giggling, retailers of clap-trap who commit them. Mirth indeed! Mr. Chesterton and his greasy following of sprawlers and imitators look for mirth! They are perfectly welcome to all the mirth they can get out of their tuppence-a-line, book-producing-on-the-feeblest-provocation, stupid, giggling, gew-gaw lives; but for heaven's sake let them refrain from setting up their stalls as theologians. "The Man of Sorrows and Acquainted with grief"—Mr. Chesterton and, we presume, Mr. ——— and Mr. ——— and Mr. ———, and the rest of them who have been crucified for righteousness' sake, "sometimes fancy" that there was one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth—namely, Mirth! We note that, with a great show of piety, Mr. Chesterton assures us that the late Mr. Oscar Wilde was wrong when he said that it was impossible to pay for a sunset. We are aware that this was not a particularly great or important saying, but Mr. Chesterton goes out of his way to refute it and to asseverate that the best way to pay for a sunset is "by not being Mr. Oscar Wilde." Mr. Wilde would have smiled a curved, archaic smile at the vagaries of Mr. Chesterton and his like. Because he had no mirth and never any reason for mirth, Mr. Wilde knew more about certain great matters than Mr. Chesterton and Dr. Nicoll, Mr. Belloc and the others are ever likely to know this side the grave. And although Mr. Wilde would have cared nothing at all for Mr. Chesterton's cheap and gratuitous gibe, we shall take it upon ourselves to remark that there is another way in which one may pay for a sunset—namely, by not being Mr. Chesterton. And the next best way to pay for a sunset is by refraining from the perusal of Mr. Chesterton's higgledy-piggledy, cut-and-come-again, let-us-all-be-as-funny-as-we-can essays in book production. A volume of Chesterton every week is calculated to put the average man into Hanwell.

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT IN EDINBURGH.

VISIT TO THE LYCEUM THEATRE.

Sept. 19.

THEIR Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, accompanied by the Princess Patricia of Connaught, the Countess of Wemyss and party, honoured with a visit on Saturday the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, where Mrs Patrick Campbell and her company were giving a matinee performance. Their Royal Highnesses, who are at present the guests of the Earl and Countess of Wemyss, motored from Gosford House, and arrived at Grindlay Street about two o'clock. A considerable crowd gathered to see them. They were received in the entrance hall by Mr G. Minshull, acting-manager, who conducted the party to the three boxes on the "prompt" or left-hand side of the stage. The Duke and Duchess were in the stage box. On entering they were greeted with a hearty round of applause by a large audience. The boxes had been specially decorated for the occasion, and bouquets of flowers were in each box. The performance opened with a one-act play—"A Florentine Tragedy"—by the late Oscar Wilde, the theme of which was suggestive of the old romance of Paola and Francesca. In this case the lover of the young wife was a young noble, Guido Bardi, and the outraged husband a merchant who talks like a book on philosophy and life. There is an exciting sword and dagger fight in the apartment, in which the merchant kills his adversary. On turning to slay his wife her eyes are opened to the strength of her husband, and he to her beauty, and the curtain falls as he drops on his knees to kiss her hand. A mediæval flavour pervaded the cleverly written dialogue, as also the dresses and the beautiful setting. In the piece Miss Stella Patrick Campbell looked charming, and acted with grace, though she had not much to do, as Bianca, the wife, and an excellent obsequious serving maid was supplied by Miss Florence Wells. Interest was also lent to the piece by the appearance in it of Mrs Patrick Campbell's young son, Mr Alan Patrick Campbell, whose performance as the young lord was full of promise. The strong part in the cast was that of the merchant, which was in the able hands of Mr Murray Carson. The chief piece of the afternoon, in which Mrs Patrick Campbell appeared, was that of "Electra," seen for the first time in Edinburgh. The play, in one long act, by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, translated into English by Arthur Symons, is a modern study of the old Greek legend of Electra and Orestes, the children of Agamemnon, used by Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Shakespeare has also made it the basis of his "Hamlet." The great Greek King, it may be recalled, had been murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Egisthus, the son Orestes exiled, and the daughters, Electra and Chrysothemis, driven to herd with the serving-women. In the opening scene, in a lovely Greek setting, recalling Lord Leighton's picture, Electra, in black vestments, is discovered by the well outside the palace door, bemoaning the death of her father, and living only for the return of her brother as his avenger. There is a strong scene between her and the Queen, from whom sleep has fled, and there is a touching episode on the return of Orestes, who, roused by Electra's passionate recital of the incidents of the murder, slays the guilty pair. In attempting, however, to perform a dance of triumph, Electra, overcome by the victory of her fierce passion, dies. It is in such a tragic part that all the resources of Mrs Campbell's admirable art find adequate expression. Her Electra was a brilliant piece of tragic work, and constituted a great intellectual, dramatic treat to all who witnessed it. She looked the rôle well, her fine voice attuned itself to all the phases of the elemental passions which wrung the heart of the vengeful Greek maid, and her facial expression and gestures were both marvellously descriptive. It was a heavy part for her to undertake. Not for a moment scarcely was she off the stage, but alike in monologue and dialogue the justness of her elocution and acting commanded the highest approbation. An important part in the play is that of Clytemnestra, who has a long scene with her daughter. It was on the whole adequately sustained by Miss Florence Farr. It was rather surprising that an actor of Mr Murray Carson's experience should have died so badly as Egisthus. His last agony rather upset the gravity of the audience. A pleasing Orestes was contributed by Mr Julian Royce. After the performance most of the audience waited outside the theatre or in the vestibule to see the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and party drive off in their motor cars.

Liverpool Courier Sept. 15. 1908

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CONNAUGHT IN EDINBURGH.

VISIT TO THE LYCEUM THEATRE.

THEIR Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, accompanied by the Princess Patricia of Connaught, the Countess of Wemyss and party, honoured with a visit on Saturday the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, where Mrs Patrick Campbell and her company were giving a matinee performance. Their Royal Highnesses, who are at present the guests of the Earl and Countess of Wemyss, motored from Gosford House, and arrived at Grindlay Street about two o'clock. A considerable crowd gathered to see them. They were received in the entrance hall by Mr G. Minshull, acting-manager, who conducted the party to the three boxes on the "prompt" or left-hand side of the stage. The Duke and Duchess were in the stage box. On entering they were greeted with a hearty round of applause by a large audience. The boxes had been specially decorated for the occasion, and bouquets of flowers were in each box. The performance opened with a one-act play—"A Florentine Tragedy"—by the late Oscar Wilde, the theme of which was suggestive of the old romance of Paola and Francesca. In this case the lover of the young wife was a young noble, Guido Bardi, and the outraged husband a merchant who talks like a book on philosophy and life. There is an exciting sword and dagger fight in the apartment, in which the merchant kills his adversary. On turning to slay his wife her eyes are opened to the strength of her husband, and he to her beauty, and the curtain falls as he drops on his knees to kiss her hand. A mediæval flavour pervaded the cleverly written dialogue, as also the dresses and the beautiful setting. In the piece Miss Stella Patrick Campbell looked charming, and acted with grace, though she had not much to do, as Bianca, the wife, and an excellent obsequious serving maid was supplied by Miss Florence Wells. Interest was also lent to the piece by the appearance in it of Mrs Patrick Campbell's young son, Mr Alan Patrick Campbell, whose performance as the young lord was full of promise. The strong part in the cast was that of the merchant, which was in the able hands of Mr Murray Carson. The chief piece of the afternoon, in which Mrs Patrick Campbell appeared, was that of "Electra," seen for the first time in Edinburgh. The play, in one long act, by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, translated into English by Arthur Symens, is a modern study of the old Greek legend of Electra and Orestes, the children of Agamemnon, used by Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Shakespeare has also made it the basis of his "Hamlet." The great Greek King, it may be recalled, had been murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Ægisthus, the son Orestes exiled, and the daughters, Electra and Chrysothemis, driven to herd with the serving-women. In the opening scene, in a lovely Greek setting, recalling Lord Leighton's picture, Electra, in black vestments, is discovered by the well outside the palace door, bemoaning the death of her father, and living only for the return of her brother as his avenger. There is a strong scene between her and the Queen, from whom sleep has fled, and there is a touching episode on the return of Orestes, who, roused by Electra's passionate recital of the incidents of the murder, slays the guilty pair. In attempting, however, to perform a dance of triumph, Electra, overcome by the victory of her fierce passion, dies. It is in such a tragic part that all the resources of Mrs Campbell's admirable art find adequate expression. Her Electra was a brilliant piece of tragic work, and constituted a great intellectual, dramatic treat to all who witnessed it. She looked the rôle well, her fine voice attuned itself to all the phases of the elemental passions which wrung the heart of the vengeful Greek maid, and her facial expression and gestures were both marvellously descriptive. It was a heavy part for her to undertake. Not for a moment scarcely was she off the stage, but alike in monologue and dialogue the justness of her elocution and acting commanded the highest approbation. An important part in the play is that of Clytemnestra, who has a long scene with her daughter. It was on the whole adequately sustained by Miss Florence Farr. It was rather surprising that an actor of Mr Murray Carson's experience should have died so badly as Ægisthus. His last agony rather upset the gravity of the audience. A pleasing Orestes was contributed by Mr Julian Royce. After the performance most of the audience waited outside the theatre for the Royal Highnesses to see the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and party drive off in their motor cars.

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Liverpool Courier Sept. 15. 1908

THE STORY OF AN ACTRESS.

Ellen Terry's Reminiscences.

PUBLISHED TO-DAY.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE. By Ellen Terry. Illustrated. London: Hutchinson and Co. 6s. net.

It is interesting to hear Miss Terry say that beyond doubt the most remarkable men she has known were Whistler and Oscar Wilde. That is not to imply that she liked them better or admired them more than the others, "but there was something about both of them more instantaneously individual and audacious than it is possible to describe." We must, however, resist our irresistible inclination to quote Miss

McCrone & Thomas Sept. 16. 1908

MEMENTO. — La Collection Tauchnitz, qui donnait récemment *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, d'Oscar Wilde, a réuni, sous une seule couverture, *De Profundis* et *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, comme dans l'édition française. Parmi les derniers volumes de cette même collection, nous mentionnerons *Love and the Poor Suitor*, par Percy White, *Buried Alive*, par Arnold Bennett, *The Statue*, par Eden Phillpotts et Arnold Bennett, *Pauline*, par W. E. Norris, *An Amateur Adventuress*, par Frank Frankfort Moore.

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HENRY-D. DAVRAY.

Glasgow Evening News, Sept. 28. 1908

MRS PATRICK CAMPBELL'S VISIT.

Mrs Patrick Campbell and her company brought a very successful visit to Glasgow to a close at the Theatre-Royal on Saturday night. In the afternoon there was a change of programme, "Electra," a tragedy from the German of Hugo von Honmansthal by Arthur Symons, being the attraction. In the title role Mrs Campbell had a heavy task, but her acting throughout was brilliant. It is the story of a maiden's longing for revenge, and in the depiction of her varying moods Mrs Campbell was excellent, and so heartily appreciated was her acting that at the end the curtain had to be raised repeatedly. Mrs Campbell was excellently supported, a clever performance being that of her daughter, Miss Stella Patrick Campbell. "Electra" was preceded by Oscar Wilde's one-act play, "A Florentine Tragedy," and here again Miss Stella Campbell was seen to advantage, and also Mr Alan Patrick Campbell, a young actor, who is held after an exciting duel.

Era,

A matinée will be given to-day (Saturday) of *Electra*, a translation by Arthur Symons from the German of Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, and the one-act play, *A Florentine Tragedy*, by Oscar Wilde.

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Sussex Daily News, Sept. 29, 1908

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

BRIGHTON PALACE PIER.

A well filled house testified its appreciation at the Palace Pier Theatre, Brighton, yesterday evening of Oscar Wilde's brilliant society farce, "The Importance of Being Earnest." This highly amusing piece is being played each evening this week, and at matinées to-morrow and Saturday, by arrangement with Mr. George Alexander, and judging by last evening's performance, the company presenting it are assured of a highly successful week. Repeated curtain calls after each act were the order of the evening, and the leading performers must have felt highly gratified, for those present on this occasion were not slow to acknowledge the excellent representation given. Mr. Arthur Hare was particularly clever as Jack Worthing, and extracted all the humour from the part, while Mr. Cyril Scott was also very natural in the rôle of Algy Moncrieff. As Canon Chasuble, Mr. Morton Francis would be hard to beat. Of the ladies, Miss Elspeth Dudgeon as Lady Bracknell, Algy's aunt, was particularly conspicuous. The part was excellently represented. Miss Olive Wilton as Gwendoline Fairfax, and Miss Una Mainwaring as Cecil Cardew were also very fine. As Miss Prism, Miss Kate Wingfield has a short but important part, which she does full justice to. The other characters are all in capable hands, and a visit to the Palace Pier Theatre is a very enjoyable one for all who like a hearty laugh.

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Academy Sept. 26, 1908.

HETERODOXY

WE should not consider it desirable to attempt to keep pace with the manifold publications of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Let his merits or demerits be what they may, he appears to have learnt the prodigious secret of the late Mr. Guy Boothby, who, we believe, was once commonly credited with the capacity for dictating (into phonographs) three brilliant works of fiction at one and the same time. Mr. Chesterton himself confesses that he is "only too ready to write books upon the feeblest provocation." He has been told this much by an occasional discerning reviewer, and we are glad to note that he accepts the soft impeachment. Out of the vast selection of brand-new works which Mr. Chesterton appears to have written upon the feeblest provocation we have taken up "Orthodoxy" (Lane) because of its title. Mr. Chesterton may be burdened with many important views on such an entertaining subject, but with those we are not gravely concerned. It is with the book as a sort of Chestertonian emanation that we are concerned. In other words, while we concede that Mr. Chesterton, like any other man, has a right to the possession of ideas about orthodoxy and a right to the expression of them, we do not consider that any public statement he may choose to make could have serious importance, or be worth discussion or serious consideration. Our interest in "Orthodoxy" is similar in kind to the interest that certain people display at the sight of performing dogs or clowns on stilts. Such persons are perfectly well aware that a dog who wears a frill and a soldier's cap and presents arms when a piece of sugar is placed upon his nose is of no con-

sequence either in his relation to military science or to the defence of his country. And so when we find Mr. Chesterton dealing with large matters we know at once that we have before us a sort of market-place entertainer who makes a great show of antic humour and hilarious profundity, but who has really nothing to say which will appeal to serious people. It is an ancient and tiresome adage which insists that the world invariably takes a man at his own valuation of himself. And in a measure, of course, this adage is as true as in a measure it is false. But it is particularly true in the matter of a man's attitude towards his own writing. If an author of serious intention persists in standing at the street-corners with his face blacked and addresses the crowd in the manner of the "stump-orator" who was wont to provide comic relief to the "dioramas" of the days of one's youth, that author must expect to be set down in the tablets of his audience for a comic, flippant, and buffoonish person. It has been the complaint of wags time out of mind that when they had compassed the high top-gallant of their fame they could not so much as say "Please, pass the salt" without setting the table in a roar. When the notorious witting rushes into a mixed company and cries "My wife is dead!" or "My mother has hanged herself!" the mixed company giggles and says "What an excellent fool it is." It will not occur to it to consider that there is just a chance that your witting's cry may be a tragic cry, and that his wife has really died, or that his mother has really hanged herself. And even when he explains that he is speaking the solemn truth he must be most careful in his explanations, and most assiduous to drop the smallest suggestion of his usual and accepted waggishness, or he will not be believed. It seems to us possible that Mr. Chesterton may believe that he has something serious to contribute to the thought of, say, Fleet Street and Bayswater. When he gets defending himself—and he has lately begun to defend himself with great gusto—he is anxious always that he should be relieved of the suspicions of flippancy, over-easiness, funniness, and mere paradox. In the present volume he is at pains to set up an almost lachrymose protest against what he calls an "intolerable bondage." "I never in my life," he asseverates, "said anything merely because I thought it funny," which is a noble boast, marred, however, by the immediate Bayswater cheap giggle—"though, of course, I have had ordinary human vainglory, and may have thought it funny because I said it." Yet, in spite of his righteous rage at being taken for a clown, Mr. Chesterton will keep on with his clowning. And it is perfectly natural that he should. It is to clowning that he owes himself; it is to the cap and bells that he must look if he would be clothed at all, and it is to the hee-haw that he must look if he is to have any sort of applause. This is unfortunate for him, provided, of course, that in his heart of hearts he carries, as he may well carry, some soul of goodness. It is the custom to scoff at garbs, but somehow they are essential. Your curate must wear the habiliments of his curacy week in and week out and even on holidays. Otherwise his spiritual authority will fall under suspicion, sooner or later. Bishops have been sneered at for wearing aprons and gaiters, but, to take a hint from Mrs. Benjamin Disraeli, what could one expect a curate to think of a Bishop in his bath. And if, to go a step further, the lady bountiful of a parish discovered the curate in the act and process of playing marbles with little boys for a stake of illuminated Scripture texts she would be shocked and upset, just as the curate would be shocked and upset if he discovered that his Bishop's favourite recreation lay in the making of buffoonish grimaces at his window with a view to quickening the sense of humour of passing butchers' boys. It is as a marble-playing curate and a grimacing, boisterous Bishop that Mr. Chesterton is most fond of taking the eye. And the terrible part of it, and the part of it with which we are most seriously concerned, is that because of Mr. Chesterton's presumed financial success and obvious paragonical success the younger brethren are beginning to ape him. The Chesterton tricks are the easiest in the world. He can bring guineapigs out of old hats and collect pennies from the illimitable void with any street conjurer

THE PLAY ACTORS.

The Play Actors will hardly add to their reputation for discernment by their latest production. "The Success of Sentiment," the new piece presented by them on Sunday night at the Court, has not, to put the matter quite frankly, the faintest chance of ever being a success. Its author, Mr. Hugh Cranmer Byng, shows an unfortunate lack of appreciation of stage requirements, while his dialogue may be described as Oscar Wilde and water, with most of the Oscar Wilde eliminated. The story of the play is merely the old tale of the eternal triumph over again, decked out with ornamentation of no particular value. To spend an evening in the company of a writer whose chief aim seems to be to spin phrases like "One man's reformation is another man's degradation," "He resembles the Moonlight Sonata played upon the pianola," "I am like a French novel between the covers of a parish magazine," is simply to court paralysis of the brain, and we confess we have no desire to meet Mr. Byng again until he has learned to chasten his style, and has lost his taste for preciousness. To dwell further upon Sunday night's entertainment would be a waste alike of time and labour, particularly as it is difficult to indicate any feature of the performance deserving mention. A number of young actors and actresses did their best with the material entrusted to them, but save in one or two instances that best cannot be considered sufficiently good to warrant comment.

Sept. 25. 1908.

Birmingham Post.

THE SOUL OF CRÆSUS. By G. Villiers Stuart.
(Laurie.) 6s.

The late Mr. Oscar Wilde imagined a portrait which changed from year to year as its original sank deeper and deeper into degradation, the model retaining the while the charm and freshness of unspoiled youth. Mr. Villiers Stuart has worked on something like the same idea. The magic of Abdul von Tarsenheim makes it possible for young Vandracken to live as he will, secure in the knowledge that the remorse and all the physical consequences of his deeds must be endured by another man. As Vandracken's income is five thousand sterling every day, and he proposes to get the full value of every pound of it in dissipation, one judges that his deputy must have been extraordinarily strong, both bodily and mentally, to have borne the strain for years together; on that point Mr. Stuart is discreetly reserved. He is more concerned with Vandracken, who seems to have found a partner after his own heart in a Parisian lady of such appalling wickedness that other men fall back in terror at her glance. But, of course, Veeda Venestra (or "The Cobra") was not strictly speaking Parisian. She was of Aztec descent, worshipped ugly idols, and devised daily for her protector new forms of saturnalia—all to no avail. One does not quite understand why Vandracken should have wanted to recover his conscience. However, the quest of Tarsenheim, the meeting with the other man, and the fate of the magician make up various exciting chapters. Decidedly Mr. Stuart can tell a fantastic tale effectively.

REVIEWS.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

G. K. CHESTERTON: A CRITICISM. With four photographs. (London: Alston Rivers. 5s.)

Quoth Nature to herself some thirty odd years ago: Time it is that I gave a new fillip to the gaiety of nations. I will fashion a mortal of fantastic mould. A harlequin-apostle shall he be, and in a whirlwind of paradox shall he live all the days of his life. And so in the fulness of time there emerged Gilbert Keith Chesterton, whom now we behold fulfilling his destiny to the delectation of many and the marvel of all.

That Chesterton is the genius of paradox is a fact so palpable that to ignore it would be an act of sheer perversity. Take his style to begin with. He revels in grotesque inversions, and in his writings we find topsy-turvydom rampant, but it is a topsy-turvydom peculiarly his own. Compare him with Oscar Wilde, for example. The paradox of Wilde assumed the form of an inversion of words; that of Chesterton an inversion of ideas. Wilde took a proverb and turned it inside out; Chesterton takes a current conception and turns it upside down. Its essential characteristic is that of wild and weird exaggeration.

As Chesterton has been compared with Oscar Wilde, so a resemblance has been traced between Chesterton and Shaw. Both to say, the resemblance is all on the surface. Pugnacity and pyrotechnics are characteristics of both, and there the resemblance ends. Chesterton is an incurable romantic. Shaw is romanticism's sworn foe. In the careers of the two men, also, the contrast is equally obvious. Shaw has stuck to his Socialism, whilst Chesterton has become a backslider.

JOHN BULL. OCTOBER 10TH, 1908.

AMONG THE BOOKS.

By HERBERT VIVIAN.

"Echoes from Kottabos," edited by R. Y. Tyrrell and Sir Edward Sullivan (Richards: 7s. 6d. net), is a collection of poems which were brought out in instalments some thirty years ago at Trinity College, Dublin. Few of the contributors have since become famous, and one of them is now justly forgotten. The humour which one would expect from young Irishmen is not much in evidence, and the poems are, for the most part, so childish and trivial that there cannot have been much object in re-printing them. The general effect is one of abortive attempts at the exhibition of non-existent cleverness.

Sto rbridge, Worcester-shire.

SOCIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "COUNTY EXPRESS."

Sir,—It is kind of Mr. Williams to make so clever an attempt to simplify Mr. Shaw's ideas, but one will prefer to obtain the information from the source.

In the "Clarion" some time ago Mr. Bernard Shaw said he had great hopes of "persuading the Fabian Society to organise a real Socialistic party openly bent on abolishing property, breaking up the family, annihilating militarism by refusing to renew the Mutiny Act, and making our domesticity decent by stamping out marriage and other legal forms of prostitution and chattel slavery."

Mr. Oscar Wilde, Mr. William Morris, and Mr. Belfort Bax tells us: "With the abolition of private property marriage must disappear."

I respectfully ask your readers to compare your Dudley correspondent's statements with the foregoing, and I ask him to be more honourable, and less prone to beguile the workers with sophistries. My letters do not give Socialism credit for the silly idea of abolishing money. We will take another extract, which shows where the foolishness lies—

Mr. Robert Blatchford (in "Merrie England") writes:—"Under Socialism there would be no money at all; no wages. The industry of the country would be organised

and managed by the State. Goods of all kinds would be produced and distributed for use—and not for sale—in such quantities as were needed; hours of labour would be fixed, and every citizen would take what he or she desired from the common stock. Food, clothing, lodging, fuel, transit, amusement, and all things would be absolutely free."

After this, and after the admission by Mr. Williams that the State would be milk vendors, may I ask on which side is the "delirium"?

SUNDAY TIMES, OCTOBER 18, 1908.

Mr. Frohman's season with "Pantaloen," at the Theatre des Arts, Paris, ends on Tuesday night, and the company will return on Wednesday. The management of the house are so satisfied with their experiment that they have made arrangements to present at the Theatre des Arts during the coming season French translations of "Lady Windermere's Fan," "The Light that Failed," and Mrs. Clifford's play, "The Latch."

AMONG THE MUMMERS.

"THE DIVINE MAHATMA."

Last week, as stated in this column, I received from Mr. Lion Margrave a printed copy of a strange play called "The Divine Mahatma," which, it was stated, would be produced on Saturday evening at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater. After all, it was not actually staged, as I had assumed would be the case, despite the excited protests of the Daily Chronicle. I did not know that the police in this country could be as despotic as they are in Russia; I assumed that any dramatist is allowed to stage privately in London any play he may care to write and that he can get actors to act. I believe that is the law; and I am anxious to know exactly how it is that Mr. Margrave has been deprived of his right. True, his play is, as I suggested, a repulsive play; but it is no more repulsive than Wilde's "Salomé" which I saw in the same hall where Mr. Margrave said "The Divine Mahatma" was to be done. Wilde's "Salomé" was redeemed, to some extent, possibly, by the fact that it is a work of art of a kind, whilst "The Divine Mahatma" is not. True, also, Mr. Margrave's request that the Press should not comment on the play before production, so as to avoid all risk of prohibition, was, as they say down east, "askin' for it." Nevertheless, I do not quite understand on what legal grounds the prohibition was carried out, unless, perchance, the licensee of the hall invoked the aid of the police at the last moment to relieve him of a responsibility that he did not care to shoulder. This may have been so, for Mr. A. S. George, the licensee in question, writes me indignantly that "there was neither rehearsal or performance."

John Bull Oct. 4. 1908

DAILY NEWS.

TABLE TALK.

We see in the current issue of "The Schoolmaster" a protest against the recommendation of the United States Education Department that fairy tales and fables be no longer read in the schools. "Will children prohibited from reading fairy tales and fables," our contemporary pertinently asks, "be permitted to read the American newspapers? If they are, what is the utility of the prohibition? If the fairy tale and fable have to go because they violate the standard of truth which the Education Department wishes to set up, what is to become of history and literature in general?"

Oscar Wilde once traced the dead and unimaginative materialism that is so common in America to the fact that the Americans have for their national hero a man who was unable to tell a lie. Certainly, there are lies and lies, and, if we are going to confine the intellectual interests of children to mathematical facts such as that two and two make four, we shall have to send by the board not only "Jack the Giant-Killer" and "The Ugly Duckling," but "Paradise Lost," "David Copperfield," and the penny stories which children are given to read on Sunday. Besides, the belief that two and two make four is, with nearly everybody, not a statement capable of proof, but the merest superstition. So are most of a child's beliefs about its father and its grandfather and kings and queens and the various people it is taught to admire. If in future children are to have nothing but the truth, we confess we tremble for George Washington himself. May not he, too, be a fable and a fairy tale, and a pleasant ghost?

A BOOK OF THE DAY.

LADY RANDOLPH.

(PUBLISHED TO-DAY.)

"The Reminiscences of Lady Randolph Churchill." By Mrs. George Cornwallis-West. With illustrations. Arnold. 15s. net.

Lady Randolph, however, has anecdotes about all sorts of people—Royalties, politicians, and authors. One of them recalls the almost too ready wit of Oscar Wilde:

An argument arose between him and Lord Ribblesdale on after-dinner speeches. Mr. Wilde declaring that there was no subject on which he could not speak at a moment's notice. Taking him at his word, Lord Ribblesdale, holding up his glass, said, "The Queen." "She is not a subject," answered Wilde, as quick as lightning.

Better still are the two pages devoted to Mr. Bernard Shaw, who refused, in reply to an invitation, to go and eat "dead animals" with Lady Randolph. The volume is full of gossip and comment that will delight everybody. It is sure to be one of the most widely-read books of the season.

CHESTNUT!

It has been said of Oscar Wilde—as, indeed, it is said with more or less truth of all purveyors of literary bon-bons—that success in this sphere is due as much to memory as to imagination, and to the happy knack of putting wares which others have manufactured on a responsive market. Wasn't it of Wilde that the story is told that, after listening to the orouscation of a witty intimate, he remarked with becoming modesty and regret—"I wish I had said that," whereupon came the retort—"Never mind, Oscar, dear boy, you will." Knowing the world and its ways so well, and especially the ways of the world of smart people, Mrs Cornwallis West, it may be thought, would have been among the last to give us as a "sparkle" of Wilde's a chestnut of quite respectable antiquity. But here it is. Oscar was boasting at a London dinner party that he could make a speech on any subject under the sun. "Taking him at his word, Lord Ribblesdale, holding up his glass, said 'The Queen.' 'She is not a subject,' answered Wilde as quick as lightning." Had Mrs Cornwallis West known, however, that the jest had currency in Scotland, where a surgical operation is required to get jokes into people's heads, long before Wilde was born, she would not, perhaps, have been surprised at the celerity with

which it was uttered. This, however, may be said. It is generally put into the mouth of a punster who boasted that he could exercise his art on any "subject." This, however, only shows Wilde's remarkable skill in adaptation.

Daily Mail Oct. 7. 1908. Birmingham.

A STORY OF OSCAR WILDE.

In her book of reminiscences (just published) Lady Randolph Churchill tells a delightful story of Oscar Wilde boasting at a London dinner-party that he could make a speech on any subject under the sun. Taking him at his word, Lord Ribblesdale, holding up his glass, said, "The Queen." "She is not a subject," answered Wilde, as quick as lightning.

Once upon a time any man who had a joke of doubtful parentage put it upon Sydney Smith. It looks as if the new scapegoat is to be Oscar Wilde. At any rate I find in Mrs. Cornwallis-West's reminiscences a witty retort attributed to Wilde which years and years ago I saw attributed to one of the wits of a much earlier generation. Wilde may have said it, but if he did he borrowed it. The story is to the effect that during an after-dinner conversation Wilde engaged to make a speech instantly on any given subject. Someone therefore gave him the Queen. He replied, "The Queen is no subject." Now in my version Porson (I think), or Sydney Smith, or Jerrold, backed himself to make a pun on any subject. They gave him the King, and he replied, "The King is no subject." It is a good story and may as well be a serial as not. V. V. V.

A correspondent tells me that "the King is no subject" joke, which Mrs. Cornwallis-West attributes to Oscar Wilde and I to Porson, is in Joe Miller. V. V. V.

Oct. 24. 1908

Sphere.

Nov. 14. 1908

REVIEWS.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

G. K. CHESTERTON: A CRITICISM.

With four photographs. (London: Alston Rivers. 5s.)

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