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Vol. 2



## WHO WROTE "FOR LOVE OF THE KING"?

In my covering letter to the editor of *The Times* I shall of course explain that I am convinced that you yourselves have acted throughout in good faith.

Yours faithfully,  
C. S. Millard.

### V

C. S. Millard, Esq.  
The Bungalow, 8 Abercorn Place, N.W.8.  
Dear Sir,

36 Essex Street, W.C.2.  
7th July, 1925.

We have tried once or twice to-day to get you on the telephone. We now write to say that we have found the original typescript of "For Love of the King," and shall be glad to allow you to see this if you will kindly call here.

We are, dear Sir, yours faithfully,  
Methuen & Co.

### VI

The Editor of *The Times*.  
Dear Sir,

The Bungalow, 8 Abercorn Place, N.W.8.  
July 8, 1925.

I have not sent the enclosed letter to any other newspaper, so I shall be grateful if you will let me know if you are unable to publish it.

The evidence in my possession that the play called "For Love of the King" is not by Oscar Wilde is very much stronger than I have stated in my letter: but it seems to me better to put my case dispassionately and to leave it to Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse or to Messrs. Methuen to produce evidence of its authenticity. I am sure Messrs. Methuen have acted throughout in good faith and have been misled.

I may add that Mr. Vyvyan Holland, Wilde's literary executor, was not consulted by Messrs. Methuen about including this play in the collected edition of Oscar Wilde's works and that he approves of my sending you the enclosed letter for publication.

Yours faithfully,  
C. S. Millard ("Stuart Mason").

### VII

#### "FOR LOVE OF THE KING."

To the Editor of *The Times*.  
Sir,

On October 19, 1922, Messrs. Methuen published, in a volume uniform with the first collected edition of the works of Oscar Wilde issued by the same firm in 1908, the scenario of a play called "For Love of the King," described on the title-page as "A Burmese Masque." A review of the book in *The Times Literary Supplement* on October 26 ended with these words: "But we cannot help wondering whether Wilde would have cared to see this . . . solemnly put out among his collected works." "For Love of the King" was first published in *Hutchinson's Magazine* for October, 1921: it appeared also in the *New York Century* in December of that year.

In an Introductory Note prefixed to the work it is stated that the play was written for Mrs. Chan Toon (now Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse) and that Wilde sent it to her in Burmah, accompanied by a letter dated November 27, 1894. No manuscript of this work in Wilde's handwriting is known to exist. It was printed from a type-written document bearing corrections in manuscript. Recently, through the courtesy of Messrs. Methuen, in whose possession this document is, I have had an opportunity of examining it, and I have no hesitation in saying that the manuscript corrections are not in Wilde's handwriting.

Wilde was in the habit of preserving every scrap of his own writing. I have myself examined hundreds of manuscripts of his plays, stories, essays and poems, both complete and incomplete, some of them written as early as his University days and some during the last few years of his life. No single line of this "Burmese Masque" is known to exist in Wilde's manuscript nor, so far as I can ascertain, has any person seen the original of the letter dated November 27, 1894, which Wilde is stated to have written to Mrs. Chan Toon (as she was then). Wilde very seldom dated a letter.

During the years 1893 and 1894 Wilde was writing "An Ideal Husband" and "The Importance of Being Earnest." An examination of the original manuscripts of

## WHO WROTE "FOR LOVE OF THE KING"?

these two plays in the British Museum will show Wilde's method of composition. It is almost incredible that at that period, when Wilde was at the height of his dramatic career, when John Hare and other managers were pressing him to fulfil contracts for which he had already received payment, when (as he complains in the unpublished portion of "De Profundis") circumstances prevented him even from finishing his one-act play called "A Florentine Tragedy," he should have had the time or the inclination to compose and to complete and to revise this "Burmese Masque," differing entirely in subject-matter and in style from any work that he had previously attempted.

Further, it is stated in the Introductory Note that "the late Robert Ross much wanted to include it in an edition of Wilde's works . . . but he could not obtain the owner's consent." From 1905 to 1909 I was closely associated with the late Mr. Robert Ross in the preparation and editing of two collected editions of Wilde's works which Mr. Ross was anxious to make as complete as possible—even fragments of lectures and two unfinished plays were included. If the existence of "For Love of the King" had been known to Mr. Ross it is (to say the least) unlikely that he would not have mentioned it to me. I suggest, therefore, that until evidence of its authenticity be forthcoming it should not be taken for granted that "For Love of the King" is the work of Oscar Wilde merely because it has been published under his name more than twenty years after his death.

Your Obedient Servant,  
Stuart Mason.

c/o Messrs. T. Werner Laurie, Ltd.  
30 New Bridge Street, E.C.4.

This letter was returned by *The Times* on July 15 with the explanation that "with the very heavy demands on his space" the editor had "been unable to find room for it."

### VIII

The Bungalow, 8 Abercorn Place, N.W.8.  
July 17, 1925.

The Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*,  
Printing House Square, E.C.4.

Dear Sir,

I sent the accompanying letter to the editor of *The Times* last week, thinking that it would be passed on to you for your consideration; but as it has been returned to me with the explanation that the editor "has been unable to find room for it" "owing to the heavy demands on his space" I think it is possible that the letter did not reach you. Of course, I did not expect it to be published in *The Times* itself.

Although I have always had suspicions about "For Love of the King" being by Oscar Wilde I had no opportunity of confirming my suspicions until recently when Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse offered to sell me six letters which she stated she had received from Wilde. As I saw immediately that these letters were forgeries, I persuaded Messrs. Methuen to allow me to examine the typescript from which "For Love of the King" was printed—the actual copy, Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse declares, which she received from Wilde with his autograph corrections on it. These autograph corrections are certainly not in Wilde's writing; and an expert who examined the document with me, agrees with me in saying that the corrections are in Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse's own hand.

It seems to me of some importance that the question of the authenticity of "For Love of the King" should be raised at the present moment because it was announced in the *Daily Graphic* of July 11 that "There are a good many of Oscar Wilde's letters and even poems drifting around which have never been published. Some of them are in the possession of Mrs. Chan-Toon." An injunction is being applied for to prevent these "poems" and "letters" from being published in Mrs. Chan Toon's (otherwise Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse) forthcoming book of reminiscences, but that of course will not prevent her from trying to dispose of these documents to unsuspecting dealers or collectors.

I sent Messrs. Methuen a copy of my letter to *The Times* and they have not raised any objection to my statements in it.

Mr. Vyvyan Holland, who is Oscar Wilde's literary executor, has also seen the letter and approves of my sending it to you for publication.

I am not at present sending my letter to any other newspaper, so I shall be grateful if you will let me know as soon as possible if you are unable to publish it.

Yours faithfully,  
C. S. Millard ("Stuart Mason").

On July 21 the Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* wrote: "I am much obliged to you for offering us your letter. I am sorry that, as Tuesday is our press day, I have not been able to come to a decision in time. . . . I hope to let you know on Thursday."

On July 23 the Editor intimated that he was unable to publish the letter.



SECOND EDITION.

Price: One Penny.

## WHO WROTE "FOR LOVE OF THE KING"?

I

The Gordon Hotel,  
27 Craven St.,  
Charing X.

June 26th.  
Dear Sir,

I have six very interesting Oscar Wilde letters which for an immediate deal you can have a bargain. Will you telephone me at above early to-morrow?

I was the original owner of Oscar's play *For Love of the King*.

Yours very truly,  
M. Wodehouse Pearse.

J. Millard, Esq.,  
The Bungalow, Abbey Rd.,  
St. John's Wood, N.W.

II

The Bungalow, 8 Abercorn Place, N.W.8.  
June 28, 1925.

Messrs. Methuen & Co., Ltd.  
36 Essex Street, W.C.2.

Oscar Wilde's "*For Love of the King*."

Gentlemen,

I shall be very much obliged if you will allow me to examine the original type-written copy from which you published the above play.

I understand from Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse that she never had the original manuscript but that the typed copy contains corrections and alterations in Wilde's handwriting and that this type-written document is in your possession. I understand also that no one has ever seen the letter which Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse states that she received from the late Mr. Robert Ross asking permission to include "*For Love of the King*" in the collected edition of Wilde's works.

Within the last few years I have had the opportunity of examining a very large number of Wilde's works in manuscript or typed with manuscript corrections, all of which have now been definitely proved to be forgeries. I am convinced that an examination of the document in your possession will enable me to come to a definite conclusion as to its genuineness or otherwise.

The immediate occasion of my writing to you is that yesterday Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse offered to sell me half-a-dozen letters supposed to have been written to her by Wilde, all of which I have no hesitation in asserting are forgeries.

Yours faithfully,  
C. S. Millard.

III

36 Essex Street, W.C.2.  
29th June, 1925.

C. S. Millard, Esq.,  
The Bungalow, 8 Abercorn Place, N.W.8.  
Dear Sir,

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of June 28th with regard to Oscar Wilde's play "*For Love of the King*." We hope to reply to it more fully in a day or two.

We are, dear Sir, yours faithfully,  
Methuen & Co.

IV

The Bungalow, 8 Abercorn Place, N.W.8.  
July 4, 1925.

Messrs. Methuen & Co., Ltd.  
36 Essex Street, W.C.2.

"*For Love of the King*."

Gentlemen,

I enclose a copy of a letter that I propose sending to *The Times Literary Supplement* as soon as possible, but I will not send it until you have had further time for considering my letter to you dated June 28.

I still hope that you will allow me to examine the type-written document which you received from Mrs. Wodehouse Pearse.



## WEATHER FORECAST.

South-westerly to westerly winds, mainly moderate; variable skies, occasional local showers; local morning mist or fog; moderate day temperature, ground frost at night. Further outlook: Continuing rather cold and unsettled, but with considerable fair intervals. Barometer, 29.39. Lighting-up time, 5.21.

## OSCAR WILDE LIBEL SUIT.

## Author Declares "For Love Of A King" To Be Spurious.

## PUBLISHERS' ACTION.

"I am bathing my brow in the perfume of water lilies."

THIS is a phrase from a letter said to have been written by Oscar Wilde which was read to-day in an action before Mr. Justice McCardie and a special jury, brought by Messrs. Methuen and Co., Limited, the well-known publishers, of Essex-street, Strand.

They claimed damages for alleged libel against Mr. Christopher Slater Millard, an author and second-hand bookseller, of Abercorn-place, Hampstead.

Messrs. Methuen complained that Mr. Millard had charged them with being a party to foisting upon the public as genuine a spurious work supposed to be by the late Oscar Wilde, a play called "For Love of the King."

## Friend of Wilde.

Defendant admitted publication of the words complained of, but pleaded privilege. He also said the words did not bear any defamatory meaning, and that in their ordinary meaning they were true in substance and fact.

Mr. Merriman, K.C., for Messrs. Methuen, said Mr. Millard was at one time apparently well acquainted with Oscar Wilde, and since his death had been regarded as an authority upon his works.

He was also a writer, in which capacity he used the name of Stuart Mason.

The issue before the jury, said counsel, was not the authenticity of the book, but whether Messrs. Methuen published it genuinely without knowing or suspecting that it was a forgery.

## A Literary Discovery.

In 1921 Messrs. Hutchinson published in their magazine for October what they described as a remarkable literary discovery, called "For Love of the King," which was, or purported to be, a small play by Oscar Wilde. It was prefaced by a letter written to a lady named Mrs. Chan Toon, dated from Tite-street, Chelsea, on November 27, 1894, and purported to be signed by Oscar Wilde.

It appeared that Mrs. Chan Toon was at that time the wife of a barrister of the Middle Temple, who was a nephew of the King of Burma, and in her maiden days, as a Miss Cosgrove, had been well acquainted with the Wilde family and there was a friendship between her and Oscar Wilde dating from childhood days.

## Letter from Wilde.

Later Mrs. Chan Toon became Mrs. Wodehouse Pearce. The letter which made a gift to her of the MS. of the play was as follows:

My dear Mrs. Chan Toon.—I am greatly repentant being so long in acknowledging receipt of "Told on the Pagoda." I enjoyed reading the stories and much admired their quaint and delicate charm. Burma calls to me. Under another cover I am sending you a fairy play, entitled "For Love of the King," just for your own amusement. It is the outcome of long and luminous talks with your distinguished husband in the Temple and on the river in the days when I was meditating writing a novel as beautiful and as intricate as a Persian prayer rug.

I hope that I have caught the atmosphere. I should like to see it acted in your garden house on some night when the sky is a sheet of violet and the stars like women's eyes. Alas, it is not likely. I am in the throes of a new comedy. I met a perfectly wonderful person the other day who unconsciously has irradiated my presence with sinuous suggestion—a Swedish baron, French in manner, Athenian in mind, and Oriental in morals. His society is a series of revelations.

I was in Oakley-street on Thursday. My mother tells me she sends

you a letter nearly every week. Constance desires to be warmly remembered, while I, who am bathing my brow in the perfume of water lilies, lay myself at the feet of you and yours.—Oscar Wilde.

It was from Mrs. Chan Toon that Messrs. Hutchinson and Messrs. Methuen, in the second instance, obtained the right and published the play in serial form, and it was afterwards published by Messrs. Methuen in book form.

## Forgery Allegation.

In the summer of 1925 defendant suddenly became obsessed with the idea that the publication was not genuine, and that the original must have been a forgery. Thereupon he started a campaign which culminated in the alleged libel.

Mr. Millard issued a pamphlet containing letters that had passed between himself and Messrs. Methuen, and also letters to the press, and stated that the correspondence disclosed "one of the most remarkable literary forgeries of recent years."

## Letter to Booksellers.

Messrs. Methuen would not resent reasonable discussion in the public press of the authenticity of the work, but they resented the defendant sending to booksellers a letter as follows:

With the assistance of Mrs. Chan Toon (Mrs. Wodehouse Pearce), this eminently respectable firm of publishers has succeeded in foisting on an unsuspecting public one thousand copies of a book at 8s. 6d. net, for which, but for Oscar Wilde's name and the imprint of Methuen and Co., Ltd., no one would have paid 8s. 6d.

Counsel, continuing, said that Mrs. Wodehouse Pearce was not a very reputable person. She was charged and convicted at Bow-street of the theft of £240 from a woman with whom she was lodging.

Later the defendant called Messrs. Methuen's attention to that conviction, and subsequently published another libel on plaintiff in which he said:

The work is now known to be a forgery, foisted on an unsuspecting public by an unscrupulous woman, now serving sentence of imprisonment for theft.

## Woman with a Parrot.

Mr. George Ernest Webster, of Highgate, giving evidence, said he was managing director of the plaintiff's firm in 1921, and Mrs. Wodehouse Pearce told him that she had the copyright of "For Love of the King," and she came to sell the book rights in the play.

She had a parrot on her shoulder, and was rather an eccentric-looking person.

He was told by her that Oscar Wilde had presented her with the MS. of the play. An agreement was signed when the book was published. None of the reviews suggested that this was not an authentic play by Oscar Wilde.

## Women: Judge's Warning.

Cross-examined by Mr. Lever, witness agreed that defendant was recognised as an authority on Oscar Wilde's works.

It never occurred to him that there was any question as to the authenticity of the play or of the letter.

"Women," Mr. Webster added, "do curious things. They don't always keep documents which we think are important."

The Judge: Don't stress that too strongly. There are three women on the jury. (Laughter.)

Mr. Webster observed that he thought both the letter and the play were characteristic of Wilde.

Mr. Lever pointed out that apparently Messrs. Methuen's staff were divided in their opinion of the merits of the play, and that Mr. E. V. Lucas, who read it, described it as "awful tosh."

## Judge as Critic.

After the luncheon adjournment Mr. Justice McCardie said he had

## THE MARCH OF PROGRESS.



The evolution of the motor-car as shown in the parade through the City streets.

## KING AND QUEEN AT OLD DRURY.

## Shakespeare Matinee In Aid The Memorial Fund.

All fashionable and theatrical London were present at the gala matinee in aid of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Fund, honoured by the King and Queen at Drury Lane Theatre this afternoon.

The Queen, who was dressed in a silver-grey coat and grey furs, with a blue toque, was given a beautiful bouquet of pink carnations by Miss Anne Wellesley.

The King and Queen were received at the private entrance to the theatre by Lady Curzon of Kedleston, Sir Alfred Butt and Lord Burnham. After talking for some time in the private reception-room, the Royal party went into their box, and immediately the curtain rose and Miss Edith Day, wearing an afternoon gown of wine crepe-de-chine, led the singing of the National Anthem.

All the chorus girls in this number were dressed in ordinary frocks with monks' hoods over them.

Every seat in the theatre was occupied, and even the Duke of Bedford, who rarely occupies his private box, was present. Other well-known people who brought parties were Lady Louis Mountbatten, Susan, Duchess of Somerset, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and Mr. and Mrs. Felix Brunner. Boxes were also taken by the Harrow School, the Queen Mary Hospital at Roehampton, and the St. Dunstan's School for the Blind.

There were many famous and charming actresses selling programs. Among the busiest were Miss Isobel Jeans in black velvet coat and skirt, and Miss Edna Best and Miss Ivy Tresmand.

taken the opportunity of reading this little play in the interval.

"There is a great deal of dramatic intensity," he said. "The colour is profuse in its richness, and some phrases are most striking."

The judge referred to some of the phrases in the letter said to have been written to Mrs. Chan Toon by Wilde, and said the touch was essentially Oscar Wilde's in intensity and colour. To those who were familiar with his letters there was something curiously reminiscent in those passages when compared with another letter which was discussed in some other litigation.

## Counsel's Declaration.

Mr. Lever: Of course, Oscar Wilde's letters had already been published. I say definitely that Mrs. Chan Toon forged it.

Mr. E. V. Lucas, the well-known writer, said he was the present chairman of Methuen and Company.

He read "For the Love of the King," before Messrs. Methuen published it and he had never doubted and did not now doubt that it was written by Oscar Wilde.

## Counsel as Parodist.

Mr. Lever suggested that some of the phrases in the alleged Wilde letter to Mrs. Chan Toon were capable of imitation by almost anybody.

The judge remarked that perhaps Mr. Lever would like to try.

Mr. Lever said he was willing, and he thereupon produced his own effort, which ran, "I should like to meet you on the Lido, where the stars are like diamonds on the sapphire sea."

The Judge (to Mr. Lucas): You hear the learned counsel's rivalry. What do you think of it?

Mr. Lucas (promptly): I don't think it's good.

"That's better than you said of the book," retorted counsel amid laughter, "for you called that tosh."

## R.A.F. OFFICER &amp; A SIGNATURE.

## Court Martial Story Of Cash Box.

## BREEZE AT INQUIRY.

## Civilian Witness Questions Commander's Powers.

EVIDENCE against Flight-Lieut. Randall, D.F.C., formerly adjutant at the Duxford Air Station (Cambridgeshire) was heard to-day at the resumed court martial investigating alleged irregularities in the administration of R.A.F. mess funds at the station.

He was charged with having applied £19 10s., which he received from the sergeants' mess, to his own use.

There was an alternative charge that he so negligently performed his duty of receiving money from the sergeants' mess for banking as to cause a loss to the mess of £38 10s. 7½d.

## Cash Box Discovery.

Flight-Lieut. G. S. Marshall, prosecuting, said that it was Randall's duty to receive and bank moneys of the sergeants' mess, and when he went on leave he said he had none of the mess moneys.

Subsequent to his return, £19 10s. was found in his cash-box.

The discovery was made when the acting adjutant threw a book into the safe. It fell against the cash box and the rattle of cash was heard.

Randall stated that the money had been paid to him prior to his going on leave, but the prosecution suggested it had been put there since his return.

## A Breeze in Court.

There was a slight breeze in court when evidence was being given by Mr. C. J. G. Heal, an insurance branch manager, of Cambridge, who spoke to making Randall a loan of £50 in September.

Mr. Heal said that he did not wish to be "mixed up in this affair." He stopped the cheque because he heard "wild rumours" from the station. As a civilian he did not acknowledge the power of the Wing Commander or anybody else to summon him to a court-martial.

Flight-Lieut. Randall, who pleaded not guilty, said that he had a bad crash in 1922, having his skull fractured and losing the sight of his left eye. He had not been able to fly since.

He did not consider himself a careful accountant. When he had a lot of work in hand he became flurried and could not sleep at night. He borrowed £100 to pay his mess bill because he was given less than a day in which to raise the money.

## Question of Signature.

Questioned with regard to a receipt for £30 in one of the books, he said that he could not say whether he signed the book or not.

Is it your signature, or is it not?—

I won't say.

Are you prepared to say on oath that that is not your signature?—I am not prepared to deny it.

He agreed that he had never questioned this signature before.

## PRINCESS ASTRID'S WEDDING.

## Gathering Of Royalties At Brussels.

## PRINCE HENRY ARRIVES.

Prince Henry arrived in Brussels to-day (says an Exchange telegram) for to-morrow's wedding of Princess Astrid of Sweden and the Belgian Crown Prince Leopold.

He was met at the station by Prince Charles of Belgium, and proceeded to the Royal Palace, where he will stay during the visit.

## Scandinavian Princes.

The other guests include the King and Queen of Denmark, the Grand Duchess of Luxemburg and her husband, Princess Astrid's parents, Princess Ingrid and Prince Eugene of Sweden, Prince and Princess Axel of Denmark, and the Crown Prince of Norway.

Comtes de Merode de Grunne d'Oultremont and De Lannoy will be Princess Astrid's pages at the marriage ceremony.

## Magnificent Gifts.

Among the presents is a beautiful bronze statuette from the International Rotary Clubs, an illuminated address contained in a gold casket from the town of Havre, a piece of old Swedish porcelain from the Swedish and Danish colonies in Brussels, an embossed silver tea service from the Maharajah of Kapurthala, an old Delft china tea tray from the Dutch colony in Brussels and a piece of gold plate from the City of Brussels.

Prince Leopold and his bride are receiving to-day the delegations which have arrived to offer their gifts.

## CHANGE IN WEST-END TRAFFIC SYSTEM.

## "One-Way" Rule To Be Tried In Lower Regent-st.

Complaints have been made by certain West-end clubs of the danger and disturbance caused to their members by the present traffic system along Pall Mall to Piccadilly, and the Ministry of Transport have agreed to make an experiment by which Lower Regent-street will be made a one-way street for traffic proceeding northwards.

This will mean that the southbound traffic now using that thoroughfare will be diverted to the Haymarket,

## The Squeaker—Nov. 15.

and thus relieve some of the congestion complained of in Pall Mall.

Apart from the clubmen's grievance, tradesmen in the Haymarket have also protested against the present system of one-way traffic in that thoroughfare which, they contend, is affecting their trade.

The Minister of Transport stated in the Commons this afternoon that he was hopeful that a satisfactory arrangement in regard to the Haymarket could be reached.

## ASTERISKS.

"Fine Under Betting Act." But the bookies don't think so.

★ ★

"Epidemic of influenza in London banks." Are they due to overdrafts?

★ ★

Mr. Baldwin's portrait has been issued on a Toby jug. To prove, perhaps, that he is no mere mug.

★ ★

A film actress has "eyes that change colour in sympathy with the frocks she wears." She should remember the chameleon and the tartan.

★ ★

A Yorkshire boy has set fire to a building, stolen fowls, wrecked the village pump, and locked the vicar in the vestry. But the most astounding thing is that he didn't blame it on the films.

★ ★

Though at Christmas we are bidden to "love one another," the attitude of the women at Christmas bazaars and sales seems to be "shove one another."



## THE WEATHER.

WE have again had a week of very unsettled weather, and marked by changes as sudden as those which have been recorded in previous years. When we closed our notice of last week the thermometers in the north Midland Counties were rising again, after registering readings some thirty degrees below the freezing point. On Thursday morning, February 18, the temperature at Loughborough was 26° higher than it had been the day before, and snow showers were reported all over the country, while a cyclonic disturbance lay over the Bay of Biscay. By approaching us during the day, bringing snow with it, and by Friday morning (19th) all communication by wire with Devon, Cornwall, and the Channel Islands was cut off by snow. The lines were restored next day. On Saturday, a fall of snow, unprecedented in depth since the Crimean winter of 1855, covered the whole of the south of Ireland. Trains were snowed up in several places, and telegraph wires broken—a blizzard was reported in Lincolnshire—while the gale which brought the snow was severe enough to do a good deal of damage even as far north as at Belmullet, in Erris. The measured amount of rain and snow at Roche's Point, Queenstown Harbour, was 1.2 inch. In front of this storm, which has been pushed out to the Atlantic again, a wave of heat passed over England, and brought on a

PIUPPET AND PLAYWRIGHT.

WHEN, shortly before the production of his play, Mr. Oscar Wilde undertook to dissipate the aerial stagnation, so that in the consequent agitation the bark which he was launching might be wafted *somewhere*, he made, as his hot and cold cyclonic centres, the following utterances:—"The personality of the actor is often a source of danger to the perfect presentation of a work of art," and "There are many advantages in puppets. . . . They recognize the presiding intellect of the dramatist." Of course Mr. Wilde must not be taken seriously; for in such case we might arrive at the conclusion that his wisdom is fatuity, and that his bearing in the eye of the public is only natural to him. But wisdom may proceed out of the mouth of "Mr. Oscar Wilde, and the paradox of the enlightened may be the verdict of the future. Let us, therefore, examine Mr. Wilde's utterances on the subject of "Puppets and Actors" with what seriousness we can. We may take it for granted that Mr. Wilde does not suppose that the casting of a play in a well-regulated theatre is a matter of chance, and that he is aware that the consideration of the personality of the various available actors is a serious managerial responsibility. No manager in his senses, for instance, would seriously cast Mr. Penley or Mr. Weedon Grossmith for the part of Hamlet, nor would he have cast the late Mr. William Hill for it, though the personality of the latter would have well fulfilled a necessary condition in the title-role, manifest from a speech of Queen Gertrude in the play, and would, indeed, have also satisfied Mr. Wilde's idea of "converting his own accidental personality into the real and essential personality of the character he was called upon to impersonate." We must, therefore, take it that in Mr. Wilde's ideal actor—that one who is to completely satisfy the requirements of the dramatist—there must be no quality which the public who know him can recognize under any disguise. This would be a consummation devoutly to be wished for—by managers—for the consequent lowering of salaries would quiet the peculiarly mercantile minds with which these gentlemen guerdon the puppets of the nineteenth century dramatists. Perhaps Mr. Wilde's meaning may be elucidated by his remark regarding the puppets, which—or whom, if he prefer the pronoun—seem to be best adapted for casting out by his own ideas. "They recognize the presiding intellect of the dramatist," nor do they speak more than is set judge from Mr. Wilde's remarks about the performance of the puppets in Paris; for in this connexion he says:—"Their features were quite sufficient, and the words that seemed to come from their little lips were spoken by poets with beautiful voices." We even see here a new function for the poet, who has hitherto been regarded as the compiler of combinations of words all his own and not the utterer of words of others. We fear that the domain of the puppet world must be left to Mr. Wilde and to Mr. County Councillor Parkinson, each of whom, gifted with special creative insight, can see qualities and recognise intentions denied to the majority of the public. What Mr. Wilde saw in that miniature effigy of Miranda, fashioned as she was "by an artist," we know not; but whatever it was, if we feel him, if we are to accept his statement as a truth, to see her flowers at the close of the play. If such effect could be achieved by the divine impersonality of a puppet, then truly that the personality which comes from the existence of red blood in the veins, of passion in the heart and fire in the brain, which things are to be found in even the meanest of actors, would be a dangerous quality to deal with for the production of an effect. Mr. Wilde says himself "anybody can act. . . . To be conventional is to be a comedian"; so we may take it that the human qualities, in which all men share, are barriers to historicism

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

One would rather have Mr. George Alexander doing work of greater value than playing a Charles Hawtrey part, yet must admit that it is pleasant to see how cleverly he did it. In the quickness and alertness of his really comic acting he gave a valuable lesson to the others, who, with the exception of Miss Rose Leclercq—she was an ideal Lady Bracknell—played rather heavily. It would be unfair to suggest that the acting of Miss Evelyn Millard, Miss Irene Vambrug, and Mr. Allan Ayresworth is not sound and clever, but at present their style is not sufficiently crisp and light.



success. If we follow his argument further, we must admit, if we accept his postulate, that, inasmuch as to have any distinguishable or recognizable personality is to bar the actor from consummate achievement, those only can be quite acceptable to the dramatist who merely speak his lines without spontaneous effort or individual yielding to the influence of the situation. The result would doubtless be, theoretically, perfection, and something like rebellion on the part of the average dramatist, especially the successful one, accompanied by a desertion of audiences *en masse*. Nay, more, if we follow out Mr. Wilde's argument, perfection can only be found for the representation of any work of art in the borderland between the positive and the negative. Here, again, let us take Mr. Wilde's dictum on the subject:—"The actable value of a play has nothing whatsoever to do with its value as a work of art." Surely if a play is complete as a work of art before it has been acted, a piece of music is a work of art before it is rendered into harmonious sound, and a picture is a work of art before it is wrought on the canvas. Thus the perfection of all art is to be found in its inception, and in the world of letters style is, by inference, a vice. Finally, we find that pictorial perfection is best represented by a whitened wall whereon the eye may tranquilly rest and take in all the beauty of scene and figure which the perfect intellect can realize thereon, untrammelled by all those dangerous and misleading qualities which distinguish any one thing from the rest of its kind. Follow out Mr. Wilde's argument to the bitter end, and we shall find that he has done a wrong to art and to himself by the production of his play. In modern plays with living actors "the charm—the ineffable charm—of the unreal is here denied us," says the author of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. How much more complete it would have been had it still remained in the brain of him who sent the flowers to the Parisian puppet! But let us not speak too much "by the card" of Mr. Wilde's pleasing theory. In his wishing for a stormy advent for his play, he only follows the lead of another "great medicine" storm-raiser, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones. Both these writers are poets and scholars, and both hold themselves competent, not only to teach their own generation as to fact, but to lay down the lines on which alone poetic achievement of plays without actors can be perfected, even if now and again both have to hold themselves free from the narrowing shackles of logic, the principles that govern speech. "I have just been sent an article," says Mr. Wilde, at the beginning of his letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, with an egotism which is above the niceties of grammar.

## THE O.U.F.C.

THE "chapter of accidents" is one which should always be taken into serious consideration by those who would organise an assault at arms on an important scale. Like those of tennis (*si parva licet* . . .), fencers' services on a public occasion are prone to fail at pervasively inopportune moments.

The Oxford University newly-founded Fencing Club must therefore be congratulated on the great success it has achieved, certain defections in their cast notwithstanding, on the occasion of their first *fête de l'épée*—we may be allowed, on such a topic, to use the consecrated Parisian term for a public display of swordsmanship. This, we believe, was the first show of the kind witnessed in Oxford, at least for a great number of years.

Besides Mr. McLaren's world-renowned gymnastic institute there have, it is true, existed from time to time certain rooms where men might learn something of the sword's dexterous use or the more sturdy wielding of singlesticks; but these "schools" always were very short-lived. The late Mr. McLaren himself, albeit he was an admirer as well as an adept (after his own lights) of the pliant foil, used to deprecate all attempts to put fencing skill to the test of wide competition. The reason for this prejudice against fencing matches, in the midst of a community where matches of any kind are naturally held as obvious concomitants of all sports, is not easily distinguishable. Be it as it may, it was reserved for a small knot of University men, with a strong taste for swordsmanship as a fine art, to start a fencing club, independent of gymnastics or pugilism, and to place its tuition in the hands of professed masters—teaching of fence being still one of those matters which "they order better in France." And to "inaugurate" the young venture, an assault-at-arms of a truly representative kind was held, before a singularly appreciative concourse, in the Clarendon Rooms, under the guidance of Sir Frederick Pollock, the president, and Mr. T. A. Cook, the secretary, of the newest of Oxford's athletic clubs. Unlike most public displays of the kind in England, the exhibition was of the sword proper, fence or exercise; that is, it was unmixt with the usual bouts of sparring and wrestling, the clumsy wielding of quarterstaff, the swinging of Indian clubs, and with "feats of

strength," all things which, as a rule, are introduced into an assault-at-arms as sope to the patience of spectators who appreciate but moderately the more refined subtleties of fencing.

The new Club goes a step further (and one, we think, in the right direction) than most similar institutions, in forbidding the use within its rooms of aught but *steel* weapons; thus is the singlestick even banished from its pale: practice in cutting play must be carried out with sabres, and not with edgeless cudgels, which never can develop in the scholar the true and necessary *sentiment du fer*. Foil play, the key to all swordsmanship, formed naturally the staple of the entertainment, and at this graceful art many members of the O.U.F.C. distinguished themselves in their opposition to well-known London swordsmen. Among the former were Mr. Crackanthorpe, of Merton, Mr. Cook, of Wadham; among the latter, Mr. H. M. Paget, Mr. M. J. Sweetman (Worcester Regiment), Mr. Walter Pollock, Mr. Egerton Castle.

Swordplay possesses among its many attractions an historical interest, and it was the intention of the promoters of the assault to have shown on the platform, introduced by a pithy historical disquisition from the President's lips, the playing for a "prize," after the Elizabethan fashion, "at verie many weapons": to wit, rapier and dagger, rapier and cloak, sword and buckler, and the good English backword. Two, however, of the four amateurs who were to "play the prize," had been disabled by previous fencing-room accidents with the uncompromising sixteenth-century black rapier (*spada negra*). Mr. Egerton Castle's left hand, suspended in a sling, was unavailable for dagger or cloak wielding, and Captain Hutton, being more recently injured, was unable to put in an appearance at all. Thus the field was reduced, in point of numbers, to Sir Frederick and Mr. Walter Pollock. Their contest, however, with these obsolete but formidable weapons excited keen interest. At the "single rapier," Mr. Harry Pys, a gentleman imbued, as to swordsmanship, with the graceful and cavalier-like Sicilian school, opposed Mr. Egerton Castle with the long, wily, insinuating Italian blade. This weapon he later exchanged for an Italian sabre wherewith to meet Mr. Walter Pollock's French duelling-sword and Mr. Sweetman with the sabre. With such dissimilar weapons it was curious to note how evenly matched the passes proved to be. Mr. Cook and Mr. Sweetman, who are singularly handy with all hand weapons, met Mr. Castle with the German sabre and the "claymore" respectively, and the assault was brought to a close by a bout of the utmost animation between M. de Gondourville, the Club's *maître-d'armes*, and M. Bourgeois, of the Langham Chambers Fencing-rooms. This final display between two "professors" aroused much enthusiasm, and one of the foreign guests was heard to say, in delighted and hopeful tones, "Allons, il y a un avenir pour les armes ici!" For the sake of a mighty pleasant and beneficial pursuit, we hope this may prove to be the case, and that the labours of Sir F. Pollock and Mr. Cook may have lasting and wide-spreading results. We may some day see a similar institution founded at Cambridge, and hear of an inter-University fencing-match as one of the athletic year's fixtures.

## BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS.

WITH the story of Mr. Oscar Wilde's play, produced last Saturday at the St. James's Theatre, the public is already familiar. It is still, we believe, the privilege of the dramatist to tell his own story in his own way, although some critics have denied to him this right. But Mr. Wilde has exercised that privilege to its utmost limit. In the first act Lady Windermere promises to strike Mrs. Eryne across the face with her fan, and we are worked up to look forward to that event in the second act, the scene of the ball. Instead, however, the fan is dropped along with the intention. This is a dangerous realism; for, of course, though Lady Windermere was remarkably "fresh" for her position, in real life she would hardly have struck a person in her own house. In a drama she might do so, and *should*. It is in Act II. that Mr. Wilde, by concealing the relationship existing between his heroines, has denied himself and his audience a dramatic situation; indeed, throughout the whole play the effect is theatrical rather than dramatic. If we were told in Act I. that Lady Windermere intended striking her mother, we should have experienced the excitement, and the relief afterwards that she had not done so. But, being ignorant of the relationship, we are merely disappointed; and no dramatist can afford to disappoint his audience so early as the beginning of Act II. The horror of a daughter striking her own mother would, of course, be out of place in high comedy, and there is perhaps no other way out of the difficulty. But in Act III. the advantages of keeping us still in ignorance are obvious. The inexplicable self-sacrifice of Mrs.

B

To this the Government had no objection. Their second scheme, while no more favourable to art, marred the prospects of science at South Kensington for all time. This the Government agreed to with effusion.

But now the really comic part of the performance began. Mr. Sheepshanks was more than a collector of pictures. He was a noble and far-seeing man. He expressly laid it down in his deed of gift that, "it is not my desire that my collection of pictures and drawings shall be kept apart or bear my name as such." This proves his nobility. He further stipulated that, if any attempt were made to place his pictures under any other care than that which he had himself selected, his collection should forthwith revert to the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. It was therefore evident that a magnificent vision of a British Luxembourg dwindled, so far as its immediate realisation was concerned, to the exhibition of Mr. Tate's sixty pictures.

Next came the question of the site. It is charitable to suppose that if the Lord President assented to the proposal, he assented to it in ignorance of the facts. If so, he soon became aware of them. Rarely has the scientific world of England been so stirred with indignation as when it learned the way in which the best interests of science had been sacrificed. It came out, in answer to a question put in the House of Commons, that the scientific employés of the Department had never been consulted. Almost every scientific man of eminence in the country immediately signed a memorial to the Prime Minister protesting against the proposed scheme.

The President and Officers of the Royal Society, many residents in Oxford and Cambridge, professors in other educational institutions in London, Edinburgh, and elsewhere, the Presidents of nearly all the scientific societies, were unanimous in condemnation.

Such an expression of expert opinion as this was more than the promoters of the scheme could stand, and attempts were made to induce the City to grant a site on the Embankment. The Corporation have, however, refused to have anything to do with the scheme on any terms which have been proposed, and, unabashed by their previous experience, the wirepullers have again come forward, and Mr. Tate is represented as having put his foot down and declared that, unless he has the site he wants, irrespective of the damage that may be done to other interests, he will withdraw his offer.

Under these circumstances it is well that the public should clearly understand the facts. Mr. Tate has consented to submit his pictures to the judgment of experts, and it is at all events possible that he may be advised that some of them are not worthy of a place in a national collection. On the other hand, it is certain that the greater part of the South Kensington pictures cannot be removed, and nearly all the others by which Mr. Tate's gift was to be supplemented are already exhibited to the public. There would thus in future be two National Galleries of British art on opposite sides of the same road, to be distinguished probably as A and B. Both would be under public control, but under different governing bodies. As both would aim at representing modern art, they would presumably be rivals in the market. Hence, there might be what is, we believe, called in financial circles a "boom" in British art from which, quite unexpectedly, profit might accrue to picture-dealers, amateur and other.

In addition to all this the future of the only museum of scientific apparatus in the country, and of the Government college in which the apparatus is used and exhibited for the training of teachers, would be sacrificed, as the most eminent scientific men in the country have with one accord declared.

We do not think that the nation will have any difficulty in coming to a right conclusion in the matter, and we can only hope that Mr. Tate will have the good sense to agree to proposals which may obviate either the rejection of his own handsome offer or the wrecking of schemes which, estimated alone by the capital which the nation has already embarked in them, are far more valuable.

## CONCERT RECORD.

FRIDAY, 12th. Wind Instrumental Chamber Music Society.—

The programme included a MS. Quintet by A. Carnall, Onslow's Sextet, Op. 30, a Concertino for Bassoon, by F. David, a Clarinet Solo, a Duo for Flute and Horn, and two pieces for quintet of wind instruments. So much "wind-music" (as Mr. Peps would have called it), unrelieved by a single song, proved very monotonous, and the Society would do well in future to shorten its programmes as well as its name. Mr. Carnall's Quintet is well written, but not very original, and the performance of Hasselman's brilliant Duo in F, though otherwise very

good, was marred by an unfortunate breakdown of the horn in an elaborate cadenza.

Saturday, 13th. Crystal Palace Concerts.—The Overture by Cherubini with which the Concert opened was written for the Philharmonic Society in 1815, but it has not been performed for some forty years, and has only recently been published. It is a fine and characteristic specimen of the great Italian master, written when his powers were at their highest, and possessing emphatically—as was truly remarked in the analytical programme—the gift of style and of that refined lofty spirit which distinguishes all Cherubini's great works. The introductory Larghetto is very impressive, and the scoring throughout is extremely interesting and effective. Presumably by way of contrast, the Overture was followed by the trivial, if pretty, Intermezzo from Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which was heard to better advantage than at any previous performance in England. Of more interest was the production of the early version of Schumann's Fourth Symphony. Though announced as the version of the work written in 1841 (that usually performed being the composer's revision of 1851), it seems that the earlier score has not been entirely followed; but the editors, Drs. Wüllner and Brahms, have adopted what they consider the best readings from both sources, with the view of furnishing a definitive edition which should comprise the best points of both. The propriety of such a proceeding is, of course, open to grave doubts. Schumann, by revising the work ten years after its composition, confessed himself dissatisfied with the earlier version, and it may be urged that it is unfair to him to revert to what he had rejected. But Schumann's orchestration is notoriously unsatisfactory, and instead of improving in this respect, he deteriorated, developing more and more a fondness for thickness of orchestral colour. It was probably this reason which induced the editors to issue the early version of the work, in which the instrumentation is much lighter and clearer than in that hitherto used. The result in performance was such as might have been expected; in point of form the later version is the best, but the orchestration of that of 1841 is to be preferred. The performance was not very good; indeed, the playing of the band throughout the concert left something to be desired, especially in the Symphony and the accompaniments to the Concerto. The solo pianist was Mme. Roger-Miclos, who was heard in Beethoven's Third Concerto, Schumann's Novelette in F, and a waltz of Moszkowski's. The vocalist was Mr. Santley, who was in excellent voice, and sang Schubert's "Erl-King," and Vulcan's song from Gounod's *Philemon et Baucis*, the last verse of which he was forced to repeat.

Monday, 15th. Monday Popular Concerts.—The programme included Beethoven's Rasounowski's Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2, and Brahms's Pianoforte Quartet in G minor, Op. 25, both works of the first rank, the merits of which can be diminished by no amount of repetition. In the latter the pianoforte part was taken by Mlle. Ilona Eibenschütz, who made her first appearance this season. She was also heard in Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata, Op. 53—a bold task for a young pianist to essay, but one from which she emerged with complete success. Her playing is not only excellent in style and technique, but shows signs of a vigour and individuality of interpretation which are most welcome. The vocalist was Mrs. Helen Trust, who sang Arne's charming "Gentle Youth" and "The Traveller Benighted," and two songs by Mlle. Chaminade. Her success was not so marked as on previous occasions, as she sang persistently out of tune—possibly owing to the sudden change in the weather.

Tuesday, 16th.—The programme of Miss Dora Bright's Pianoforte Recital was exclusively selected from the works of English composers. Curiously enough, the earliest and last numbers in the chronologically arranged programme proved the most interesting. Purcell's Second Suite, containing an elaborate Chaconne, and a fine Sonata of Dr. Arne's, with a clever Air and Variations by J. Moir Clark, Dr. Hubert Parry's Mendelssohnian "Lied" and Professor Stanford's difficult Toccata, were much more striking than Sterndale Bennett's *Joan of Arc* Sonata—one of the composer's weakest works—and the group of pieces by other composers which opened Part II. of the Recital. Miss Bright was also best in these numbers. Her style and execution are so good that it is a pity she cannot get rid of an unbecoming habit of looking about her whilst playing; it is a trick which seriously interferes with the effect of her performances. On the same afternoon Miss Clara Osmond, a young pianist of some promise, gave a Recital at Steinway Hall. Miss Osmond's reading of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 90, was very good; she also played Chopin's Concerto in E minor and other pieces. She has intelligence and considerable technical ability, which would probably develop under first-rate teaching. The Recital was pleasantly enlivened by songs by Mrs. Randolph Liebig and Mr. Bispham. In the evening, Mr. Frederic Griffiths, a flute-player of exceptional ability, gave an invitation concert at the Royal Academy of Music, at which he was heard in Schubert's



Introduction and Variations, Op. 160, two numbers from a Concerto by F. Langer; a Romance and Saltarello by E. German, and a Hungarian Fantasia by Joachim Andersen. The concert also included songs by Dvořák, Gounod, Godard, and Sullivan, sung by Miss Hannah Jones (who replaced Miss Lucile Hill), and Mr. W. Nicholl.

*Thursday, 18th.*—Mr. Richard Gompertz and the Cambridge University Musical Society's String Quartet gave a remarkably fine performance of Beethoven's (so-called) Posthumous Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, at Princes' Hall. Mr. Gompertz also took part in a very well-written, though occasionally diffuse, Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin in E major, from the pen of Mr. Algernon Ashton, who played the piano part. The concert included songs by Mr. Shakspeare, and ended with Haydn's Quartet, Op. 76, No. 5.

*Friday, 19th.*—A magnificent performance of Berlioz's Symphony, "Harold en Italie," brought the series of Sir Charles Hallé's orchestral concerts to a close. The support these concerts have received has been so meagre that there is no chance of their being revived next winter. We can, therefore, only congratulate Manchester on the opportunities it enjoys of hearing such orchestral playing as London has shown itself incapable of appreciating. Besides Berlioz's Symphony, the programme included a short Symphony of Haydn's, Dvořák's first Slav Rhapsody, and Beethoven's Triple Concerto. The latter work is seldom heard, nor is it altogether one of the master's best compositions. The violoncello part, which is the most prominent of the three solo instruments, was admirably played by Signor Piatti.

*Saturday, 20th. Crystal Palace Concerts.*—Wagner's *Faust* Overture, Beethoven's First Symphony, Schumann's Pianoforte Concerto, and a new Gipsy Suite by Mr. German made up a very attractive programme. The Symphony is so seldom heard as to be almost a novelty, and Mr. German's Suite proved a very taking and melodious work, consisting of four graceful numbers, all more or less illustrative of gipsy life. The final Tarantella is hardly appropriate, for the South Italian dance is most uncharacteristic of gipsy music and dances. The solo pianist was Miss De Lara. She played the Concerto with great delicacy and refinement, and was encored after her other solos. The vocalist was Mme. Clara Samuëll, who sang songs by Mozart and Macfarren.

*Monday, 22nd.*—Mr. Edgar Haddock, an able violinist, assisted by Mme. de Pachmann, accomplished successfully the feat of playing Beethoven's first six Violin Sonatas at an afternoon concert at Steinway Hall. The scheme has some small educational interest; but six sonatas at a sitting is too much to be appreciated by any but the most enduring amateur. *Monday Popular Concerts.*—Dvořák's bright and interesting String Quartet, Op. 51, was played with much *verve* and finish by Mme. Neruda, MM. Ries, Straus, and Piatti; the other concerted number in the programme being Mozart's Pianoforte Quartet in G minor, in which Herr Schönberger took part. The pianist was heard at his best in Weber's Sonata in A flat, Op. 39, and Mr. Plunket Greene sang Schubert's "Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt," and three national Hungarian songs, arranged by F. Korbay, giving for an encore Brahms's "Feldeinsamkeit."

*Tuesday, 23.*—Mlle. Marianne Eissler gave her third Quartet concert at Steinway Hall, the programme of which does not call for remark.

#### THE WEATHER.

WE have again had a week of very unsettled weather, and marked by changes as sudden as those which have been recorded in previous weeks. When we closed our notice of last week the thermometers in the north Midland Counties were rising again, after registering readings some thirty degrees below the freezing point. On Thursday morning, February 18, the temperature at Loughborough was 26° higher than it had been the day before, and snow showers were reported all over the country, while a cyclonic disturbance lay over the Bay of Biscay. This approached us during the day, bringing snow with it, and by Friday morning (19th) all communication by wire with Devon, Cornwall, and the Channel Islands was cut off by snow. The lines were restored next day; but the storm moved northwards to the Irish coast, where, on Saturday, a fall of snow, unprecedented in depth since the Crimean winter of 1855, covered the whole of the south of Ireland. Trains were snowed up in several places, and telegraph wires broken—a blizzard was reported in Limerick—while the gale which brought the snow was severe enough to do a good deal of damage even as far north as at Belmullet, in Erris. The measured amount of rain and snow at Roche's Point, Queenstown Harbour, was 1·2 inch. In front of this storm, which has been pushed out to the Atlantic again, a wave of heat passed over England, and brought on a

rapid thaw, the change from Saturday to Sunday being from 10° to 15° in the south of England, and even greater at Aberdeen and other places in the north of Scotland. During these days a tremendous downpour of rain and snow descended upon Scilly, as much as four inches being measured in five days. On Monday morning the depression continued to lie off the south-west coast of Ireland, but the gales had died down, and the barometer was rising steadily, except in the extreme north. This movement has been continued up to Wednesday; but on Tuesday night a small secondary depression formed itself over Kent, and, of course, in the process, brought down a regular downpour over all the south-east of England. During the last two or three days our temperature in London has been more genial, and maximum readings of above 50° have made their reappearance on the charts here and elsewhere. The weather on the Continent has been quite as unsteady as in these islands, and visitors to the Riviera, in search of fine weather, have enjoyed the treat of three inches of rain at Nice, on the two days of Sunday and Monday.

#### PUPPET AND PLAYWRIGHT.

WHEN, shortly before the production of his play, Mr. Oscar Wilde undertook to dissipate the aerial stagnation, so that in the consequent agitation the bark which he was launching might be wafted *somewhere*, he made, as his hot and cold cyclonic centres, the following utterances:—"The personality of the actor is often a source of danger in the perfect presentation of a work of art," and "There are many advantages in puppets. . . . They recognize the presiding intellect of the dramatist." Of course Mr. Wilde must not be taken seriously; for in such case we might arrive at the conclusion that his wisdom is fatuity, and that his bearing in the eye of the public is only natural to him. But wisdom may proceed out of the mouth of—Mr. Oscar Wilde, and the paradox of the enlightened may be the verdict of the future. Let us, therefore, examine Mr. Wilde's utterances on the subject of "Puppets and Actors" with what seriousness we can. We may take it for granted that Mr. Wilde does not suppose that the casting of a play in a well-regulated theatre is a matter of chance, and that he is aware that the consideration of the personality of the various available actors is a serious managerial responsibility. No manager in his senses, for instance, would seriously cast Mr. Penley or Mr. Weedon Grossmith for the part of Hamlet, nor would he have cast the late Mr. William Hill for it, though the personality of the latter would have well fulfilled a necessary condition in the title-rôle, manifest from a speech of Queen Gertrude in the play, and would, indeed, have also satisfied Mr. Wilde's idea of "converting his own accidental personality into the real and essential personality of the character he was called upon to impersonate." We must, therefore, take it that in Mr. Wilde's ideal actor—that one who is to completely satisfy the requirements of the dramatist—there must be no quality which the public who know him can recognize under any disguise. This would be a consummation devoutly to be wished for—by managers—for the consequent lowering of salaries would quiet the peculiarly mercantile minds with which these gentlemen are credited by the fag-end of the century dramatists. Perhaps Mr. Wilde's meaning may be elucidated by his remark regarding the puppets, which—or whom, if he prefer the pronoun—seem to be best adapted for carrying out his own ideas. "They recognize the presiding intellect of the dramatist," "nor do they speak more than is set down for them." They do not even speak so much, if we are to judge from Mr. Wilde's remarks about the performance of the puppets in Paris; for in this connexion he says:—"Their gestures were quite sufficient, and the words that seemed to come from their little lips were spoken by poets with beautiful voices." We even see here a new function for the poet, who has hitherto been regarded as the compiler of combinations of words all his own and not the utterer of words of others. We fear that the domain of the puppet world must be left to Mr. Wilde and to Mr. County Councillor Parkinson, each of whom, gifted with special creative insight, can see qualities and recognise intentions denied to the majority of the public. What Mr. Wilde saw in that miniature effigy of Miranda, fashioned as she was "by an artist," we know not; but whatever it was, it led him, if we are to accept his statement as a truth, to send her flowers at the close of the play. If such effect can be achieved by the divine impersonality of a puppet, then truly that personality which comes from the existence of red blood in the veins, of passion in the heart and fire in the brain, which things are to be found in even the meanest of actors, would be a dangerous quality to deal with for the production of effect. Mr. Wilde says himself "anybody can act. . . . To be conventional is to be a comedian"; so we may take it that the human qualities, in which all men share, are barriers to histrionic



success. If we follow his argument further, we must admit, if we accept his postulate, that, inasmuch as to have any distinguishable or recognizable personality is to bar the actor from consummate achievement, those only can be quite acceptable to the dramatist who merely speak his lines without spontaneous effort or individual yielding to the influence of the situation. The result would doubtless be, theoretically, perfection, and something like rebellion on the part of the average dramatist, especially the successful one, accompanied by a desertion of audiences *en masse*. Nay, more, if we follow out Mr. Wilde's argument, perfection can only be found for the representation of any work of art in the borderland between the positive and the negative. Here, again, let us take Mr. Wilde's dictum on the subject:—"The actable value of a play has nothing whatsoever to do with its value as a work of art." Surely if a play is complete as a work of art before it has been acted, a piece of music is a work of art before it is rendered into harmonious sound, and a picture is a work of art before it is wrought on the canvas. Thus the perfection of all art is to be found in its inception, and in the world of letters style is, by inference, a vice. Finally, we find that pictorial perfection is best represented by a whitened wall whereon the eye may tranquilly rest and take in all the beauty of scene and figure which the perfect intellect can realize thereon, untrammelled by all those dangerous and misleading qualities which distinguish any one thing from the rest of its kind. Follow out Mr. Wilde's argument to the bitter end, and we shall find that he has done a wrong to art and to himself by the production of his play. In modern plays with living actors "the charm—the ineffable charm—of the unreal is here denied us," says the author of *Lady Windermere's Fan*. How much more complete it would have been had it still remained in the brain of him who sent the flowers to the Parisian puppet! But let us not speak too much "by the card" of Mr. Wilde's pleasing theory. In his wishing for a stormy advent for his play, he only follows the lead of another "great medicine" storm-raiser, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones. Both these writers are poets and scholars, and both hold themselves competent, not only to teach their own generation as to fact, but to lay down the lines on which alone poetic achievement of plays without actors can be perfected, even if now and again both have to hold themselves free from the narrowing shackles of logic, the principles that govern speech. "I have just been sent an article," says Mr. Wilde, at the beginning of his letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, with an egotism which is above the niceties of grammar.

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THE "chapter of accidents" is one which should always be taken into serious consideration by those who would organise an assault at arms on an important scale. Like those of tenors (*si parva licet* . . .), fencers' services on a public occasion are prone to fail at perversely inopportune moments.

The Oxford University newly-founded Fencing Club must therefore be congratulated on the great success it has achieved, certain defections in their cast notwithstanding, on the occasion of their first *fête de l'épée*—we may be allowed, on such a topic, to use the consecrated Parisian term for a public display of swordsmanship. This, we believe, was the first show of the kind witnessed in Oxford, at least for a great number of years.

Besides Mr. McLaren's world-renowned gymnastic institute there have, it is true, existed from time to time certain rooms where men might learn something of the sword's dexterous use or the more sturdy wielding of singlesticks; but these "schools" always were very short-lived. The late Mr. McLaren himself, albeit he was an admirer as well as an adept (after his own lights) of the pliant foil, used to deprecate all attempts to put fencing skill to the test of wide competition. The reason for this prejudice against fencing matches, in the midst of a community where matches of any kind are naturally held as obvious concomitants of all sports, is not easily distinguishable. Be it as it may, it was reserved for a small knot of University men, with a strong taste for swordsmanship as a fine art, to start a fencing club, independent of gymnastics or pugilism, and to place its tuition in the hands of professed masters—teaching of fence being still one of those matters which "they order better in France." And to "inaugurate" the young venture, an assault-at-arms of a truly representative kind was held, before a singularly appreciative concourse, in the Clarendon Rooms, under the guidance of Sir Frederick Pollock, the president, and Mr. T. A. Cook, the secretary, of the newest of Oxford's athletic clubs. Unlike most public displays of the kind in England, the exhibition was of the sword proper, fence or exercise; that is, it was unminged with the usual bouts of sparring and wrestling, the clumsy wielding of quarterstaff, the swinging of Indian clubs, and with "feats of

strength," all things which, as a rule, are introduced into an assault-at-arms as sop to the patience of spectators who appreciate but moderately the more refined subtleties of fencing.

The new Club goes a step further (and one, we think, in the right direction) than most similar institutions, in forbidding the use within its rooms of aught but *steel* weapons; thus is the singlestick even banished from its pale: practice in cutting play must be carried out with sabres, and not with edgeless cudgels, which never can develop in the scholar the true and necessary *sentiment du fer*. Foil play, the key to all swordsmanship, formed naturally the staple of the entertainment, and at this graceful art many members of the O.U.F.C. distinguished themselves in their opposition to well-known London swordsmen. Among the former were Mr. Crackanthorpe, of Merton, Mr. Cook, of Wadham; among the latter, Mr. H. M. Paget, Mr. M. J. Sweetman (Worcester Regiment), Mr. Walter Pollock, Mr. Egerton Castle.

Swordplay possesses among its many attractions an historical interest, and it was the intention of the promoters of the assault to have shown on the platform, introduced by a pithy historical disquisition from the President's lips, the playing for a "prize," after the Elizabethan fashion, "at verie many weapons": to wit, rapier and dagger, rapier and cloak, sword and buckler, and the good English backsword. Two, however, of the four amateurs who were to "play the prize," had been disabled by previous fencing-room accidents with the uncompromising sixteenth-century black rapier (*spada negra*). Mr. Egerton Castle's left hand, suspended in a sling, was unavailable for dagger or cloak wielding, and Captain Hutton, being more recently injured, was unable to put in an appearance at all. Thus the field was reduced, in point of numbers, to Sir Frederick and Mr. Walter Pollock. Their contest, however, with these obsolete but formidable weapons excited keen interest. At the "single rapier" Mr. Harry Pye, a gentleman imbued, as to swordsmanship, with the graceful and cavalier-like Sicilian school, opposed Mr. Egerton Castle with the long, wily, insinuating Italian blade. This weapon he later exchanged for an Italian sabre wherewith to meet Mr. Walter Pollock's French duelling-sword and Mr. Sweetman with the sabre. With such dissimilar weapons it was curious to note how evenly matched the passes proved to be. Mr. Cook and Mr. Sweetman, who are singularly handy with all hand weapons, met Mr. Castle with the German sabre and the "claymore" respectively, and the assault was brought to a close by a bout of the utmost animation between M. de Goudourville, the Club's *maitre-d'armes*, and M. Bourgeois, of the Langham Chambers Fencing-rooms. This final display between two "professors" aroused much enthusiasm, and one of the foreign guests was heard to say, in delighted and hopeful tones, "Allons, il y a un avenir pour les armes ici!" For the sake of a mighty pleasant and beneficial pursuit, we hope this may prove to be the case, and that the labours of Sir F. Pollock and Mr. Cook may have lasting and wide-spreading results. We may some day see a similar institution founded at Cambridge, and hear of an inter-University fencing-match as one of the athletic year's fixtures.

## BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS.

WITH the story of Mr. Oscar Wilde's play, produced last Saturday at the St. James's Theatre, the public is already familiar. It is still, we believe, the privilege of the dramatist to tell his own story in his own way, although some critics have denied to him this right. But Mr. Wilde has exercised that privilege to its utmost limit. In the first act Lady Windermere promises to strike Mrs. Erlynne across the face with her fan, and we are worked up to look forward to that event in the second act, the scene of the ball. Instead, however, the fan is dropped along with the intention. This is a dangerous realism; for, of course, though Lady Windermere was remarkably "fresh" for her position, in real life she would hardly have struck a person in her own house. In a drama she might do so, and *should*. It is in Act II. that Mr. Wilde, by concealing the relationship existing between his heroines, has denied himself and his audience a dramatic situation; indeed, throughout the whole play the effect is theatrical rather than dramatic. If we were told in Act I. that Lady Windermere intended striking her mother, we should have experienced the excitement, and the relief afterwards that she had not done so. But, being ignorant of the relationship, we are merely disappointed; and no dramatist can afford to disappoint his audience so early as the beginning of Act II. The horror of a daughter striking her own mother would, of course, be out of place in high comedy, and there is perhaps no other way out of the difficulty. But in Act III. the advantages of keeping us still in ignorance are obvious. The inexplicable self-sacrifice of Mrs.

B

To this the Government had no objection. Their second scheme, while no more favourable to art, marred the prospects of science at South Kensington for all time. This the Government agreed to with effusion.

But now the really comic part of the performance began. Mr. Sheepshanks was more than a collector of pictures. He was a noble and far-seeing man. He expressly laid it down in his deed of gift that, "it is not my desire that my collection of pictures and drawings shall be kept apart or bear my name as such." This proves his nobility. He further stipulated that, if any attempt were made to place his pictures under any other care than that which he had himself selected, his collection should forthwith revert to the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. It was therefore evident that a magnificent vision of a British Luxembourg dwindled, so far as its immediate realisation was concerned, to the exhibition of Mr. Tate's sixty pictures.

Next came the question of the site. It is charitable to suppose that if the Lord President assented to the proposal, he assented to it in ignorance of the facts. If so, he soon became aware of them. Rarely has the scientific world of England been so stirred with indignation as when it learned the way in which the best interests of science had been sacrificed. It came out, in answer to a question put in the House of Commons, that the scientific employés of the Department had never been consulted. Almost every scientific man of eminence in the country immediately signed a memorial to the Prime Minister protesting against the proposed scheme.

The President and Officers of the Royal Society, many residents in Oxford and Cambridge, professors in other educational institutions in London, Edinburgh, and elsewhere, the Presidents of nearly all the scientific societies, were unanimous in condemnation.

Such an expression of expert opinion as this was more than the promoters of the scheme could stand, and attempts were made to induce the City to grant a site on the Embankment. The Corporation have, however, refused to have anything to do with the scheme on any terms which have been proposed, and, unabashed by their previous experience, the wirepullers have again come forward, and Mr. Tate is represented as having put his foot down and declared that, unless he has the site he wants, irrespective of the damage that may be done to other interests, he will withdraw his offer.

Under these circumstances it is well that the public should clearly understand the facts. Mr. Tate has consented to submit his pictures to the judgment of experts, and it is at all events possible that he may be advised that some of them are not worthy of a place in a national collection. On the other hand, it is certain that the greater part of the South Kensington pictures cannot be removed, and nearly all the others by which Mr. Tate's gift was to be supplemented are already exhibited to the public. There would thus in future be two National Galleries of British art on opposite sides of the same road, to be distinguished probably as A and B. Both would be under public control, but under different governing bodies. As both would aim at representing modern art, they would presumably be rivals in the market. Hence, there might be what is, we believe, called in financial circles a "boom" in British art from which, quite unexpectedly, profit might accrue to picture-dealers, amateur and other.

In addition to all this the future of the only museum of scientific apparatus in the country, and of the Government college in which the apparatus is used and exhibited for the training of teachers, would be sacrificed, as the most eminent scientific men in the country have with one accord declared.

We do not think that the nation will have any difficulty in coming to a right conclusion in the matter, and we can only hope that Mr. Tate will have the good sense to agree to proposals which may obviate either the rejection of his own handsome offer or the wrecking of schemes which, estimated alone by the capital which the nation has already embarked in them, are far more valuable.

## CONCERT RECORD.

FRIDAY, 12th. *Wind Instrumental Chamber Music Society*.—The programme included a MS. Quintet by A. Carnall, Onslow's Sextet, Op. 30, a Concertino for Bassoon, by F. David, a Clarinet Solo, a Duo for Flute and Horn, and two pieces for quintet of wind instruments. So much "wind-music" (as Mr. Pepys would have called it), unrelieved by a single song, proved very monotonous, and the Society would do well in future to shorten its programmes as well as its name. Mr. Carnall's Quintet is well written, but not very original, and the performance of Hasselman's brilliant Duo in F, though otherwise very

good, was marred by an unfortunate breakdown of the horn in an elaborate cadenza.

Saturday, 13th. *Crystal Palace Concerts*.—The Overture by Cherubini with which the Concert opened was written for the Philharmonic Society in 1815, but it has not been performed for some forty years, and has only recently been published. It is a fine and characteristic specimen of the great Italian master, written when his powers were at their highest, and possessing emphatically—as was truly remarked in the analytical programme—the gift of style and of that refined lofty spirit which distinguishes all Cherubini's great works. The introductory Larghetto is very impressive, and the scoring throughout is extremely interesting and effective. Presumably by way of contrast, the Overture was followed by the trivial, if pretty, Intermezzo from Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, which was heard to better advantage than at any previous performance in England. Of more interest was the production of the early version of Schumann's Fourth Symphony. Though announced as the version of the work written in 1841 (that usually performed being the composer's revision of 1851), it seems that the earlier score has not been entirely followed; but the editors, Drs. Wüllner and Brahms, have adopted what they consider the best readings from both sources, with the view of furnishing a definitive edition which should comprise the best points of both. The propriety of such a proceeding is, of course, open to grave doubts. Schumann, by revising the work ten years after its composition, confessed himself dissatisfied with the earlier version, and it may be urged that it is unfair to him to revert to what he had rejected. But Schumann's orchestration is notoriously unsatisfactory, and instead of improving in this respect, he deteriorated, developing more and more a fondness for thickness of orchestral colour. It was probably this reason which induced the editors to issue the early version of the work, in which the instrumentation is much lighter and clearer than in that hitherto used. The result in performance was such as might have been expected; in point of form the later version is the best, but the orchestration of that of 1841 is to be preferred. The performance was not very good; indeed, the playing of the band throughout the concert left something to be desired, especially in the Symphony and the accompaniments to the Concerto. The solo pianist was Mme. Roger-Miclos, who was heard in Beethoven's Third Concerto, Schumann's Novelette in F, and a waltz of Moszkowski's. The vocalist was Mr. Santley, who was in excellent voice, and sang Schubert's "Erl-King," and Vulcan's song from Gounod's *Philemon et Baucis*, the last verse of which he was forced to repeat.

Monday, 15th. *Monday Popular Concerts*.—The programme included Beethoven's Rasumowski's Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2, and Brahms's Pianoforte Quartet in G minor, Op. 25, both works of the first rank, the merits of which can be diminished by no amount of repetition. In the latter the pianoforte part was taken by Mlle. Ilona Eibenschütz, who made her first appearance this season. She was also heard in Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata, Op. 53—a bold task for a young pianist to essay, but one from which she emerged with complete success. Her playing is not only excellent in style and technique, but shows signs of a vigour and individuality of interpretation which are most welcome. The vocalist was Mrs. Helen Trust, who sang Arne's charming "Gentle Youth" and "The Traveller Benighted," and two songs by Mlle. Chaminade. Her success was not so marked as on previous occasions, as she sang persistently out of tune—possibly owing to the sudden change in the weather.

Tuesday, 16th.—The programme of Miss Dora Bright's Pianoforte Recital was exclusively selected from the works of English composers. Curiously enough, the earliest and last numbers in the chronologically arranged programme proved the most interesting. Purcell's Second Suite, containing an elaborate Chaconne, and a fine Sonata of Dr. Arne's, with a clever Air and Variations by J. Moir Clark, Dr. Hubert Parry's Mendelssohnian "Lied" and Professor Stanford's difficult Toccata, were much more striking than Sterndale Bennett's *Joan of Arc* Sonata—one of the composer's weakest works—and the group of pieces by other composers which opened Part II. of the Recital. Miss Bright was also best in these numbers. Her style and execution are so good that it is a pity she cannot get rid of an unbecoming habit of looking about her whilst playing; it is a trick which seriously interferes with the effect of her performances. On the same afternoon Miss Clara Osmond, a young pianist of some promise, gave a Recital at Steinway Hall. Miss Osmond's reading of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 90, was very good; she also played Chopin's Concerto in E minor and other pieces. She has intelligence and considerable technical ability, which would probably develop under first-rate teaching. The Recital was pleasantly enlivened by songs by Mrs. Randolph Liebig and Mr. Bispham. In the evening, Mr. Frederic Griffiths, a flute-player of exceptional ability, gave an invitation concert at the Royal Academy of Music, at which he was heard in Schubert's



"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

Mr. John Worthing, of the Manor House, Woolton, Shropshire, in order to explain to his pretty ward, Cecily, with whom he was not in love, his frequent visits to town, imagined the existence of a younger brother, whom he called Ernest, and pretended that he went to see him. When in London he, for no discoverable reason, called himself Ernest. These visits were not culpable in character, for he was courting honestly the Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax. Now, the two girls had what one may call Shandian views about names. By the way, did not Lytton, in "The Caxtons," use Sterne's idea to some extent? Lytton's name naturally comes into mind when one thinks of Mr. Oscar Wilde, for in one aspect the brilliant author of "Pelham" suggests the modern apostle of culture—fortunately, other aspects of Lytton excuse his weaknesses.

Gwendolen fell in love with John because she believed that his name was Ernest. Cecily became enamoured of the mere name of Ernest and the description of him given by John—in which she reminds one of a case cited by Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy"—and, being a girl whose studies in French seem to have extended to Marivaux, she actually went so far as to engage herself to this mere fiction. As soon as John, posing as Ernest, proposed to Gwendolen, he was accepted, but he was rather embarrassed to hear her say that his name, Ernest, vibrated in her soul. However, when he spoke to Lady Bracknell—her mother—difficulties arose, for he happened to be a foundling, and Lady Bracknell could not accept as son-in-law a nameless babe, found in a bag at a station. Gwendolen promised to be true despite Mamma's opposition.

Now it chanced that Gwendolen's cousin, Algernon Moncrieffe, was bosom friend of Worthing. Algy for a long time believed that his friend was Ernest, and did not know his country address. By accident the truth came out, and Worthing, in giving an explanation, injudiciously dwelt upon the charms of Cecily, so, of course, Algy fell in love with the description. For Mr. Wilde works upon the economical plan of using almost all his comic ideas twice. Consequently, Algy went down to the Manor House and gained admittance by pretending that he was Ernest, the imaginary brother. In ten minutes he had proposed to Cecily, and been accepted by her. He, like John, was much embarrassed to find how great was the importance attached by his sweetheart to the name Ernest.

John had decided to put an end to the imaginary existence of Ernest, so he bought himself a suit of mourning of the deepest dye, and came down to Shropshire with the sad sham news of his brother's death, on the day that Algy was paying his surreptitious visit. Of course, he was startled to find Algy in such a guise, but, for his own sake, was compelled to abstain from "giving him away." Gwendolen followed her sweetheart to the Manor House, and, to her surprise, discovered that he had such a pretty ward as Cecily. The two girls, who are as unlike nature and like one another as is conceivable, promptly became great friends.

Such a friendship could hardly last, seeing that each believed herself to be engaged to Ernest Worthing. Soon they began to speak of their love-affairs; then arose a misunderstanding, which naturally begat a quarrel. Peace was restored by the appearance of John and Algy, for the girls discovered the fraud as to the name that had been practised upon them, and therefore joined forces in an attack upon the impostors. So the men were left alone, and buried their grief in an orgie of crumpets and tea-cakes.

Of course, as the play is a farce—"trivial comedy" is the official description, but only one-half of it is correct—a happy ending had to be contrived. So the author, with daring simplicity, took advantage of the fact that John was a foundling. By the aid of Lady Bracknell and Miss Prism, the governess of Cecily, it was discovered that his father actually was the husband of Lady Bracknell's sister. This removed the difficulty of the question of birth, and only Gwendolen's attachment to the name Ernest remained as an impediment. It was suggested that his father's name might have been Ernest, and that the son should have been christened after him. Lady Bracknell could not recollect the name of her brother-in-law, but, by aid of the Army List, the question was settled affirmatively. Algernon was pardoned because his imposture was due solely to his desire to see Cecily.

No doubt, the tale sounds even more than "trivial." Certainly it cannot be pretended that in such matters as construction, invention—or adaptation—of subject, contrivance of comic business, or delineation of character, Mr. Wilde has shown much ability. However, the liveliness of the dialogue saved the piece—even rendered it very successful. I do not believe that the writing is so clever that it would have secured success but for the prestige of the theatre and name of the author, yet cannot deny that it contains many smart speeches. One can have too much of such sayings as "Divorcees are made in heaven"—"to have lost one parent is a misfortune, to have lost both looks like carelessness"—or "I am only serious about my amusements." On the other hand, there are many clever jests in the play, and if the average were raised by judicious elimination of the numerous failures, everybody would be heartily amused by "The Importance of Being Earnest."

One would rather have Mr. George Alexander doing work of greater value than playing a Charles Hawtrey part, yet must admit that it is pleasant to see how cleverly he did it. In the quickness and alertness of his really comic acting he gave a valuable lesson to the others, who, with the exception of Miss Rose Leclercq—she was an ideal Lady Bracknell—played rather heavily. It would be unfair to suggest that the acting of Miss Evelyn Millard, Miss Irene Vanbrugh, and Mr. Allan Aynesworth is not sound and clever, but at present their style is not sufficiently crisp and light.



July 5, 1890.]

THE SPEAKER.

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The most notable articles in the *Fortnightly Review* are "E. B. Lanin's" account of Russian Prisons, and the papers on England and Germany in Africa by Mr. Johnston, Commander Cameron, and Mr. E. W. Beckett, M.P. Of the story told by Mr. Lanin we can hardly trust ourselves to speak. No more terrible indictment of Russian autogovernment has ever been given to the world, and it is an indictment fortified by constant references to authentic documents. To say that Russian prisons to-day are in many cases infinitely worse than English prisons were before John Howard began his work is to put the case in the mildest manner, whilst the horror of the story told by Mr. Lanin is intensified by the knowledge that thousands of absolutely innocent persons have to undergo the tortures moral and physical which are the common lot of men and women confined by order of the Czar. Mr. Johnston's tribute to the discussion of the Anglo-German agreement is sound and sensible, and may be commended to those who wish for a plain statement of facts. The fierce attack upon the Anglo-German agreement by Mr. Beckett is notable as an outburst of the feeling which prevails so widely throughout the Tory party, and is so largely responsible for that Tory discontent of which we speak elsewhere. There are few members of Parliament on the Ministerial side, however, who have Mr. Beckett's courage.

The American magazines are unusually good this month, good as they always are in illustration, but better than usual in literary matter. We have spoken elsewhere of the leading contribution to *Lippincott*. The *Century* has its usual bountiful supply of topographical articles and stories and sketches, "The Anglomaniacs" being one that specially deserves attention on the part of those Englishmen who wish to see themselves as others see them. *Harper's* provides us with a continuation of the last adventures of the illustrious Tartarin from the pen of Daudet, and the story of Jonathan Wild is told again with vigour and fidelity to truth. But perhaps the article which will have the greatest attraction for the English reader is that upon social life in Oxford by Miss Arnold, which is well written and admirably illustrated.

The *Cornhill* is strongest in its fiction. Two stories which promise well are begun in this month's number. One is from the pen of the author of that very powerful story of the Indian Mutiny, called "The Touchstone of Peril," which appeared some years ago, and failed to meet with the reception it merited. The present story has the same great tragedy as its theme, and the opening chapters are full of life, and steeped in the Indian atmosphere of 1857. Of a lighter character is the tale entitled "A Bride from the Bush," and if this be, as we are led to believe, from the pen of a new writer, we must hope great things from the future performances of the author. For the rest the contents of the *Cornhill* are as pleasant and instructive as usual. In *Murray's Magazine* for July there is a poem in blank verse by Mr. Lewis Morris, an account of Scotland Yard by Mr. Hall Richardson, which has at least the advantage of being timely, and discussions upon the question of Technical Education and Trades Unionism from competent pens. An excellent ghost story, called "The Empty Compartment," adds to the attractions of a really good number.



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The *Contemporary* is chiefly remarkable for the Rev. Benjamin Waugh's article on Child-Life In-

surance. It is cruel reading for any man with a heart, and is written by one who has the best right to be heard. M. Gabriel Monod reviews French Affairs, and Mr. Sidney Webb writes with information and vigour in favour of Poor Law Reform. In "A New Profession Wanting Professors," Mr. Pennell demands a school for illustrators. He justly emphasises the superiority of the Americans in the matter of illustration, but it seems ungentle of him to sneer at the *Daily Graphic*, considering the strides it has made in the short six months of its existence.

The most notable articles in the *Fortnightly Review* are "E. B. Lanin's" account of Russian Prisons, and the papers on England and Germany in Africa by Mr. Johnston, Commander Cameron, and Mr. E. W. Beckett, M.P. Of the story told by Mr. Lanin we can hardly trust ourselves to speak. No more terrible indictment of Russian misgovernment has ever been given to the world, and it is an indictment fortified by constant references to authentic documents. To say that Russian prisons to-day are in many cases infinitely worse than English prisons were before John Howard began his work is to put the case in the mildest manner, whilst the horror of the story told by Mr. Lanin is intensified by the knowledge that thousands of absolutely innocent persons have to undergo the tortures moral and physical which are the common lot of men and women confined by order of the Czar. Mr. Johnston's tribute to the discussion of the Anglo-German agreement is sound and sensible, and may be commended to those who wish for a plain statement of facts. The fierce attack upon the Anglo-German agreement by Mr. Beckett is notable as an outburst of the feeling which prevails so widely throughout the Tory party, and is so largely responsible for that Tory discontent of which we speak elsewhere. There are few members of Parliament on the Ministerial side, however, who have Mr. Beckett's courage.

The American magazines are unusually good this month, good as they always are in illustration, but better than usual in literary matter. We have spoken elsewhere of the leading contribution to *Lippincott*. The *Century* has its usual bountiful supply of topographical articles and stories and sketches, "The Anglomaniacs" being one that specially deserves attention on the part of those Englishmen who wish to see themselves as others see them. *Harper's* provides us with a continuation of the last adventures of the illustrious Tartarin from the pen of Daudet, and the story of Jonathan Wild is told again with vigour and fidelity to truth. But perhaps the article which will have the greatest attraction for the English reader is that upon social life in Oxford by Miss Arnold, which is well written and admirably illustrated.

The *Cornhill* is strongest in its fiction. Two stories which promise well are begun in this month's number. One is from the pen of the author of that very powerful story of the Indian Mutiny, called "The Touchstone of Peril," which appeared some years ago, and failed to meet with the reception it merited. The present story has the same great tragedy as its theme, and the opening chapters are full of life, and steeped in the Indian atmosphere of 1857. Of a lighter character is the tale entitled "A Bride from the Bush," and if this be, as we are led to believe, from the pen of a new writer, we must hope great things from the future performances of the author. For the rest the contents of the *Cornhill* are as pleasant and instructive as usual. In *Murray's Magazine* for July there is a poem in blank verse by Mr. Lewis Morris, an account of Scotland Yard by Mr. Hall Richardson, which has at least the advantage of being timely, and discussions upon the question of Technical Education and Trades Unionism from competent pens. An excellent ghost story, called "The Empty Compartment," adds to the attractions of a really good number.



run riot in truffles. We will admit at once that Lord Henry's epigrams are admirable examples, taken separately; but a story demands simplicity and proportion, and here we have neither; it demands restraint, and here we find profusion only; it demands point, and here the point is too often obscured by mere cleverness. Lord Harry's mission in the book is to lead Dorian Gray to destruction; and he does so, if you please, at the end of a string of epigrams.

In fact, we should doubt that Mr. Wilde possessed the true story-teller's temperament, were it not for some half a dozen passages. Here is one, where Dorian tells of his engagement to Sibyl Vane, the actress:—

"Lips," he says, "that Shakespeare taught to speak have whispered their secret in my ear. I have had the arms of Rosalind around me, and kissed Juliet on the mouth."

"Have you seen her to-day?" asked Lord Henry.

"Dorian Gray shook his head. 'I left her in the forest of Arden; I shall find her in an orchard in Verona.'"

Lord Henry sipped his champagne in a meditative manner. "At what particular point did you mention the word marriage, Dorian?"

"My dear Harry, I did not treat it as a business transaction, and I did not make any formal proposal. I told her that I loved her, and she said she was not worthy to be my wife. Not worthy! Why, the whole world is nothing to me compared to her."

"Women are wonderfully practical," murmured Lord Henry: "much more practical than we are. In situations of this kind we often forget to say anything about marriage, and they always remind us."

The last chapter of the tale is good story-telling throughout, in style and matter—as good as Chapter IX. is bad. And when Mr. Wilde thoroughly sees why two particular sentences in that last chapter—

"The Park is quite lovely now. I don't think there have been such lines since the year I met you—"

though trivial in themselves are full of significance and beauty in their setting, he will be far on the road to eminence in fiction. He has given us a work of serious art, strong and fascinating, in spite of its blemishes. Will he insist on being taken seriously, and go on to give us a better?

In its way, "Perfervid" is as striking a tale as "The Picture of Dorian Gray," and is as full of excellences and faults. Whoever Mr. John Davidson may be, he shall be welcomed as the possessor of a style at once light and vigorous, and of a very pretty gift of humour. In the first half of the volume this humour runs to fantastic excess; but we would implore the reader to go forward without fear, and he shall find in Part II. a little narrative as tender as it has been our lot to meet. "The Pilgrimage of Strongson and Saunders Elshander," as Mr. Davidson entitles the second half of his book, is fantastic too, no doubt. It treats of a little boy who travels forth upon the world with the "Pilgrim's Progress" for guide, and of the adventures he meets. It defies probability with a light heart, but it is sincerely and engagingly human, nevertheless; and while it makes you laugh—even at the very moment when it makes you weep—it comes perilously near to making you weep also.

We are the more concerned that the reader should gird up his loins to reach the second part, and taste the delight we found in it, because the first part is decidedly tantalising. A man, we suspect, who really cares for style, will find no difficulty; but there is a serious drawback to the charm of the book in its obvious infelicity of structure. We can forgive even "Tristram Shandy," but we cannot at first forgive Mr. Davidson. The two parts of the book contain two parallel series of adventures, with no more connection than this, that the hero in Part I. is the son of the hero in Part II. In fact they are even less coherent than the two halves of Bunyan's great work.

To us this seems a radical defect; but when we turn and search the book for indications of ability rather than actual achievement, we can forgive very easily. In sense of proportion, firmness of such, restraint, the writer has every advantage over Mr. Wilde. He has especially the art of

speaking home with few words, the art so seldom learnt. We can imagine that many will be merely irritated by "Perfervid"; but those whom genuine humour conciliates will keep a warm corner in their hearts for this little volume.

#### WITH SWORD AND PEN.

MAYNE REID: A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE. By Elizabeth Reid, his widow. London: Ward & Downey. 1890.

THE problem, What shall I do with my life?—we should say rather, the succession of problems, for even though the *pons asinorum*, the choice of a career, be fortunately crossed, it is only the first and easiest of countless difficulties—has never been harder to solve for men like Mayne Reid than in the present century. Those high-strung, adventurous natures, the slaves of their imaginations, which in former times were never at a loss for some Drake or Raleigh to follow, some Stuart Pretender, or romantic Irish patriot, or even a Paul Jones or a Captain Kyd, have fallen on evil times. The world will soon be cracked like a nut; science and commerce between them will manage that, and when the kernel is peeled, and the whole earth inside and out as "evident to any formal capacity" as Malvolio found Maria's letter, even such a career as Mayne Reid stumbled upon will have become as impossible to the adventurous spirit as highway robbery on the Edgware Road or piracy in the English Channel. The splendour and the isolation of the cases in which imaginative daring has succeeded in recent years in carving out a career of action are a twofold testimony to the overwhelming difficulty of finding, not the line of least resistance, but the line that is not positively irresistible; and the two most notable as well as most noble examples of the reappearance or survival of the berserker mood among Englishmen are distinguished above all others because of something higher and deeper than the mere pressure of the adventurous instinct: the passion that sanctified the lives of Gordon and Livingstone, however we may name it, transcended that of almost all adventurers since Godfrey of Bouillon and Peter the Hermit. We need hardly say that it is not the spirit of the first crusaders that we find in Mayne Reid. He represents the soldier of fortune. His temperament had much in common with Mr. Stanley's; and in his writing we have the same slipshod rhetoric and self-glorification; the latter which, in various disguises, is known to the readers of his novels, appears nakedly in the autobiographical fragment incorporated by Mrs. Reid in her interesting memoir. We are bound to add, however, that Mayne Reid's egotism is always genial.

After the stormy boyhood and youth usual with men of his type, at the age of twenty-two Mayne Reid went to America. As tutor, store-keeper, nigger-driver, schoolmaster—in a wooden school of his own building—trapper, player, poet, he spent six years. Then the second outbreak of the war between Mexico and the United States occurred, and by good luck he obtained a commission in a New York regiment. During the stirring scenes that ended with the capture of the city of Mexico all his energies were for the first time thoroughly roused. "Who is that young officer leading the charge on our right?" asked Captain Peternell at the siege of Chapultepec. One of his men answered him, "It is a New Yorker by the name of Mayne Reid—a hell of a fellow." As a consequence of his daring he was severely wounded, reported dead, and mourned in halting verses by a young poetess. After his convalescence he wrote his first novel, "The Rifle Rangers," full of his Mexican experiences, and alive with the pleasure of his newly discovered talent. Then came "The Scalp Hunters," which no man can remember without a thrill, not for the magnificent adventures alone, but because it is the story in which the love-passages appeal most directly to boyhood. Mr. Swinburne declares that every Englishman is in love with Jane Eyre; it is less

hundred and sixteen criticisms of *Dorian Gray* that have passed from my library table into the waste-paper basket I have taken public notice of only three. One was that which appeared in *The Scots Observer*. I noticed it because it made a suggestion, about the intention of the author in writing the book, which needed correction. The second was an article in *The St. James's Gazette*. It was offensively and vulgarly written, and seemed to me to require immediate and caustic censure. The tone of the article was an impertinence to any man of letters. The third was a meek attack in a paper called *The Daily Chronicle*. I think my writing to *The Daily Chronicle* was an act of pure wilfulness. In fact, I feel sure it was. I quite forget what they said. I believe they said that *Dorian Gray* was poisonous, and I thought that, on alliterative grounds, it would be kind to remind them that, however that may be, it is at any rate perfect. That was all. Of the other two hundred and thirteen criticisms I have taken no notice. Indeed, I have not read more than half of them. It is a sad thing, but one wearies even of praise.

As regards Mr. Brown's letter, it is only interesting in so far as it exemplifies the truth of what I have said above on the question of the two obvious schools of critics. Mr. Brown says frankly that he considers morality to be the 'strong point' of my story. Mr. Brown means well, and has got hold of a half-truth, but when he proceeds to deal with the book from the artistic standpoint he, of course, goes sadly astray. To class *Dorian Gray* with M. Zola's *La Terre* is as silly as if one were to class Musset's *Fortunio* with one of the Adelphi melodramas. Mr. Brown should be content with ethical appreciation. There he is impregnable.

Mr. Cobban opens badly by describing my letter, setting Mr. Whibley right on a matter of fact, as an 'impudent paradox.' The term 'impudent' is meaningless, and the word 'paradox' is misplaced. I am afraid that writing to newspapers has a deteriorating influence on style. People get violent, and abusive, and lose all sense of proportion, when they enter that curious journalistic arena in which the race is always to the noisiest. 'Impudent paradox' is neither violent, nor abusive, but it is not an expression that should have been used about my letter. However, Mr. Cobban makes full atonement afterwards for what was, no doubt, a mere error of manner, by adopting the impudent paradox in question as his own, and pointing out that, as I had previously said, the artist will always look at the work of art from the standpoint of beauty of style and beauty of treatment, and that those who have not got the sense of considerations, will always turn their attention to the subject-matter and make its moral import the test and touchstone of the poem, or novel, or picture, that is presented to them, while the newspaper critic will sometimes take one side and sometimes the other, according as he is cultured or uncultured. In fact, Mr. Cobban converts the impudent paradox into a tedious truism, and, I dare say, in doing so does good service. The English public like tediousness, and like things to be explained to them in a tedious way. Mr. Cobban has, I have no doubt, already repented of the unfortunate expression with which he made his *début*, so I will say no more about it. As far as I am concerned he is quite forgiven.

And finally, sir, in taking leave of *The Scots Observer* I feel bound to make a candid confession to you. It has been suggested to me by a great friend of mine, who is a charming and distinguished man of letters and not unknown to you personally, that there have been really only two people engaged in this terrible controversy, and that those two people are the editor of *The Scots Observer* and the author of *Dorian Gray*. At dinner this evening, over some excellent Chianti, my friend insisted that under assumed and mysterious names you had simply given dramatic expression to the views of some of the semi-educated classes in our community, and that the letters signed 'H.' were your own skilful, if somewhat bitter, caricature of the Philistine as drawn by himself. I admit that something of the kind had occurred to me when I read 'H.'s' first letter—the one in which he proposed that the test of art should be the political opinions of the artist, and that if one differed from the artist on the question of the best way of misgoverning Ireland, one should always abuse his work. Still, there are such infinite varieties of Philistines, and North Britain is so renowned for seriousness, that I dismissed the idea as one unworthy of the

editor of a Scotch paper. I now fear that I was wrong, and that you have been amusing yourself all the time by inventing little puppets and teaching them how to use big words. Well, sir, if it be so—and my friend is strong upon the point—allow me to congratulate you most sincerely on the cleverness with which you have reproduced that lack of literary style which is, I am told, essential for any dramatic and life-like characterisation. I confess that I was completely taken in; but I bear no malice; and as you have no doubt been laughing at me in your sleeve, let me now join openly in the laugh, though it be a little against myself. A comedy ends when the secret is out. Drop your curtain, and put your dolls to bed. I love Don Quixote, but I do not wish to fight any longer with marionettes, however cunning may be the master-hand that works their wires. Let them go, sir, on the shelf. The shelf is the proper place for them. On some future occasion you can re-label them and bring them out for our amusement. They are an excellent company, and go well through their tricks, and if they are a little unreal, I am not the one to object to unreality in art. The jest was really a good one. The only thing that I cannot understand is why you gave your marionettes such extraordinary and improbable names.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

OSCAR WILDE.

#### REVIEWS.

##### OLD SCOTS LIFE.

In *Scottish Life*. By HUGH HALIBURTON. London: Paterson.

In this volume Hugh Haliburton resumes the subject of a former book—*For Puir Auld Scotland's Sake*. The period he discusses is not very ancient history; for, setting aside the essays on Dunbar and Dr. Hornbook, everything he says was true of North Britain much less than a century ago. But there is a gap of far more than time between the Scotland of yesterday and the Scotland of to-day. She is rich now, she was poor then; and, as the virtues and vices of the poor are different from those of the rich, it is only natural to expect great changes in the national character. The alteration has been sudden as well as great, and its effects are not yet fully worked out. Hugh Haliburton affects the lower end of the scale. His observations have the special value that they are drawn not from books but from the experience and the traditional lore of old folk with whom he has conversed. The essay on *The Revolution in the Rural Districts* is a good example of this. The author is inclined to wax sentimental over the past; but he has fortunately for his readers no special theory to propound. You can regard him with some confidence as an accurate reporter. He is not an economist, and his discussion of the 'Revolution' is by no means exhaustive. He refers to steam as the ultimate cause of the depopulation, but it was only one of several. All the forces at work may be referred to two classes: mental changes, which make the rustic to desire a city life; and material changes, chiefly but not exclusively improvements in agricultural machinery which reduce the amount of human labour required. The first is more than the second, for certainly more people could find their way to the country. A significant fact in proof of this is the great increase of late years in the permanent Irish element in the Lothians. It was long a superstition that no Irishman could hold a plough: he had not, it was believed, sufficient steadiness; but there are plenty of Irish ploughmen now. Indeed, the Caledonian has gone and the Hibernian has come in such numbers that in many districts both dialect and manners are modified, and a plantation of the Lothians has avenged the plantation of Ulster.

Five of the essays—almost half the book—are on Burns. The two most interesting are on Burns as a letter-writer, and as an artist. Hugh Haliburton has already edited an edition of the letters, and he may be supposed to know the ground tolerably well. What he says strikes one's sound. Thus, he remarks that as the poet was a letter-writer all through the most important years of his life, and as each event that marked his career was recorded by him with impressions it produced, it is in the epistles you must seek for the true Burns. And yet people look in every other direction. There are a hundred lives of him, and which is worst it were hard to tell, though



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THE SPEAKER.

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as the external soul of the oak, and finds in this the reason for the rule that it must be broken off before the Tree Spirit, which lives in and belongs to the oak, can be killed in its embodied form. It is therefore the sacred Bough, and golden because of its association with sunlight and with fire—an association explained in an ingenious way too long to set forth. Gold and fire, as every reader of old Norse poetry knows, are constantly identified in early thinking, and Pindar's juxtaposition of them is something more than a poetical conceit. It is probably a mere accident that we find both "Golden Boughs" in a land of subterranean fire, for the lake of Nemi is an extinct volcanic crater, as is Avernus among the Phlegrean fields.

Thus shortly stated, the hypothesis which the book is intended to prove is that the priest of Nemi embodied in himself the spirit, primarily of the "woods," and secondarily of vegetable life in general. Hence according as he was well or ill, the woods, the flowers, and the fields were believed to flourish or fade; and if he were to die of sickness or old age, the plant world, it was believed, would simultaneously languish or perish. Therefore it was necessary that this priest of the woodlands, this sylvan deity incarnate in a man, should be put to death while he was still in the full bloom of his divine manhood, in order that his sacred life, transmitted in unabated force to his successor, might renew its youth, and thus by successive transmissions through a perpetual line of vigorous incarnations, might remain eternally fresh and young, a pledge and security that the buds and blossoms of spring, the verdure of summer woods, and the mellow glories of autumn would never fail, while in order to slay the Tree Spirit incarnate in the priest or King of the Grove, the Oak Soul, residing in the mistletoe, must first be slain by the breaking off of the mistletoe bough.

We have no space to test the links in this chain of argument. That there are weak links in it Mr. Frazer himself admits; hypotheses which need more evidence to establish them than has yet been gathered, and omissions to deal with other hypotheses to explain admitted facts which are quite as plausible as those he has adopted. But the book, though far from perfect in its form and structure, is in its substance of remarkable interest, not unworthy to be named along with the latest work ("The Religion of the Semites") of the distinguished man, Mr. W. Robertson Smith, to whom it is dedicated. We have noted some small errors here and there, as when Mr. Frazer calls the Khonds and Gonds of Central India Dravidian races, and the old Prussians of the Vistula, Slavs instead of Lithuanians; but these errors are few when one allows for the width of the field and the variety of the matters dealt with. A graver fault may be noted in the somewhat amorphous character of the book. It is too much of an accumulation of details in the manner of Mr. Tylor and Sir John Lubbock—details among the mazes of which the unskilled reader may easily lose himself—too little of an ordered and reasoned argument.

However, even those who may be fatigued by the details or perplexed by the argumentation will be repaid by the illustrative matter, and particularly by the parts relating to the primitive meanings of sacrifice, the primitive use of sacraments, the primitive conceptions of the Soul or Inner Life, as well as by the explanations of many curious superstitions which have held their own to this day among civilised peoples, such as the habit of covering mirrors in a house where one has died, the throwing of rice at weddings, the "crying of the neck" in Devonshire, the St. John's Day fires of Ireland. A week ago policemen in Tipperary were extinguishing Midsummer Day bonfires, kindled not so much to defy Mr. Balfour, as in pursuance of a custom older than Nebuchadnezzar. In return for the pleasure Mr. Frazer's collection of data for the history of early religions has given us, we will give him two curious facts which he may use in a future edition

to further illustrate points he has here dealt with. One relates to the superstition of the external soul in the navel, adverted to in vol. ii, p. 329. We have seen a Hawaiian islander wrap in a leaf and hide away in a crevice of a rock in the midst of a river, a scrap of flesh from the navel, plastering up the orifice to keep it the safer, no doubt with the aim of protecting that part of his life which he had stored therein. The other turns on the oracles from the movement of animals, of which several instances are given. When the Tibetans were preparing, some two years ago, to attack our forces posted on the pass above Chumbi, which leads from Sikkim into Tibet, they consulted the future by means of the Shivering Goat, and finding the omens favourable, advanced to their doom. So do the superstitions of a remote antiquity mingle themselves on the frontiers of India, like the bonfires in Tipperary, with the history of our own days.

PROFUSE AND PERFERVID.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. By Oscar Wilde. *Lippincott's Magazine*, July, 1890. London: Ward, Lock & Co. PERFERVID: THE CAREER OF NIXIAN JAMIESON. By John Davidson, with illustrations by Harry Furniss. London: Ward & Downey, 1890.

BY a stroke of good fortune, singular at this season, the two stories which we have taken up to review this week turn out to be—each in its way—of no slight interest. Of Mr. Wilde's work this was to be expected. Let it be granted, to begin with, that the conception of the story is exceedingly strong. A young man of remarkable beauty, perfect in body, but undeveloped—or, rather, lacking altogether—in soul, becomes the dear friend of a painter of genius. The artist, under the spell of this friendship, is painting the youth's portrait. Enter to them the spirit of evil, in the shape of Lord Henry Wotton, an extremely *fin de siècle* gentleman, who, by a few inspiring words, supplies, or calls into life, the boy's missing soul—and it is an evil one. Henceforward the tale develops the growth of this evil soul, side by side with this mystery—that while vice and debauchery write no wrinkle on the boy's face, but pass from it as breath off a pane and leave it perennially innocent and lovely, every vile action scores its mark upon the portrait, which keeps accurate record of a loathsome life.

It has been insinuated that this story should be suppressed in the interest of morality. Mr. Wilde has answered that art and ethics have nothing to do with each other. His boldness in resting his defence on the general proposition is the more exemplary, as he might fairly have insisted on the particular proposition—that the teaching of his book is conspicuously right in morality. If we have correctly interpreted the book's motive—and we are at a loss to conceive what other can be devised—this position is unassailable. There is, perhaps, a passage or so in the description of Dorian's decline that were better omitted. But this is a matter of taste.

The motive of the tale, then, is strong. It is in his treatment of it that Mr. Wilde has failed, and his mistakes are easy of detection. Whether they can be as readily corrected is doubtful. To begin with, the author has a style as striking as his matter; but he has entirely missed reconciling the two. There is an amateurish lack of precision in the descriptive passages. They are laboured, finicking, overlaid with paint: and therefore they want vigour. "The Picture of Dorian Gray" has been compared very naturally with "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and we would invite Mr. Wilde to take up that story, and consider the bold, sharply defined strokes with which its atmosphere and *milieu* are put in. Such brevity as Mr. Stevenson's comes from sureness of knowledge, not want of care, and is the first sign of mastery. Nor is Mr. Wilde too wordy alone: he is too paradoxical. Only the cook who has yet to learn will



run riot in trifles. Lord Henry's epigrams taken separately; but in proportion, and demands restraint, only; it demands precision; it demands perfection in the book of instruction; and he does of a string of epigrams.

In fact, we should the true story-teller some half a dozen Dorian tells of his actress—

"Lips," he says, "that their secret in my ear. I kissed Juliet on the mouth. Have you seen her?" "Dorian Gray shook his head. Lord Henry sipped his what particular point did and what did she say in a room?" "My dear Harry, I did not make any formal she said she was not worth whole world is nothing to women are wonderful much more practical than often forget to say anything."

The last chapter throughout, in style IX. is bad. And why two particular

"The Park is quite such lilacs since the year though trivial in and beauty in the road to eminence of serious art, streamlines. Will and go on to give

In its way, "The Picture of excellences and far may be, he shall style at once high gift of humour. humour runs to implore the reader shall find in as it has been out Stronghold and S entitled the second no doubt. It trem upon the world guide, and of the probability with you laugh—even you laugh—it ceases also.

We are the should gird up and taste the first part is defect, who really but there is a book in its obvious forgive even "first forgive M book contain to more connect. I is the son of even less coherent work.

To us this turn and search rather than a very easily. much, restraint over Mr. W.

that deplorable effort of the late Principal Shairp probably deserves the 'bad eminence.' They are all-full of stupid censure as stupid apology, of senseless praise as senseless blame. Disregard them altogether, and study the letters. There you learn what manner of man was this eternally interesting personality. As to the other essay, it is a brief discussion on this text: 'He was a literary man in the sense that what he left us is literature, but in no other.' Burns, according to Hugh Haliburton, was not an artist. Of course this is merely a matter of definition. If the work of the artist must be artificial, elaborate, non-natural, then was Burns no artist. He did not always strike the mark right off; he recast many of his pieces most assiduously, sometimes with the happiest results, sometimes with the reverse. He was capable now and again of verses of singular atrocity. But he knew wherein his strength consisted. He had the exact perception of the exact word to employ; he knew the literary value of the work of his predecessors, as the letters to Thomson, quite apart from the poems themselves, show again and again. It is mere impertinence to deny him the title of artist. Then, says our author, Burns did not make the language he used; it was simply the speech of the district. No one ever said anything else. The words used in *Lea* were the very words of Eastcheap and the Bankside, and so the words of *Death and Dr. Hornbook* were in constant use in Ayr and Mauchline; but Shakespeare in the highest degree, and Burns in a high though of course a far inferior degree, had the knack, skill, art, genius—call it what you will—of putting them together so as to produce a definite and designed effect. Again, no one would deny that there were Scottish poets before Burns. The names of Fergusson and Ramsay are well known (witness Hugh Haliburton himself!), but what all decent critics say is that the difference between such feeble folk and the lad that was born in Kyle is the difference between the very small and the very great. A number of Burns's songs in some form or other existed before him. Such are *Gae Fetch to Me a Pint o' Wine* and *Now all is Done that Man can do*. But these lyrics are now rightly associated with his name, because by certain changes—in some lines only a word, but such a word!—he has completely transformed them; in short, refined rude ore into polished gold. That is just where he shows himself an artist. And if Hugh Haliburton cannot see it, so much the worse for them that look to him for guidance.

## MINOR VERSE.

Mr. Francis Adams, the singer of *Songs of The Army of the Night* (London: Vizetelly), is more angry with everything than anybody in literature since the Angry Boy. One feels, too, that like the Angry Boy he would be all the better for a proper cudgelling. He is a Socialist, it should be said; and he has Socialist friends and admirers, one of whom, Mr. Sydney Jephcott (attached to the Brisbane *Boomerang*), is by way of being as blatant a person and as painful a writer of English as himself; and he dedicates his work 'To You,' whosever and whatsoever you be, who are an earner of wages and a payer of rent, 'in the hope that you may see how you are being robbed' by the Capitalist, that arch-brigand, and that chief of thieves, the Landowner. If you are in this quandary (as most likely you are), you will of necessity applaud your poet in his denunciations of 'the tinsel creed of Christ'; you will sympathise with his appeal to 'India, India, O my lovely land'; to rise and 'chuck' the 'greedy English snake with fangs and lips that suck and never slake'; you will applaud when he singles out Mr. C. S. Parnell (that Avenger of the Nations!) as 'pure' and 'brave' and 'dauntless' and 'a hater of the wrong,' and all the rest of it; you will re-echo his oburgation of England (that foul sea-harlot!) and you will go with him heart and soul when he 'lashes the bloody aristocracy' and turns his *Reynolds's Newspaper* into sonnets and songs and imitations of Heine. If your mood is other, you will wonder how it is that the poor man found a publisher, and why his relations do not take better care of him.

Mr. Warham St. Leger's *Ballads from Punch, and Other Poems* (London: Scott) remind you not a little of an organ-piano. There are times when you listen to the song of that instrument with real pleasure: it is bright, it is fluent, it is gay, it mingles pleasantly with the light of the London morning and the perfume of your first cigar; and for five minutes you

would like it to go on all day. But there comes the instant of 'sad satiety'; and lo! the thing is, a nuisance; and you hurry to your scuttle for the material of protest: and you put the artist (with execrations and with coals and halfpence) out of earshot. Thus it is—or rather thus you would it were—with Mr. Warham St. Leger. He, too, is bright; he, too, is fluent; he, too, is gay; and after some thirty pages you would fain to your scuttle and have at him. He is a cheerful, skilful rhymester, indeed, with touches of pleasant wit and occasional notes of whimsical and moving humour. But there is five or six times as much of him as there ought to be; and you find yourself regretting very soon that he is not outside the window with his organ-piano, and that you are not inside it with your vocabulary and your halfpence and your coals.

In the earlier section of *Song-Strays* (London: Unwin), the author whereof has not unwisely withheld his or her name, foam-flakes and clouds and moths and moors and bees and a lump of clay prattle and lament and moralise, and a child chatters to its doll, and a piece of tinsel expresses repentance, and a lullaby is sung to a baby:

'Baby go to bee-by, Baby go to bee-by,  
Bee-by, bee-by, baby';

and a touching tribute is paid to a dog:

'Nearer I come—more near,  
The laugh in his eye grows pale—  
His pleading soft whine I hear,  
But louder the tell-tale tail,  
The thump of that tell-tale tail.'

In the second section, which consists of sonnets and sestets, Sappho and Heine and Goethe and Raphael and George Sand and Rosaline and Romeo and others of the immortals are the interlocutors; and it would be hard to say whether they or the moths and foam-flakes speak to less purpose and in more tuneless and colourless verse.

Mr. Ernest Radford states that, having put his life into a 'tiny book of song'—*Chambers Twain* (London: Mathews), the curious, the perplexing, name of it—he intends, should the volume quicken the pulse of his Love, to defy the bloodless critic to do his worst. Sometimes he is lachrymose, and makes his moan on the old days and the old ways and cheerless couches and broken rings, and writes an inscription for an urn:

'She chose to die.  
Grave here, beneath our helpless flowers,  
She chose to die.  
Alas! the sun forsook her sky.'

Sometimes he is gay and arch and familiar, and carols of luncheons and kisses in merriest disdain of the bloodless one:

'And he said—but oh, that I can't tell you!  
But he kissed me before he began;  
He's over six feet and he's lovely,  
If he isn't an ideal man.'

And sometimes he unlocks his heart in a strain of weird humour:

'I came, I saw, I fielded "point,"  
Till Buggins *minimus*, by Jingo,  
Knocked my fore-finger out of joint,  
And chirruped, "Hold it, Old Flamingo,"  
It made me hop.'

Part of the volume consists of curious exercises in the 'unsustainable.' To each of these a line of German is prefixed: e.g., *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*. The assumption appears to be that Heine is all unknown to the bloodless critic.

There are about a dozen pieces in Miss Florence Severn's *Verses and Thoughts* (London: Spottiswoode) which are truly felt and simply expressed and not ungracefully turned. When she is content to speak as a woman she speaks sincerely, and there is a touch of pathos in her love-words. *Constancy and Love* and *This Year and Last* are pretty with a melancholy prettiness. The verses may be depressing, but they are never morbid. When she would show us, however, how a man feels and speaks when he is in love, her defective experience compels her to shrill in a sustained falsetto. *The Twin Sisters* is the one notable thing in the book. The subject is somewhat unpleasant, but it is handled with a power of which Miss Severn nowhere else betrays a sign. There is certainly promise in the piece, but the greater part of the volume consists of rhymed moralities and pieties, and these are naught.

Conservatives now would not think of, spoke of all the disturbed part of Ireland as if it were a congested district containing only "peasantry;" and he was absolutely without any perception of the broader aspects of the land question, or any knowledge of the history of Irish land tenure. So, doubtless, were nearly all Englishmen in 1849; but, by 1886, the defect was curable. And the practical, earnest, ethical bent of his mind seems to have left him without the slightest trace of, or sympathy with, religious mysticism, or any capacity for seeing the position of the Ritualists—against whom he directed some of his most vigorous attacks. By the way, the person who revived Lord Melbourne's description of him as "a disappointed, popularity-hunting parson," was not "clerical," as Mr. White describes him, except in the sense that a Belgian Conservative is so, though he was a registrar of a diocese.

The book at least shows how ludicrously inappropriate such epithets were. It is a memorial of a noble nature who, living as he did on the whole in retirement, had both the leisure to be strongly impressed with great social evils and the power to bring them in an effective form before a public which knew much less of them thirty years ago than it does now. That he did not suggest any remedies, as his editor repeatedly laments, was probably due to that same retirement. To rouse sympathy is far from useless. It helps to form opinion, even though it may lead to no precise tangible result.

## OSCAR WILDE'S "INTENTIONS."

INTENTIONS. By Oscar Wilde. London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.

"I CANNOT but be conscious," says Mr. Wilde in one of his essays, "that we are born in an age when only the dull are treated seriously, and I live in terror of not being misunderstood." To be precisely accurate, it is one of the characters in a dialogue who makes this remark. It is no doubt meant to have a personal application—it certainly has. Mr. Wilde is much too brilliant to be ever believed; he is much too witty to be ever taken seriously. A passion for caprice, a whimsical Irish temperament, a love of art for art's sake—it is in qualities such as these that we find the origin of the beautiful farce of aestheticism, the exquisite echoes of the "Poems," the subtle decadence of "Dorian Gray," and the paradoxical truths, the perverted common-sense, of the "Intentions." Mr. Wilde, with a most reasonable hatred of the bourgeois seriousness of dull people, has always taken refuge from the commonplace in irony. Intentionally or not—scarcely without intention—he has gained a reputation for frivolity which does injustice to a writer who has at least always been serious in the reality of his devotion to art. The better part of his new book is simply a plea for the dignity, an argument for the supremacy, of imaginative art.

The first essay, "The Decay of Lying," is a protest against realism—against "the monstrous worship of facts." It presents certain aesthetic doctrines, which Mr. Wilde probably partly believes. We are told, for example, that "Art never expresses anything but itself. It has an independent life, just as Thought has, and develops purely on its own lines. . . . All bad art comes from returning to Life and Nature, and elevating them used as part of art's rough material, but before they are of any real service to art, they must be translated into artistic conventions. . . . Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life. . . . It follows, as a corollary from this, that external Nature also imitates Art. The only effects that she can show us are effects that we have already seen through poetry, or in paintings. . . . The final revelation is that Lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of Art." All this, startling as it sounds, needs only to be properly apprehended, to be properly analysed, and

we get an old doctrine, indeed, but a doctrine in which there is a great deal of sanity and a perfectly reasonable view of things. The two long dialogues called "The Critic as Artist" present a theory of criticism which might certainly be justified by the practice of some of the most perfect among critical writers. "To the critic," we are told, "the work of art is simply a suggestion for a new work of his own, that need not necessarily bear any obvious resemblance to the thing it criticises. The one characteristic of a beautiful form is that one can put into it whatever one wishes, and see in it whatever one chooses to see; and the beauty, that gives to creation its universal and aesthetic element, makes the critic a creator in his turn, and whispers of a thousand different things which were not present in the mind of him who carved the statue or painted the panel or graven the gem." The essay on "The Truth of Masks" is a learned argument from Shakespeare in favour of the beautiful and appropriate use of archaeology in the mounting of the Shakespearian drama—an argument which seems to us obviously just, in spite of the warning with which it concludes: "Not that I agree with everything that I have said in this essay. There is much with which I entirely disagree. The essay simply represents an artistic standpoint, and in aesthetic criticism attitude is everything." Then, finally, there is a paper on Wainwright, the artist in "Pen, Pencil, and Poison," a paper which suffers from the lack of intrinsic interest in its subject. A pretentious, affected writer does not become interesting merely because he commits a murder.

A book like this, with its curious convolutions of sentiment, its intricacies of mood and manner, its masquerade of disguises, cannot possibly receive adequate notice in the space of a brief review. Mr. Wilde is always suggestive; he is interesting even when he is provoking. At his best, to our thinking, when he is most himself—an artist in epigram—he can be admirable even when his eloquence reminds us of the eloquent writing of others. He is conscious of the charm of graceful echoes, and is always original in his quotations. His criticism is often just as well as amusing; over and over again he proves to us the truth of masks. By constantly saying the opposite of sensible opinions he proves to us that opposites can often be equally true. While he insists on producing his paradox, sometimes for no other reason than that it is a paradox, and would rather say something that is clever than something that is merely true, it is surprising how often he contrives to illustrate a mathematical figure by an intellectual somersault, and how often he succeeds in combining truth and cleverness. After achieving a reputation by doing nothing, he is in a fair way to beat his own record by real achievements. He is a typical figure, alike in the art of life and the art of literature, and, if he might be supposed for a moment to represent anything but himself, he would be the perfect representative of all that is meant by the modern use of the word Decadence. (Arthur Symonds)

## POETRY AND VERSE.

SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS. By Isabella J. Southern. London: Walter Scott.

THE VISION OF BARANBAR, AND OTHER POEMS. Anonymous. London: Henry Frowde.

IO, AND OTHER VERSE. By Mary P. Negroponce. London: Kegan Paul & Co.

RENAISSANCE: A BOOK OF VERSE. By Walter Crane. London: Elkin Mathews.

THE TEMPLE OF FAME, AND OTHER POEMS. By Ganymede. London: Griffith, Farran & Co.

PICTURES IN RHYME. By Arthur Clark Kennedy. London: Longmans, Green & Co.

CHARYBDIS, AND OTHER POEMS. By H. M. Waithman. London: Eden, Remington & Co.

THE essential mark of poetry has been defined as the betrayal in every word of instant activity of



run riot in truffles. We will admit at once that Lord Henry's epigrams are admirable examples, taken separately; but a story demands simplicity and proportion, and here we have neither; it demands restraint, and here we find profusion only; it demands point, and here the point is too often obscured by mere cleverness. Lord Harry's mission in the book is to lead Dorian Gray to destruction; and he does so, if you please, at the end of a string of epigrams.

In fact, we should doubt that Mr. Wilde possessed the true story-teller's temperament, were it not for some half a dozen passages. Here is one, where Dorian tells of his engagement to Sibyl Vane, the actress:—

"Lips," he says, "that Shakespeare taught to speak have whispered their secret in my ear. I have had the arms of Rosalind around me, and kissed Juliet on the mouth."

"Have you seen her to-day?" asked Lord Henry.

"Dorian Gray shook his head. "I left her in the forest of Arden; I shall find her in an orchard in Verona."

Lord Henry sipped his champagne in a meditative manner. "At what particular point did you mention the word marriage, Dorian? and what did she say in answer? Perhaps you forgot all about it."

"My dear Harry, I did not treat it as a business transaction, and I did not make any formal proposal. I told her that I loved her, and she said she was not worthy to be my wife. Not worthy! Why, the whole world is nothing to me compared to her."

"Women are wonderfully practical," murmured Lord Henry; "much more practical than we are. In situations of this kind we often forget to say anything about marriage, and they always remind us."

The last chapter of the tale is good story-telling throughout, in style and matter—as good as Chapter IX. is bad. And when Mr. Wilde thoroughly sees why two particular sentences in that last chapter—

"The Park is quite lovely now. I don't think there have been such lilacs since the year I met you—"

though trivial in themselves are full of significance and beauty in their setting, he will be far on the road to eminence in fiction. He has given us a work of serious art, strong and fascinating, in spite of its blemishes. Will he insist on being taken seriously, and go on to give us a better?

In its way, "Perfervid" is as striking a tale as "The Picture of Dorian Gray," and is as full of excellences and faults. Whoever Mr. John Davidson may be, he shall be welcomed as the possessor of a style at once light and vigorous, and of a very pretty gift of humour. In the first half of the volume this humour runs to fantastic excess; but we would implore the reader to go forward without fear, and he shall find in Part II. a little narrative as tender as it has been our lot to meet. "The Pilgrimage of Strong-soul and Saunders Elshander," as Mr. Davidson entitles the second half of his book, is fantastic too, no doubt. It treats of a little boy who travels forth upon the world with the "Pilgrim's Progress" for guide, and of the adventures he meets. It defies probability with a light heart, but it is sincerely and engagingly human, nevertheless; and while it makes you laugh—even at the very moment when it makes you weep—it comes perilously near to making you weep also.

We are the more concerned that the reader should gird up his loins to reach this second part, and taste the delight we found in it, because the first part is decidedly tantalising. A man, we suspect, who really cares for style, will find no difficulty; but there is a serious drawback to the charm of the book in its obvious infelicity of structure. We can forgive even "Tristram Shandy," but we cannot at first forgive Mr. Davidson. The two parts of the book contain two parallel series of adventures, with no more connection than this, that the hero in Part II. is the son of the hero in Part I. In fact they are even less coherent than the two halves of Bunyan's great work.

To us this seems a radical defect; but when we turn and search the book for indications of ability rather than actual achievement, we can forgive very easily. In sense of proportion, firmness of touch, restraint, the writer has every advantage over Mr. Wilde. He has especially the art of

speaking home with few words, the art so seldom learnt. We can imagine that many will be merely irritated by "Perfervid"; but those whom genuine humour conciliates will keep a warm corner in their hearts for this little volume.

#### WITH SWORD AND PEN.

MAYNE REID: A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE. By Elizabeth Reid, his widow. London: Ward & Downey. 1890.

THE problem, What shall I do with my life?—we should say rather, the succession of problems, for even though the *pons asinorum*, the choice of a career, be fortunately crossed, it is only the first and easiest of countless difficulties—has never been harder to solve for men like Mayne Reid than in the present century. Those high-strung, adventurous natures, the slaves of their imaginations, which in former times were never at a loss for some Drake or Raleigh to follow, some Stuart Pretender, or romantic Irish patriot, or even a Paul Jones or a Captain Kyd, have fallen on evil times. The world will soon be cracked like a nut; science and commerce between them will manage that, and when the kernel is peeled, and the whole earth inside and out as "evident to any formal capacity" as Malvolio found Maria's letter, even such a career as Mayne Reid stumbled upon will have become as impossible to the adventurous spirit as highway robbery on the Edgware Road or piracy in the English Channel. The splendour and the isolation of the cases in which imaginative daring has succeeded in recent years in carving out a career of action are a twofold testimony to the overwhelming difficulty of finding, not the line of least resistance, but the line that is not positively irresistible: and the two most notable as well as most noble examples of the reappearance or survival of the berserk mood among Englishmen are distinguished above all others because of something higher and deeper than the mere pressure of the adventurous instinct; the passion that sanctified the lives of Gordon and Livingstone, however we may name it, transcended that of almost all adventurers since Godfrey of Bouillon and Peter the Hermit. We need hardly say that it is not the spirit of the first crusaders that we find in Mayne Reid. He represents the soldier of fortune. His temperament had much in common with Mr. Stanley's; and in his writing we have the same slipshod rhetoric and self-glorification; the latter which, in various disguises, is known to the readers of his novels, appears nakedly in the autobiographic fragment incorporated by Mrs. Reid in her interesting memoir. We are bound to add, however, that Mayne Reid's egotism is always genial.

After the stormy boyhood and youth usual with men of his type, at the age of twenty-two Mayne Reid went to America. As tutor, store-keeper, nigger-driver, schoolmaster—in a wooden school of his own building—trapper, player, poet, he spent six years. Then the second outbreak of the war between Mexico and the United States occurred, and by good luck he obtained a commission in a New York regiment. During the stirring scenes that ended with the capture of the city of Mexico all his energies were for the first time thoroughly roused. "Who is that young officer leading the charge on our right?" asked Captain Peternell at the siege of Chapultepec. One of his men answered him, "It is a New Yorker by the name of Mayne Reid—a hell of a fellow." As a consequence of his daring he was severely wounded, reported dead, and mourned in halting verses by a young poetess. After his convalescence he wrote his first novel, "The Rifle Rangers," full of his Mexican experiences, and alive with the pleasure of his newly discovered talent. Then came "The Scalp Hunters," which no man can remember without a thrill, not for the magnificent adventures alone, but because it is the story in which the love-passages appeal most directly to boyhood. Mr. Swinburne declares that every Englishman is in love with Jane Eyre; it is less



as the external soul of the oak, and finds in this the reason for the rule that it must be broken off before the Tree Spirit, which lives in and belongs to the oak, can be killed in its embodied form. It is therefore the sacred Bough, and golden because of its association with sunlight and with fire—an association explained in an ingenious way too long to set forth. Gold and fire, as every reader of old Norse poetry knows, are constantly identified in early thinking, and Pindar's juxtaposition of them is something more than a poetical conceit. It is probably a mere accident that we find both "Golden Boughs" in a land of subterranean fire, for the lake of Nemi is an extinct volcanic crater, as is Avernus among the Phlegrean fields.

Thus shortly stated, the hypothesis which the book is intended to prove is that the priest of Nemi embodied in himself the spirit, primarily of the "woods," and secondarily of vegetable life in general. Hence according as he was well or ill, the woods, the flowers, and the fields were believed to flourish or fade; and if he were to die of sickness or old age, the plant world, it was believed, would simultaneously languish or perish. Therefore it was necessary that this priest of the woodlands, this sylvan deity incarnate in a man, should be put to death while he was still in the full bloom of his divine manhood, in order that his sacred life, transmitted in unabated force to his successor, might renew its youth, and thus by successive transmissions through a perpetual line of vigorous incarnations, might remain eternally fresh and young, a pledge and security that the buds and blossoms of spring, the verdure of summer woods, and the mellow glories of autumn would never fail, while in order to slay the Tree Spirit incarnate in the priest or King of the Grove, the Oak Soul, residing in the mistletoe, must first be slain by the breaking off of the mistletoe bough.

We have no space to test the links in this chain of argument. That there are weak links in it Mr. Frazer himself admits; hypotheses which need more evidence to establish them than has yet been gathered, and omissions to deal with other hypotheses to explain admitted facts which are quite as plausible as those he has adopted. But the book, though far from perfect in its form and structure, is in its substance of remarkable interest, not unworthy to be named along with the latest work ("The Religion of the Semites") of the distinguished man, Mr. W. Robertson Smith, to whom it is dedicated. We have noted some small errors here and there, as when Mr. Frazer calls the Khonds and Gonds of Central India Dravidian races, and the old Prussians of the Vistula, Slavs instead of Lithuanians; but these errors are few when one allows for the width of the field and the variety of the matters dealt with. A graver fault may be noted in the somewhat amorphous character of the book. It is too much of an accumulation of details in the manner of Mr. Tylor and Sir John Lubbock—details among the mazes of which the unskilled reader may easily lose himself—too little of an ordered and reasoned argument.

However, even those who may be fatigued by the details or perplexed by the argumentation will be repaid by the illustrative matter, and particularly by the parts relating to the primitive meanings of sacrifice, the primitive use of sacraments, the primitive conceptions of the Soul or Inner Life, as well as by the explanations of many curious superstitions which have held their own to this day among civilised peoples, such as the habit of covering mirrors in a house where one has died, the throwing of rice at weddings, the "crying of the neck" in Devonshire, the St. John's Day fires of Ireland. A week ago policemen in Tipperary were extinguishing Midsummer Day bonfires, kindled not so much to defy Mr. Balfour, as in pursuance of a custom older than Nebuchadnezzar. In return for the pleasure Mr. Frazer's collection of data for the history of early religions has given us, we will give him two curious facts which he may use in a future edition

to further illustrate points he has here dealt with. One relates to the superstition of the external soul in the navel, adverted to in vol. ii., p. 329. We have seen a Hawaiian islander wrap in a leaf and hide away in a crevice of a rock in the midst of a river, a scrap of flesh from the navel, plastering up the orifice to keep it the safer, no doubt with the aim of protecting that part of his life which he had stored therein. The other turns on the oracles from the movement of animals, of which several instances are given. When the Tibetans were preparing, some two years ago, to attack our forces posted on the pass above Chumbi, which leads from Sikkim into Tibet, they consulted the future by means of the Shivering Goat, and finding the omens favourable, advanced to their doom. So do the superstitions of a remote antiquity mingle themselves on the frontiers of India, like the bonfires in Tipperary, with the history of our own days.

### PROFUSE AND PERFERVID.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. By Oscar Wilde. *Lippincott's Magazine*, July, 1890. London: Ward, Lock & Co.  
PERFERVID: the CAREER OF NINIAN JAMIESON. By John Davidson, with illustrations by Harry Furniss. London: Ward & Downey. 1890.

By a stroke of good fortune, singular at this season, the two stories which we have taken up to review this week turn out to be—each in its way—of no slight interest. Of Mr. Wilde's work this was to be expected. Let it be granted, to begin with, that the conception of the story is exceedingly strong. A young man of remarkable beauty, perfect in body, but undeveloped—or, rather, lacking altogether—in soul, becomes the dear friend of a painter of genius. The artist, under the spell of this friendship, is painting the youth's portrait. Enter to them the spirit of evil, in the shape of Lord Henry Wotton, an extremely *fin de siècle* gentleman, who, by a few inspiring words, supplies, or calls into life, the boy's missing soul—and it is an evil one. Henceforward the tale develops the growth of this evil soul, side by side with this mystery—that while vice and debauchery write no wrinkle on the boy's face, but pass from it as breath off a pane and leave it perennially innocent and lovely, every vile action scores its mark upon the portrait, which keeps accurate record of a loathsome life.

It has been insinuated that this story should be suppressed in the interest of morality. Mr. Wilde has answered that art and ethics have nothing to do with each other. His boldness in resting his defence on the general proposition is the more exemplary, as he might fairly have insisted on the particular proposition—that the teaching of his book is conspicuously right in morality. If we have correctly interpreted the book's motive—and we are at a loss to conceive what other can be devised—this position is unassailable. There is, perhaps, a passage or so in the description of Dorian's decline that were better omitted. But this is a matter of taste.

The motive of the tale, then, is strong. It is in his treatment of it that Mr. Wilde has failed, and his mistakes are easy of detection. Whether they can be as readily corrected is doubtful. To begin with, the author has a style as striking as his matter; but he has entirely missed reconciling the two. There is an amateurish lack of precision in the descriptive passages. They are laboured, finicking, overlaid with paint; and therefore they want vigour. "The Picture of Dorian Gray" has been compared very naturally with "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and we would invite Mr. Wilde to take up that story, and consider the bold, sharply defined strokes with which its atmosphere and *milieu* are put in. Such brevity as Mr. Stevenson's comes from sureness of knowledge, not want of care, and is the first sign of mastery. Nor is Mr. Wilde too wordy alone: he is too paradoxical. Only the cook who has yet to learn will



hundred and sixteen criticisms of *Dorian Gray* that have passed from my library table into the waste-paper basket I have taken public notice of only three. One was that which appeared in *The Scots Observer*. I noticed it because it made a suggestion, about the intention of the author in writing the book, which needed correction. The second was an article in *The St. James's Gazette*. It was offensively and vulgarly written, and seemed to me to require immediate and caustic censure. The tone of the article was an impertinence to any man of letters. The third was a meek attack in a paper called *The Daily Chronicle*. I think my writing to *The Daily Chronicle* was an act of pure wilfulness. In fact, I feel sure it was. I quite forget what they said. I believe they said that *Dorian Gray* was poisonous, and I thought that, on alliterative grounds, it would be kind to remind them that, however that may be, it is at any rate perfect. That was all. Of the other two hundred and thirteen criticisms I have taken no notice. Indeed, I have not read more than half of them. It is a sad thing, but one wearies even of praise.

As regards Mr. Brown's letter, it is only interesting in so far as it exemplifies the truth of what I have said above on the question of the two obvious schools of critics. Mr. Brown says frankly that he considers morality to be the 'strong point' of my story. Mr. Brown means well, and has got hold of a half-truth, but when he proceeds to deal with the book from the artistic standpoint he, of course, goes sadly astray. To class *Dorian Gray* with M. Zola's *La Terre* is as silly as if one were to class Musset's *Fortunio* with one of the Adelphi melodramas. Mr. Brown should be content with ethical appreciation. There he is impregnable.

Mr. Cobban opens badly by describing my letter, setting Mr. Whibley right on a matter of fact, as an 'impudent paradox.' The term 'impudent' is meaningless, and the word 'paradox' is misplaced. I am afraid that writing to newspapers has a deteriorating influence on style. People get violent, and abusive, and lose all sense of proportion, when they enter that curious journalistic arena in which the race is always to the noisiest. 'Impudent paradox' is neither violent, nor abusive, but it is not an expression that should have been used about my letter. However, Mr. Cobban makes full atonement afterwards for what was, no doubt, a mere error of manner, by adopting the impudent paradox in question as his own, and pointing out that, as I had previously said, the artist will always look at the work of art from the standpoint of beauty of style and beauty of treatment, and that those who have not got the sense of beauty, or whose sense of beauty is dominated by ethical considerations, will always turn their attention to the subject-matter and make its moral import the test and touchstone of the poem, or novel, or picture, that is presented to them, while the newspaper critic will sometimes take one side and sometimes the other, according as he is cultured or uncultured. In fact, Mr. Cobban converts the impudent paradox into a tedious truism, and, I dare say, in doing so does good service. The English public like tediousness, and like things to be explained to them in a tedious way. Mr. Cobban has, I have no doubt, already repented of the unfortunate expression with which he made his *début*, so I will say no more about it. As far as I am concerned he is quite forgiven.

And finally, sir, in taking leave of *The Scots Observer* I feel bound to make a candid confession to you. It has been suggested to me by a great friend of mine, who is a charming and distinguished man of letters and not unknown to you personally, that there have been really only two people engaged in this terrible controversy, and that those two people are the editor of *The Scots Observer* and the author of *Dorian Gray*. At dinner this evening, over some excellent Chianti, my friend insisted that under assumed and mysterious names you had simply given dramatic expression to the views of some of the semi-educated classes in our community, and that the letters signed 'H.' were your own skilful, if somewhat bitter, caricature of the Philistine as drawn by himself. I admit that something of the kind had occurred to me when I read 'H.'s' first letter—the one in which he proposed that the test of art should be the political opinions of the artist, and that if one differed from the artist on the question of the best way of misgoverning Ireland, one should always abuse his work. Still, there are such infinite varieties of Philistines, and North Britain is so renowned for seriousness, that I dismissed the idea as one unworthy of the

editor of a Scotch paper. I now fear that I was wrong, and that you have been amusing yourself all the time by inventing little puppets and teaching them how to use big words. Well, sir, if it be so—and my friend is strong upon the point—allow me to congratulate you most sincerely on the cleverness with which you have reproduced that lack of literary style which is, I am told, essential for any dramatic and life-like characterisation. I confess that I was completely taken in; but I bear no malice; and as you have no doubt been laughing at me in your sleeve, let me now join openly in the laugh, though it be a little against myself. A comedy ends when the secret is out. Drop your curtain, and put your dolls to bed. I love Don Quixote, but I do not wish to fight any longer with marionettes, however cunning may be the master-hand that works their wires. Let them go, sir, on the shelf. The shelf is the proper place for them. On some future occasion you can re-label them and bring them out for our amusement. They are an excellent company, and go well through their tricks, and if they are a little unreal, I am not the one to object to unreality in art. The jest was really a good one. The only thing that I cannot understand is why you gave your marionettes such extraordinary and improbable names.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

OSCAR WILDE.

## REVIEWS.

### OLD SCOTS LIFE.

*In Scottish Fields.* By HUGH HALIBURTON.  
London: Paterson.

In this volume Hugh Haliburton resumes the subject of a former book—*For Puir Auld Scotland's Sake*. The period he discusses is not very ancient history; for, setting aside the essays on Dunbar and Dr. Hornbook, everything he says was true of North Britain much less than a century ago. But there is a gap of far more than time between the Scotland of yesterday and the Scotland of to-day. She is rich now, she was poor then; and, as the virtues and vices of the poor are different from those of the rich, it is only natural to expect great changes in the national character. The alteration has been sudden as well as great, and its effects are not yet fully worked out. Hugh Haliburton affects the lower end of the scale. His observations have the special value that they are drawn not from books but from the experience and the traditional lore of old folk with whom he has conversed. The essay on *The Revolution in the Rural Districts* is a good example of this. The author is inclined to wax sentimental over the past; but he has fortunately for his readers no special theory to propound. You can regard him with some confidence as an accurate reporter. He is not an economist, and his discussion of the 'Revolution' is by no means exhaustive. He refers to steam as the ultimate cause of the depopulation, but it was only one of several. All the forces at work may be referred to two classes: mental changes, which make the rustic to desire a city life; and material changes, chiefly but not exclusively improvements in agricultural machinery which reduce the amount of human labour required. The first is more than the second, for certainly more people could find their way to the country. A significant fact in proof of this is the great increase of late years in the permanent Irish element in the Lothians. It was long a superstition that no Irishman could hold a plough: he had not, it was believed, sufficient steadiness; but there are plenty of Irish ploughmen now. Indeed, the Caledonian has gone and the Hibernian has come in such numbers that in many districts both dialect and manners are modified, and a plantation of the Lothians has avenged the plantation of Ulster.

Five of the essays—almost half the book—are on Burns. The two most interesting are on Burns as a letter-writer, and as an artist. Hugh Haliburton has already edited an edition of the letters, and he may be supposed to know the ground tolerably well. What he says strikes one as sound. Thus, he remarks that as the poet was a letter-writer all through the most important years of his life, and as each event that marked his career was recorded by him with the impressions it produced, it is in the epistles you must seek for the true Burns. And yet people look in every other direction. There are a hundred lives of him, and which is worst it were hard to tell, though



that deplorable effort of the late Principal Shairp probably deserves the 'bad eminence.' They are all-full of stupid censure as stupid apology, of senseless praise as senseless blame. Disregard them altogether, and study the letters. There you learn what manner of man was this eternally interesting personality. As to the other essay, it is a brief discourse on this text: 'He was a literary man in the sense that what he left us is literature, but in no other.' Burns, according to Hugh Haliburton, was not an artist. Of course this is merely a matter of definition. If the work of the artist must be artificial, elaborate, non-natural, then was Burns no artist. He did not always strike the mark right off; he recast many of his pieces most assiduously, sometimes with the happiest results, sometimes with the reverse. He was capable now and again of verses of singular atrocity. But he knew wherein his strength consisted. He had the exact perception of the exact word to employ; he knew the literary value of the work of his predecessors, as the letters to Thomson, quite apart from the poems themselves, show again and again. It is mere impertinence to deny him the title of artist. Then, says our author, Burns did not make the language he used; it was simply the speech of the district. No one ever said anything else. The words used in *Lear* were the very words of Eastcheap and the Bankside, and so the words of *Death and Dr. Hornbook* were in constant use in Ayr and Mauchline; but Shakespeare in the highest degree, and Burns in a high though of course a far inferior degree, had the knack, skill, art, genius—call it what you will—of putting them together so as to produce a definite and designed effect. Again, no one would deny that there were Scottish poets before Burns. The names of Fergusson and Ramsay are well known (witness Hugh Haliburton himself!), but what all decent critics say is that the difference between such feeble folk and the lad that was born in Kyle is the difference between the very small and the very great. A number of Burns's songs in some form or other existed before him. Such are *Gae Fetch to Me a Pint o' Wine* and *Now all is Done that Man can do*. But these lyrics are now rightly associated with his name, because by certain changes—in some lines only a word, but such a word!—he has completely transformed them; in short, refined rude ore into polished gold. That is just where he shows himself an artist. And if Hugh Haliburton cannot see it, so much the worse for them that look to him for guidance.

#### MINOR VERSE.

Mr. Francis Adams, the singer of *Songs of The Army of the Night* (London: Vizetelly), is more angry with everything than anybody in literature since the Angry Boy. One feels, too, that like the Angry Boy he would be all the better for a proper cudgelling. He is a Socialist, it should be said; and he has Socialist friends and admirers, one of whom, Mr. Sydney Jephcott (attached to the Brisbane *Boomerang*), is by way of being as blatant a person and as painful a writer of English as himself; and he dedicates his work 'To YOU,' whosoever and whatsoever you be, who are an earner of wages and a payer of rent, 'in the hope that you may see how you are being robbed' by the Capitalist, that arch-brigand, and that chief of thieves, the Landowner. If you are in this quandary (as most likely you are), you will of necessity applaud your poet in his denunciations of 'the tinsel creed of Christ'; you will sympathise with his appeal to 'India, India, O my lovely land,' to rise and 'chuck' the 'greedy English snake with fangs and lips that suck and never slake'; you will applaud when he singles out Mr. C. S. Parnell (that Avenger of the Nations!) as 'pure' and 'brave' and 'dauntless' and 'a hater of the wrong,' and all the rest of it; you will re-echo his objurgation of England (that foul sea-harlot!); and you will go with him heart and soul when he 'lashes the bloody aristocracy' and turns his *Reynold's Newspaper* into sonnets and songs and imitations of Heine. If your mood is other, you will wonder how it is that the poor man found a publisher, and why his relations do not take better care of him.

Mr. Warham St. Leger's *Ballads from Punch, and Other Poems* (London: Scott) remind you not a little of an organ-piano. There are times when you listen to the song of that instrument with real pleasure: it is bright, it is fluent, it is gay, it mingles pleasantly with the light of the London morning and the perfume of your first cigar; and for five minutes you

would like it to go on all day. But there comes the instant of 'sad satiety'; and lo! the thing is, a nuisance; and you hurry to your scuttle for the material of protest: and you pelt the artist (with execrations and with coals and halfpence) out of earshot. Thus it is—or rather thus you would it were—with Mr. Warham St. Leger. He, too, is bright; he, too, is fluent; he, too, is gay; and after some thirty pages you would fain to your scuttle and have at him. He is a cheerful, skilful rhymester, indeed, with touches of pleasant wit and occasional notes of whimsical and moving humour. But there is five or six times as much of him as there ought to be; and you find yourself regretting very soon that he is not outside the window with his organ-piano, and that you are not inside it with your vocabulary and your halfpence and your coals.

In the earlier section of *Song-Strays* (London: Unwin), the author whereof has not unwisely withheld his or her name, foam-flakes and clouds and moths and moors and bees and a lump of clay prattle and lament and moralise, and a child chatters to its doll, and a piece of tinsel expresses repentance, and a lullaby is sung to a baby:

'Baby go to bee-by, Baby go to bee-by,  
Bee-by, bee-by, baby';

and a touching tribute is paid to a dog:

'Nearer I come—more near,  
The laugh in his eye grows pale—  
His pleading soft whine I hear,  
But louder the tell-tale tail,  
The thump of that tell-tale tail.'

In the second section, which consists of sonnets and sestets, Sappho and Heine and Goethe and Raphael and George Sand and Rosaline and Romeo and others of the immortals are the interlocutors; and it would be hard to say whether they or the moths and foam-flakes speak to less purpose and in more tuneless and colourless verse.

Mr. Ernest Radford states that, having put his life into a 'tiny book of song'—*Chambers Twain* (London: Mathews) the curious, the perplexing, name of it—he intends, should the volume quicken the pulse of his Love, to defy the bloodless critic to do his worst. Sometimes he is lachrymose, and makes his moan on the old days and the old ways and cheerless couches and broken rings, and writes an inscription for an urn:

'She chose to die.  
Grave here, beneath our helpless flowers,  
She chose to die.  
Alas! the sun forsook her sky.'

Sometimes he is gay and arch and familiar, and carols of luncheons and kisses in merriest disdain of the bloodless one:

'And he said—but oh, that I can't tell you!  
But he kissed me before he began;  
He's over six feet and he's lovely,  
If he isn't an ideal man.'

And sometimes he unlocks his heart in a strain of weird humour:

'I came, I saw, I fielded "point,"  
Till Buggins *minimus*, by Jingo,  
Knocked my fore-finger out of joint,  
And chirruped, "Hold it, Old Flamingo."  
It made me hop.'

Part of the volume consists of curious exercises in the unscannable. To each of these a line of German is prefixed: e.g., *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*. The assumption appears to be that Heine is all unknown to the bloodless critic.

There are about a dozen pieces in Miss Florence Severne's *Verses and Thoughts* (London: Spottiswoode) which are truly felt and simply expressed and not ungracefully turned. When she is content to speak as a woman she speaks sincerely, and there is a touch of pathos in her love-wails. *Constancy and Love* and *This Year and Last* are pretty with a melancholy prettiness. The verses may be depressing, but they are never morbid. When she would show us, however, how a man feels and speaks when he is in love, her defective experience compels her to shrill in a sustained falsetto. *The Twin Sisters* is the one notable thing in the book. The subject is somewhat unpleasant, but it is handled with a power of which Miss Severne nowhere else betrays a sign. There is certainly promise in the piece, but the greater part of the volume consists of rhymed moralities and pieties, and these are naught.



Conservatives now would not think of, spoke of all the disturbed part of Ireland as if it were a congested district containing only "peasantry;" and he was absolutely without any perception of the broader aspects of the land question, or any knowledge of the history of Irish land tenure. So, doubtless, were nearly all Englishmen in 1849; but, by 1886, the defect was curable. And the practical, earnest, ethical bent of his mind seems to have left him without the slightest trace of, or sympathy with, religious mysticism, or any capacity for seeing the position of the Ritualists—against whom he directed some of his most vigorous attacks. By the way, the person who revived Lord Melbourne's description of him as "a disappointed, popularity-hunting parson," was not "clerical," as Mr. White describes him, except in the sense that a Belgian Conservative is so, though he was a registrar of a diocese.

The book at least shows how ludicrously inappropriate such epithets were. It is a memorial of a noble nature who, living as he did on the whole in retirement, had both the leisure to be strongly impressed with great social evils and the power to bring them in an effective form before a public which knew much less of them thirty years ago than it does now. That he did not suggest any remedies, as his editor repeatedly laments, was probably due to that same retirement. To rouse sympathy is far from useless. It helps to form opinion, even though it may lead to no precise tangible result.

#### OSCAR WILDE'S "INTENTIONS."

INTENTIONS. By Oscar Wilde. London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.

"I CANNOT but be conscious," says Mr. Wilde in one of his essays, "that we are born in an age when only the dull are treated seriously, and I live in terror of not being misunderstood." To be precisely accurate, it is one of the characters in a dialogue who makes this remark. It is no doubt meant to have a personal application—it certainly has. Mr. Wilde is much too brilliant to be ever believed; he is much too witty to be ever taken seriously. A passion for caprice, a whimsical Irish temperament, a love of art for art's sake—it is in qualities such as these that we find the origin of the beautiful farce of aestheticism, the exquisite echoes of the "Poems," the subtle decadence of "Dorian Gray," and the paradoxical truths, the perverted common-sense, of the "Intentions." Mr. Wilde, with a most reasonable hatred of the *bourgeois* seriousness of dull people, has always taken refuge from the commonplace in irony. Intentionally or not—scarcely without intention—he has gained a reputation for frivolity which does injustice to a writer who has at least always been serious in the reality of his devotion to art. The better part of his new book is simply a plea for the dignity, an argument for the supremacy, of imaginative art.

The first essay, "The Decay of Lying," is a protest against realism—against "the monstrous worship of facts." It presents certain æsthetic doctrines, which Mr. Wilde probably partly believes. We are told, for example, that "Art never expresses anything but itself. It has an independent life, just as Thought has, and develops purely on its own lines."

... All bad art comes from returning to Life and Nature, and elevating them into ideals. Life and Nature may sometimes be used as part of art's rough material, but before they are of any real service to art, they must be translated into artistic conventions. . . . Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life. . . . It follows, as a corollary from this, that external Nature also imitates Art. The only effects that she can show us are effects that we have already seen through poetry, or in paintings. . . . The final revelation is that Lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of Art." All this, startling as it sounds, needs only to be properly apprehended, to be properly analysed, and

we get an old doctrine, indeed, but a doctrine in which there is a great deal of sanity and a perfectly reasonable view of things. The two long dialogues called "The Critic as Artist" present a theory of criticism which might certainly be justified by the practice of some of the most perfect among critical writers. "To the critic," we are told, "the work of art is simply a suggestion for a new work of his own, that need not necessarily bear any obvious resemblance to the thing it criticises. The one characteristic of a beautiful form is that one can put into it whatever one wishes, and see in it whatever one chooses to see; and the beauty, that gives to creation its universal and æsthetic element, makes the critic a creator in his turn, and whispers of a thousand different things which were not present in the mind of him who carved the statue or painted the panel or graved the gem." The essay on "The Truth of Masks" is a learned argument from Shakespeare in favour of the beautiful and appropriate use of archæology in the mounting of the Shakespearian drama—an argument which seems to us obviously just, in spite of the warning with which it concludes: "Not that I agree with everything that I have said in this essay. There is much with which I entirely disagree. The essay simply represents an artistic standpoint, and in æsthetic criticism attitude is everything." Then, finally, there is a paper on Wainwright, the artist in "Pen, Pencil, and Poison," a paper which suffers from the lack of intrinsic interest in its subject. A pretentious, affected writer does not become interesting merely because he commits a murder.

A book like this, with its curious convolutions of sentiment, its intricacies of mood and manner, its masquerade of disguises, cannot possibly receive adequate notice in the space of a brief review. Mr. Wilde is always suggestive; he is interesting even when he is provoking. At his best, to our thinking, when he is most himself—an artist in epigram—he can be admirable even when his eloquence reminds us of the eloquent writing of others. He is conscious of the charm of graceful echoes, and is always original in his quotations. His criticism is often just as well as amusing: over and over again he proves to us the truth of masks. By constantly saying the opposite of sensible opinions he proves to us that opposites can often be equally true. While he insists on producing his paradox, sometimes for no other reason than that it is a paradox, and would rather say something that is clever than something that is merely true, it is surprising how often he contrives to illustrate a mathematical figure by an intellectual somersault, and how often he succeeds in combining truth and cleverness. After achieving a reputation by doing nothing, he is in a fair way to beat his own record by real achievements. He is a typical figure, alike in the art of life and the art of literature, and, if he might be supposed for a moment to represent anything but himself, he would be the perfect representative of all that is meant by the modern use of the word Decadence.

[Arthur Symonds]

#### POETRY AND VERSE.

SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS. By Isabella J. Southern. London: Walter Scott.

THE VISION OF BARABBAS, AND OTHER POEMS. Anonymous. London: Henry Frowde.

IO, AND OTHER VERSE. By Mary P. Negroponte. London: Kegan Paul & Co.

RENAISSANCE: A BOOK OF VERSE. By Walter Crane. London: Elkin Mathews.

THE TEMPLE OF FAME, AND OTHER POEMS. By Ganymede. London: Griffith, Farran & Co.

PICTURES IN RHYME. By Arthur Clark Kennedy. London: Longmans, Green & Co.

CHARYBDIS, AND OTHER POEMS. By H. M. Waithman. London: Eden, Remington & Co.

THE essential mark of poetry has been defined as the betrayal in every word of instant activity of



# OSCAR WILDE TRAGEDY.

## Judge Sternly Rebukes Lord Alfred Douglas.

### VERDICT FOR DEFENDANTS.

The libel action brought by Lord Alfred Douglas against Mr. Arthur Ransome, author of a book on Oscar Wilde, and the "Times" Book Club was concluded in the King's Bench on Tuesday.

Mr. Justice Darling in the course of his summing up paid a high tribute to Lord Alfred Douglas's talents, which, he said, amounted to genius. Referring to the circumstances of the case, his lordship said Lord Alfred's name was not mentioned in the book, and apparently it took his wife to know what was meant, for Lord Alfred did not profess that anyone else called his attention to it. Lord Alfred had said that his wife did not believe it, and that she knew everything before he married her. He (the judge) hoped that she did.

After the jury had retired Mr. Campbell intimated that he was instructed by Sir George Lewis, solicitor to Lady Alfred Douglas, to say she had done her best to prevent these proceedings, and the judge added that Lord Alfred could go into the witness-box to reply to that statement, but Lord Alfred was not there. His lordship added: "I never knew a court to be treated in such a way as Lord Alfred Douglas has treated this court."

The jury, after an absence of nearly two hours, found a verdict for both defendants. They said that although the words complained of by Lord Alfred were libellous they were true, and that the "Times" Book Club had not been guilty of negligence in circulating or selling the book.

Judgment was entered for the defendants with costs.

### A COURT "SCENE."

#### JUDGE REBUKES LORD ALFRED.

When the judge entered the crowded court for the resumption of the trial on Friday Mr. Cecil Haye, counsel for Lord Alfred, alluded to the unpublished part of the "De Profundis," and said that when his lordship decided against his submission that there was no evidence and allowed it to be put in Mr. McCordie started to read it, and he (Mr. Haye) said he would like the whole of it read as was his right. After Mr. McCordie had read a portion of it his lordship pointed out that it would be better to read bits of it later on, as it was so tiresome and long.

Mr. Justice Darling: Because it seemed to me that Mr. McCordie had got to a part which was absolutely unimportant, and I looked ahead, and there seemed to me many pages of that sort—very dead water indeed.

Mr. Haye said that on thinking over the matter, as it had been put in evidence against plaintiff, and as he had read it himself very carefully, he thought it was desirable that the jury should hear the reading of it to the end because of the context.

His lordship: Would you like to read it?

Mr. Haye: I am sure Mr. McCordie can read it better than I can.

Mr. McCordie then continued the reading of the unpublished part of "De Profundis," written by Oscar Wilde in prison, and now produced from the British Museum.

LORD ALFRED MISSING.

The plaintiff, Lord Alfred Douglas, who had been an early arrival at the court, and had taken his seat at the solicitors' table, left the court while counsel was reading the manuscript, which appeared to be, at this part, a diary of the doings of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas during certain portions of their lives.

A little later Mr. Justice Darling asked if the plaintiff was in court.

Mr. Campbell said he had not been there since the reading began.

Mr. Haye: I gave instructions for him to go into the witness-box, and he said he wanted to go outside for a short time.

His lordship: Let somebody fetch him. I have been looking about for him and have not seen him here. One of the reasons why this is being read is that he shall be cross-examined upon it and re-examined.

Mr. Campbell: And his counsel asked that it should be read.

His lordship: Stop reading it until he comes in. Let him be fetched.

Plaintiff's solicitor went to find him.

#### CURIOUS TREATMENT OF THE COURT.

His lordship: As the manuscript is being read at plaintiff's counsel's request, I think it had better be proceeded with. I will deal with him when he comes. To wait for him is only to waste more time.

Mr. McCordie continued reading the manuscript in plaintiff's absence. After a brief interval plaintiff returned and went into the witness-box. Mr. Justice Darling looked at him very severely, but merely said to counsel, "Go on."

Counsel having reached the end of a paragraph, the judge turned to plaintiff, who stood up, remarking, "I understand your lordship is annoyed with me."

#### JUDGE'S REBUKE.

His lordship: Is it upon your instructions that your counsel desired that the whole of this document written by Oscar Wilde should be read?—Yes, my lord.

Then why do you absent yourself from the court?—I asked my counsel to ask if I could go out, and I was told it was not necessary, and that I could go out.

His lordship: To go out where?

Lord A. Douglas: As I did not wish to sit here to hear it read, I asked you yesterday whether I might go out, and you said no. Afterwards you volunteered the remark, having heard the first part read, that you were not surprised that I did not want to hear the whole of it read.

His lordship: I did not. I said I was not surprised that you wanted to go down. Let me tell you you are the plaintiff in this case.

and if you absent yourself again when your presence is necessary I will immediately enter judgment against you.

Lord A. Douglas: I am sorry. I had not the slightest idea your lordship objected, and I can only offer my sincere apologies.

He then sat down in the witness-box, and Mr. McCordie continued reading the manuscript, plaintiff apparently paying no attention to it.

#### MORE CROSS-EXAMINATION.

##### ANGRY OUTBURSTS BY THE PLAINTIFF.

Mr. Campbell (to plaintiff): I want to ask you questions on certain portions of the statement. He says, speaking of Mrs. Wilde, "Your friendship had always been a source of distress to her, not merely because she had never liked you personally, but because she saw how your companionship altered me, and not for the better." Had your constant intimacy with Oscar Wilde to your knowledge been a source of distress to his wife?—My knowledge is exactly the opposite. I was always on the best of terms with his wife.

Did not you write to Mr. Ross, "The strain of being a bone of contention between Oscar and Mrs. Oscar began to make itself felt." I suppose that was referring to some quarrel?—They were always quarrelling.

Did she welcome your presence in her house? Of course she did. I was one of her greatest friends. It is not fair to judge of our friendship by one letter written to Mr. Ross.

#### TO SAVE HIS FACE.

In an outburst plaintiff said: "This was written by Wilde in prison, out of his rage and spite and malice against me and my family, in order to injure me as much as he could. The whole thing is a farage of lies, a suppression of the truth, and a building up of half-truths. It is plain, absolute, straight lie. He did it to save his face and curry favour with the prison authorities. It is a disgraceful thing that the prison authorities should have allowed him to send the letter out. If I had been shown it at the time I would have answered it point by point."

Mr. Campbell: After that outburst perhaps you will attend to me.

Witness said he thought Oscar Wilde was making £2,000 or £3,000 a year.

Did you, in fact, live on him during all those years?—Certainly not.

Did you write, "I remember the sweetness of asking Oscar for money. It was a sweet humiliation, a sweet pleasure for both of us."—I may have borrowed money from him occasionally as between friends. I paid him back fifty-fold afterwards. That is the truth if you really want the truth.

#### IMPERTINENT ANSWERS.

The Judge: Don't be impertinent.

Lord Alfred: I do not wish to be impertinent.

His lordship: You are impertinent whether you wish to be or not.

Lord Alfred: I was about to ask a question.

The Judge: You are not entitled to do so.

Lord Alfred: I accept your rebuke, my lord.

His lordship: Don't merely accept my view, but act on it.

Lord Alfred: I said your "rebuke."

His lordship (with irritation): Be silent till you are asked questions.

Witness denied that he and Oscar Wilde were ever turned out of London hotels.

Asked how it was that he was able to go about to Monte Carlo and other places, witness said: "I had £500 a year, but that was simply pocket-money I lived with my mother free, and I had all the money I wanted. I had a lot of rich relations, and I never was short. I had unlimited credit."

Plaintiff agreed that he helped Oscar Wilde with money to take proceedings against plaintiff's father, because he thought it was only right that Wilde should go on with the proceedings. After Wilde came out of prison

witness knew that his own relations desired to keep him from Wilde. He wrote to Mr. Ross a letter, in which he said, referring to an article which he (plaintiff) proposed to write for a French magazine—"My object in writing the article is to try and raise the case out of the gutter, and to put it on its true level as the greatest romantic tragedy of the age." He (plaintiff) was making an effort to rehabilitate Wilde in the eyes of the French public.

"A FIEND OUT OF HELL."

His lordship: But you told me yesterday that Wilde confessed to you in prison that he was guilty—I was trying to put the case in as nice a way as possible, to show that he was not so bad as people thought, and that there were redeeming points about the case.

Mr. Campbell: "It may have been immoral or wrong, but there is nothing sordid or mean or dirty in this terrible tragedy of love." You did not think he was a devil incarnate then?—I did not at that time. I only formed the opinion after I read the manuscript. I had long before that given up thinking of him as a hero and a martyr. When I read that unpublished part of "De Profundis" I realised that he was a fiend out of hell, the filthiest beast that ever trod the earth, and the meanest.

Did you write this letter to Mr. Ross: "After the first shock of that terrible letter I had a moment of deep bitterness against Oscar, now gone away never to return?"

My own attitude has always been that since the catastrophe I accept all responsibility, and have no wish to defend myself against any accusations.

His lordship: How could you, having his own confession as to what he was, propose that you should live together again?

Witness: There does not seem to be anything wrong. I was sorry for him. I supposed other friends who knew to him, and not to desert him. He said I was his last hope, and that if I did not do that every-thing would be finished, and he would have no hope in life.

With regard to the article in the "Revue Blanche," which it was said witness had written, he said he did not write the article at all. He had given an article to a French

#### "NOTHING CAN KEEP US APART."

Then why did you write, "If Oscar only loves me half as much as I love him when he comes out, and even if he thinks he does not, nothing in the world can keep us apart. All the plots of friends and relations will go to the winds when I am with him again and see his face—his hands—his hair—his eyes—only shows what a faithful friend I was. In the book I am accused of not being his friend. You want to have it both ways. If I stick up for him I am a brute and a swine; if I don't I am a traitor."

#### "APOSTLE AGAINST VICE."

Cross-examined as to an article by a Frenchman, he asserted that vice was rampant at our English Protestant public schools, and that was the reason he would not send his boy to one of them. It was mere hypocrisy to say that it was not. It was getting worse and worse because of Wilde's books and books defending him by Mr. Ransome and other people. "I am doing more to stop it," he said, "than any of you people have done by standing here now."

His lordship: Mr. Campbell, can you take your case much further; is there anything that can advance it further? According to plaintiff he is an apostle against vice, and here you have his letters.

Witness: They were written twenty years ago.

Plaintiff admitted that he wrote a poem about the devil, which Mr. Campbell described as blasphemous. He agreed that it was a horrible thing to have written. He complained that Mr. Ross had kept all those things locked up all these years while pretending to be his friend.

I suppose if you had known all these things were in existence you would not have come into court?—Oh, yes, I should; but they ought to have been disclosed so that I should have had an opportunity of preparing to meet them. Witness further admitted that he was not surprised that his friends were determined to keep him and Wilde apart.

Mr. Campbell: And with all the knowledge of Wilde's past life and his vice and sin you insisted on returning to his friendship?—Yes. And you enticed him by the offer of your villa?—I don't know about enticement. I made him the offer to stay there.

NOT A DEGENERATE.

RECONCILED TO HIS FATHER.

Cross-examined by Mr. F. E. Smith, for the "Times" Book Club, plaintiff said there were a number of people who were familiar with the circumstances of witness's friendship with Wilde, and they would have no difficulty in understanding the innocence that plaintiff wished to place on the words of the libel. The general public, who knew the facts, would also know the reference was to himself. He admitted that he had not read Ransome's book through. There was no doubt some criticism in the book, but there was also a great deal of biography in it.

Do you know that the "Times" refused to circulate a book called "Oscar Wilde, Three Times Tried," because of the references to these matters in it?—No.

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In re-examination by Mr. Haye, plaintiff said that when he was at school at Winchester he was a good athlete, and at Oxford he won the mile and the two mile race for his college.

Is there any truth in the suggestion that you are a degenerate?—I do not think so. Do you know what it means?—I suppose it means that I am a sort of rotten person who could do nothing.

You wrote some post-cards to your father?—They were written in answer to very offensive letters by him about Wilde.

Witness further said that he had quarrelled with his father about Wilde, but was reconciled, and his father, when he died, left him every penny he could. Wilde's play, "The Importance of Being Earnest," was written at Worthing while the plaintiff stayed with him there; in fact, a good deal of the dialogue was plaintiff's. They would discuss the matter, and plaintiff would make suggestions. The same might be said of "An Ideal Husband."

Did he recognise your assistance?—Oh, no; he was much too conceited. (Laughter.)

#### THE MORAL POINT OF VIEW.

In answer to further questions, witness said he thought the public always took well to good poetry, but it was not often that they got it. He did not approve of Swinburne's early work from a moral point of view. Witness said that he had never been accused of writing a single line of indecency. He never received "De Profundis" in 1897 from Mr. Ross, but he received a letter from that gentleman enclosing a letter from Wilde, which he was told would upset him (plaintiff) very much. Witness tore it up, and told Ross that he objected to his interference in the matter, and that if Wilde had anything to say he could write himself.

#### LAST WARNING.

##### PLAINTIFF AGAIN ANGERS THE JUDGE.

His lordship was asking Mr. Haye, who was reading a number of extracts from "De Profundis," why he was doing so, when the plaintiff interpolated a remark that it was "all lies," and was sternly rebuked by the judge for interrupting.

A little later the plaintiff interrupted again, and his lordship said: "I shall not warn you any more. I shall understand, once for all, that nothing in your position entitles you to treat the court any different from any other person."

Plaintiff: I should be the last to do that.

Am I not entitled?—

His lordship: You are entitled to answer questions put to you. You are not entitled to insult counsel.

Plaintiff: I was not insulting counsel. Further questioned, witness said Wilde never gave him money while he was with him. There was no truth in the suggestion that he persuaded Wilde to leave his work and go to Naples with witness.

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Why did you resume friendship with Wilde after he came out of prison?—Because, before he went in, he implored me to stick to him and not to desert him. He said I was his last hope, and that if I did not do that every-thing would be finished, and he would have no hope in life.

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In answer to further questions, witness said his wife first called his attention to Mr. Ransome's book, and it was at her instigation that the present action was brought.

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In cross-examination, he said he thought it advisable that Wilde and the plaintiff should cease their friendship, but he admitted that the plaintiff's undertaking to leave Wilde was not carried out.

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Mr. F. E. Smith, for the "Times" Book Club, then formally submitted that there was no case to go to the jury on the plaintiff's evidence.

His lordship said he should not withdraw the case from the jury.

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##### PRACTICE OF THE "TIMES" BOOK CLUB.

When the hearing of the action was resumed on Monday, Mr. Campbell, K.C., M.P., called a translator to prove the English translation of an article in a French magazine for which Lord Alfred Douglas said he had supplied some of the material.

Mr. Campbell intimated that he did not propose to call any further evidence.

Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C., M.P., stated that he would call some evidence for the "Times" Book Club, and then he and Mr. Campbell would address the jury.

Mr. Alfred Bates, manager and director of the "Times" Book Club, said that every day all books that came in were carefully scrutinised by a committee, for the purpose of seeing that they did not contain anything that was indecent or improper or libellous. He was one of the committee. On the 14th February he examined the book in question, rather more carefully than usual, because a few weeks before another book on the subject of Oscar Wilde had been submitted—a reprint of the Oscar Wilde trial—and he decided that it was certainly not a proper book to circulate. He was rather surprised to find another book on the same subject, and looked at it very carefully.

A HORRIBLE PRODUCTION.

His lordship: Was it a verbatim report of the trial?—I believe so.

His lordship: It was clearly a horrible production to circulate?

Mr. Smith: It was not a verbatim report, I understand.

Mr. Campbell: And we had nothing to do with it.

Witness said that, having looked through the book in question very carefully, it seemed to him to be what the title represented, a critical study. It seemed to deal with Oscar Wilde's literary work, and not the incidents of his trial or the incidents leading up to it. It seemed a literary book. Other members of the committee looked at the book, and made no adverse comment, and it was passed. Thirty-four copies were ordered. Of these twenty were put in circulation, and fourteen were put on sale. Directly they received a letter of complaint from the plaintiff's solicitor in March those in circulation were recalled, and instructions were given that it was not to be sold. They got all the copies back and returned them to the publisher.

Witness said the author, Mr. Ransome, was an author of established reputation. He was a well-known man, of excellent reputation, and was the author of a well-known book on Edgar Allan Poe. The publisher was also of good reputation.

#### NOT FOR YOUNG LADIES.

Mr. Haye, for the plaintiff, asked in cross-examination: The book says that "he experimented in the vice in 1888, and it became a habit." What does that mean? Are you still of opinion that a book with that in it ought not to be circulated?—I should certainly raise a question on that; but I did not see that.

Is it a book for young ladies?—Oscar Wilde is not a book for young ladies.

You have young ladies in your book club?—Yes, but we have to exercise a certain amount of discretion in sending books to subscribers.

How can you prevent any subscriber getting it if it is in circulation in the club, whether ladies or students?—They write for these books, and in nearly every case we have the right to substitute something else if we think right.

His lordship: They might write for this, and if he thought it was not good for them he would send them Wordsworth. (Laughter.)

Witness: Our subscribers expect us to do that. (Laughter.)

His lordship: Mr. Haye, I want to know what your view is? Do you say that no one may write any book except of the nature of the lives of saints? There is nothing to say what this vice is, unless anybody has read the trial of Oscar Wilde. It may have been taking opium or too much drink.

LITERARY CRITICISM.

Mr. Haye: It says "the vice for which he was imprisoned, leading to his separation from the common life of man."

His lordship: That may have been drink. Witness: I think, expressed as that is, it is proper in a book intended for serious readers.

Mr. Haye: Would you call that a literary criticism—that "he experimented in the vice," &c.? Don't you think that for any young student beginning literature it would be very bad for him to read that?—It is not a book for a young man beginning literature.

His lordship: I don't quite understand your attitude, Mr. Haye. Do you say the "Times" Club must not circulate any book unless it is a book which all young ladies may be allowed to read?

Mr. Haye: Certainly not. I would not go so far as that.

His lordship: Then why introduce young ladies unless that is the criterion? What is the point of it?

Mr. Haye: I am coming to married women. We know that the lady who actually got the book was Lady Alfred Douglas.

Mr. Campbell: I don't think you ought to introduce her name in the case.

Mr. Haye: I think that is a very improper remark to make. Lord Alfred Douglas said in the witness-box that she showed it to him, and that the book had broken up his home.



# OSCAR WILDE TRAGEDY.

## Judge Sternly Rebukes Lord Alfred Douglas.

### VERDICT FOR DEFENDANTS.

The libel action brought by Lord Alfred Douglas against Mr. Arthur Ransome, author of a book on Oscar Wilde, and the "Times" Book Club was concluded in the King's Bench on Tuesday.

Mr. Justice Darling in the course of his summing up paid a high tribute to Lord Alfred Douglas's talents, which, he said, amounted to genius. Referring to the circumstances of the case, his lordship said Lord Alfred's name was not mentioned in the book, and apparently it took his wife to know what was meant, for Lord Alfred did not profess that anyone else called his attention to it. Lord Alfred had said that his wife did not believe it, and that she knew everything before he married her. He (the judge) hoped that she did.

After the jury had retired Mr. Campbell intimated that he was instructed by Sir George Lewis, solicitor to Lady Alfred Douglas, to say she had done her best to prevent these proceedings, and the judge added that Lord Alfred could go into the witness-box to reply to that statement, but Lord Alfred was not there. His lordship added: "I never knew a court to be treated in such way as Lord Alfred Douglas has treated this court."

The jury, after an absence of nearly two hours, found a verdict for both defendants. They said that although the words complained of by Lord Alfred were libellous they were true, and that the "Times" Book Club had not been guilty of negligence in circulating or selling the book.

Judgment was entered for the defendants with costs.

### A COURT "SCENE."

#### JUDGE REBUKES LORD ALFRED.

When the judge entered the crowded court for the resumption of the trial on Friday Mr. Cecil Hayes, counsel for Lord Alfred, alluded to the unpublished part of the "De Profundis," and said that when his lordship decided against his submission that it was not evidence and allowed it to be put in Mr. McCardie started to read it, and he (Mr. Hayes) said he would like the whole of it read as was his right. After Mr. McCardie had read a portion of it his lordship pointed out that it would be better to read bits of it later on, as it was so tiresome and long.

Mr. Justice Darling: Because it seemed to me that Mr. McCardie had got to a part which was absolutely unimportant, and I looked ahead, and there seemed to me many pages of that sort—very dead water indeed.

Mr. Hayes said that on thinking over the matter, as it had been put in evidence against plaintiff, and as he had read it himself very carefully, he thought it was desirable that the jury should hear the reading of it to the end because of the context.

His Lordship: Would you like to read it?

Mr. Hayes: I am sure Mr. McCardie can read it better than I can.

Mr. McCardie then continued the reading of the unpublished part of "De Profundis," written by Oscar Wilde in prison, and now produced from the British Museum.

#### LORD ALFRED MISSING.

The plaintiff, Lord Alfred Douglas, who had been an early arrival at the court, and had taken his seat at the solicitors' table, left the court while counsel was reading the manuscript, which appeared to be, at this part, a diary of the doings of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas during certain portions of their lives.

A little later Mr. Justice Darling asked if the plaintiff was in court.

Mr. Campbell said he had not been there since the reading began.

Mr. Hayes: I gave instructions for him to go into the witness-box, and he said he wanted to go outside for a short time.

His Lordship: Let somebody fetch him. I have been looking about for him and haven't seen him here. One of the reasons why this is being read is that he shall be cross-examined upon it and re-examined.

Mr. Campbell: And his counsel asked that it should be read.

His Lordship: Stop reading it until he comes in. Let him be fetched.

Plaintiff's solicitor went to find him.

#### CURIOUS TREATMENT OF THE COURT.

His Lordship: As the manuscript is being read at plaintiff's counsel's request, I think it had better be proceeded with. I will deal with him when he comes. To wait for him is only to waste more time.

Mr. McCardie continued reading the manuscript in plaintiff's absence. After a brief interval plaintiff returned and went into the witness-box. Mr. Justice Darling looked at him very severely, but merely said to counsel, "Go on."

Counsel having reached the end of a paragraph, the Judge turned to plaintiff, who stood up, remarking, "I understand your lordship is annoyed with me."

#### JUDGE'S REBUKE.

His Lordship: Is it upon your instructions that your counsel desired that the whole of this document written by Oscar Wilde should be read?—Yes, my lord.

Then why do you absent yourself from the court?—I asked my counsel to ask if I could go out, and I was told it was not necessary, and that I could go out.

His Lordship: To go out where?

Lord A. Douglas: As I did not wish to sit here to hear it read, I asked you yesterday whether I might go out, and you said no. Afterwards you volunteered the remark, having heard the first part read, that you were not surprised that I did not want to hear the whole of it read.

His Lordship: I did not. I said I was not surprised that you did not want to hear it read. I told you you are the plaintiff in this case.

and if you absent yourself again when your presence is necessary I will immediately enter judgment against you.

Lord A. Douglas: I am sorry. I had not the slightest idea your lordship objected, and I can only offer my sincere apologies.

He then sat down in the witness-box, and Mr. McCardie continued reading the manuscript, plaintiff apparently paying no attention to it.

#### MORE CROSS-EXAMINATION.

#### ANGRY OUTBURSTS BY THE PLAINTIFF.

Mr. Campbell (to plaintiff): I want to ask you questions on certain portions of the statement. He says, speaking of Mrs. Wilde, "Your friendship had always been a source of distress to her, not merely because she had never liked you personally, but because she saw how your companionship altered me, and not for the better." Had your constant intimacy with Oscar Wilde to your knowledge been a source of distress to his wife?—My knowledge is exactly the opposite. I was always on the best of terms with his wife.

Did not you write to Mr. Ross, "The strain of being a bone of contention between Oscar and Mrs. Oscar began to make itself felt." I suppose that was referring to some quarrel?—They were always quarrelling.

Did she welcome your presence in her house? Of course she did. I was one of her greatest friends. It is not fair to judge of our friendship by one letter written to Mr. Ross.

#### TO SAVE HIS FACE.

In an outburst plaintiff said: "This was written by Wilde in prison, out of his rage and spite and malice against me and my family, in order to injure me as much as he could. The whole thing is a farago of lies, a suppression of the truth, and a building up of half-truths. It is plain, absolute, straight lies. He did it to save his face and curry favour with the prison authorities. It is a disgraceful thing that the prison authorities should have allowed him to send the letter out. If I had been shown it at the time I would have answered it point by point."

Mr. Campbell: After that outburst perhaps you will attend to me.

Witness said he thought Oscar Wilde was making £2,000 or £3,000 a year.

Did you, in fact, live on him during all those years?—Certainly not.

Did you write, "I remember the sweetness of asking Oscar for money. It was a sweet humiliation; a sweet pleasure for both of us"?—I may have borrowed money from him occasionally as between friends. I paid him back fifty-fold afterwards. That is the truth if you really want the truth.

#### IMPERTINENT ANSWERS.

The Judge: Don't be impertinent.

Lord Alfred: I do not wish to be impertinent.

His Lordship: You are impertinent whether you wish to be or not.

Lord Alfred: I was about to ask a question.

The Judge: You are not entitled to do so.

Lord Alfred: I accept your rebuke, my lord.

His Lordship: Don't merely accept my view, but act on it.

Lord Alfred: I said your "rebuke."

His Lordship (with irritation): Be silent till you are asked questions.

Witness denied that he and Oscar Wilde were ever turned out of London hotels.

Asked how it was that he was able to go about to Monte Carlo and other places, witness said: "I had £350 a year, but that was simply pocket-money I lived with my mother free, and I had all the money I wanted. I had a lot of rich relations, and I never was short. I had unlimited credit."

Plaintiff agreed that he helped Oscar Wilde with money to take proceedings against plaintiff's father, because he thought it was only right that Wilde should go on with the proceedings. After Wilde came out of prison

witness knew that his own relations desired to keep him from Wilde. He wrote to Mr. Ross a letter, in which he said, referring to an article which he (plaintiff) proposed to write for a French magazine:—"My object in writing the article is to try and raise the case out of the gutter, and to put it on its true level as the greatest romantic tragedy of the age." He (plaintiff) was making an effort to rehabilitate Wilde in the eyes of the French public.

#### "A FIEND OUT OF HELL."

His Lordship: But you told me yesterday that Wilde confessed to you in prison that he was guilty?—I was trying to put the case in as nice a way as possible, to show that he was not so bad as people thought, and that there were redeeming points about the case.

Mr. Campbell: "It may have been immoral or wrong, but there is nothing sordid or mean or dirty in this terrible tragedy of love." You did not think he was a devil incarnate then?—I did not at that time. I only formed the opinion after I read the manuscript. I had long before that given up thinking of him as a hero and a martyr. When I read that unpublished part of "De Profundis" I realised that he was a fiend out of hell, the filthiest beast that ever trod the earth, and the meanest.

Did you write this letter to Mr. Ross: "After the first shock of that terrible letter I had a moment of deep bitterness against Oscar, now gone away never to return"?—My own attitude has always been that since the catastrophe I accept all responsibility, and have no wish to defend myself against any accusations.

His Lordship: How could you, having his own confession as to what he was, propose that you should live together again?

Witness: There does not seem to be anything wrong. I was sorry for him. I supposed other friends who knew him would receive him under their roof. I do not see why not.

Was it not the object of his friends to keep you apart?—Yes.

Plaintiff: I am sorry that it would have been in the interest of both that you should be kept apart?—Most certainly.



**"NOTHING CAN KEEP US APART."**

Then why did you write: "If Oscar only loves me half as much as I love him when he comes out, and even if he thinks he does not, nothing in the world can keep us apart. All the plots of friends and relations will go to the winds when I am with him again and am holding his hand." (Laughter.) That only shows what a faithful friend I was. In the book I am accused of not being his friend. You want to have it both ways. If I stick up for him I am a brute and a swine; if I don't I am a traitor.

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Mr. Campbell: And we had nothing to do with it.

Witness said that, having looked through the book in question very carefully, it seemed to him to be what the title represented, a critical study. It seemed to deal with Oscar Wilde's literary work, and not the incidents of his trial or the incidents leading up to it. It seemed a literary book. Other members of the committee looked at the book, and made no adverse comment, and it was passed. Thirty-four copies were ordered. Of these twenty were put in circulation, and fourteen were put on sale. Directly they received a letter of complaint from the plaintiff's solicitor in March those in circulation were re-called, and instructions were given that it was not to be sold. They got all the copies back and returned them to the publisher.

Witness said the author, Mr. Ransome, was an author of established reputation. He was a well-known man, of excellent reputation, and was the author of a well-known book on Edgar Allan Poe. The publisher was also of good reputation.

**NOT FOR YOUNG LADIES.**

Mr. Hayes, for the plaintiff, asked in cross-examination: The book says that "he experimented in the vice in 1886, and it became a habit with him in 1889." Are you still of opinion that a book with that in it ought to be circulated?—I should certainly raise a question on that; but I did not see that.

Is it a book for young ladies?—"Oscar Wilde" is not a book for young ladies.

You have young ladies in your book club?—Yes; but we have to exercise a certain amount of discretion in sending books to subscribers.

How can you prevent any subscriber getting it if it is in circulation in the club, whether ladies or students?—They write for these books, and in nearly every case we have the right to substitute something else if we think right.

His Lordship: They might write for this, and if he thought it was not good for them he would send them Wordsworth. (Laughter.)

Witness: Our subscribers expect us to do that. (Laughter.)

His Lordship: Mr. Hayes, I want to know what your view is? Do you say that no one may write any book except of the nature of the lives of saints? There is nothing to say what this vice is, unless anybody has read the trial of Oscar Wilde. It may have been taking opium or too much drink.

**LITERARY CRITICISM.**

Mr. Hayes: It says "the vice for which he was imprisoned, leading to his separation from the common life of man."

His Lordship: That may have been drink.

Witness: I think, expressed as that is, it is proper in a book intended for serious readers.

Mr. Hayes: Would you call that a literary criticism—that "he experimented in the vice," &c.? Don't you think that for any young student beginning literature it would be very bad for him to read that?—It is not a book for a young man beginning literature.

His Lordship: I don't quite understand your attitude, Mr. Hayes. Do you say the "Times" Club must not circulate any book unless it is a book which all young ladies may be allowed to read?

Mr. Hayes: Certainly not. I would not go so far as that.

His Lordship: Then why introduce young ladies unless that is the criterion? What is the point of it?

Mr. Hayes: I am coming to married women. We know that the lady who actually got the book was Lady Alfred Douglas.

Mr. Campbell: I don't think you ought to introduce her name in the case.

Witness: I think that is a very improper remark to make. Lord Alfred Douglas said in the witness-box that she showed it to him, and that the book had broken up his home.



CANNOT LIBEL THE DEAD.

Mr. Hayes (to witness): You have married women subscribers?—I believe so.  
On reflection, would you let this book be in the library for sending to married women?—I don't see how we can prevent it. If they send for it we can substitute another book.  
Mr. Hayes put another passage, and asked: Is not that a libel on Oscar Wilde's father?  
His Lordship: You can't libel the dead, or else what would become of Nero and Caligula. (Laughter.)

Mr. Smith: Fancy suing the executors of Caligula. (Laughter.)  
His Lordship: If you want to know what you may say about the dead, read Campbell's "Lives of the Judges." (Great laughter.)

Mr. Hayes: Having heard what I have read out, are you still of opinion that the book is not libellous?—I should get advice upon it. I should have it looked at.  
Mr. Hayes started reading the preface, upon which his Lordship remarked that it seemed to be a gross plagiarism of Chitty on Contracts. (Laughter.)

Counsel put to witness that Mr. Ransome had written a book entitled "A Night in the Luxembourg," which had been withdrawn from circulation.  
Witness said he did not know the book.  
His Lordship: Neither do I. What is the Luxembourg? Is it the kind of place one would spend a night in?

Witness: It is a picture gallery.  
The Judge (to witness): You know what the Luxembourg is—tell the jury.

Witness: Yes, a picture gallery in Paris owned by the State.  
Mr. Hayes: A picture palace. (Much laughter.)  
The Judge: No, a picture gallery, like our National Gallery.

THE ALLIES ANGRY.  
Mr. Campbell objected to questions regarding the book. He was instructed that it was not published until after the writ in the action had been issued.  
His Lordship: Then you cannot go into it. Mr. Hayes (referring to an animated conversation between Mr. F. E. Smith and Mr. Campbell): They are getting angry, my lord.

The Judge: Who are?  
Mr. Hayes: The allies. (Laughter.)  
The Judge: In a court of justice you must never think people are so angry as they seem. Re-examined, witness said that on an average the "Times" Book Club had over 100,000 volumes in it. None of the reviews on Mr. Ransome's book on Oscar Wilde indicated that there was anything in the least objectionable in it. They were all favourable.

Mr. Herbert Stretch, chief librarian of the "Times" Book Club, gave similar evidence, and said one of the members of the committee was a barrister, to whom all doubtful books were submitted. He did not remember passing the book.

Asked in cross-examination whether if he had seen the page about Oscar Wilde's vices he would still have passed the book for circulation, witness replied, "Most certainly."  
Then you differ from the last witness?—I take a broader view. In the case of a difference of opinion the view of the majority prevails.  
Mr. Smith said he had the other members of the committee there, but he did not think it necessary to call them. That concluded his evidence.

FOR THE DEFENCE.  
MR. F. E. SMITH'S SPEECH TO THE JURY.  
Mr. Smith then addressed the jury on behalf of the "Times" Book Club. Counsel said the position of his clients was entirely different from that of Mr. Ransome. Mr. Ransome had adopted a certain defence, and he offered no criticism of it. The "Times" Book Club could not make inquiries into the truth of every statement in the books which they circulated. The Master of the Rolls in a recent case said it was quite impossible that a distributing agency such as the "Times" Book Club should be expected to read every book they had. All they could do was to take reasonable precautions, and that duty had been fully discharged in the book of which Lord Alfred Douglas complained. They had no malice against him, and directly he complained they withdrew the book from circulation. The name of the plaintiff was not mentioned in the book at all, and after all these years only a certain number of people would know that the plaintiff was referred to in these guarded and colourless references.

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TREMBLOUS BLUFF.  
Mr. Campbell subsequently addressed the jury, and said the only issue in regard to his client, Mr. Ransome, was whether the words were true or not. He submitted that the plaintiff had in the witness-box admitted the truth of every allegation. They had nothing to do with the plaintiff's sentiments to-day. They had to deal with his state of mind at the time the words were referred to. Plaintiff had, with damaging and incredible folly, charged the defendant with publishing false and malicious lies in three isolated passages, in which he was not mentioned by name, but which were not new to the people who knew all the facts. His whole attitude was a piece of tremendous bluff, denying everything he thought defendant could not prove.

"DE PROFUNDIS."  
They were not trying whether the statements in the unpublished "De Profundis" were true or not, although he said that every one of them could be proved to be true under the handwriting of the plaintiff himself. There was a good deal of stage acting on the part of Lord Alfred Douglas, but he (counsel) believed that when Lord Alfred Douglas left the court it was because the reading of "De Profundis" seared his conscience. If the statements in that terrible indictment were true, it was a terrible ordeal for him to have to undergo in the witness-box.

Plaintiff was not in court during this part of counsel's speech, coming in at 2.30.  
Counsel went on that in 1896, a year before "De Profundis" was written, Oscar Wilde wrote to Mr. Ross that the plaintiff had ruined him, and the plaintiff, instead of challenging that statement and calling Wilde a fend incarnate, as he did now, wrote to Mr. Ross in grovelling submission, saying, "I know I have ruined his life."

EVERY LIE PROVED.  
Every line in the defendant's book was proved by the plaintiff's own admissions, though no doubt he came to that court thinking that time had destroyed much of the evidence against him, and that his own bare-faced bluffing and denials would pull him through.

In conclusion, Mr. Campbell said that every line of the defence had been proved to be true, and that, therefore, there could be no question of libel from any point of view. There was overwhelming evidence that the plaintiff never had the prospect of getting one shilling of damages. It was plain that the plaintiff could never have expected that any useful result would have followed his action, except to blast the character of Oscar Wilde, to whom he had referred in language for which he hoped the plaintiff would be ashamed for the rest of his natural life.

THE RUIN OF OSCAR WILDE.  
He had reviled the man who had shielded him and had made a splendid defence of him, and to whom, on his dying bed, plaintiff sent a message of undying love and affection. Plaintiff had gone into the box and blurted out, with no provocation, but with malice aforethought, that this man—whom a few years ago he worshipped—was, in his private life, a man of monstrously vicious habits. Plaintiff had tried to overthrow him, not because he differed from his views of life and his habits, but because Wilde, in the solitary seclusion of Reading Gaol, wrote that document in which he threw the fullest light on the facts which had caused that ruin, into the abyss of which he sank.

"THE BATTLE OF HIS LIFE."  
COUNSEL'S SPEECH FOR THE PLAINTIFF.  
Mr. Hayes then replied for the plaintiff, and commented strongly on the fact that neither Mr. Ransome nor Mr. Ross had been called by the defence.

It was a terrible charge that had been made against Lord Alfred Douglas, who was fighting the battle of his life. What Oscar Wilde might have written to another person was no justification for the libel which the defendants had published against the plaintiff. Dealing with the complaints made about the plaintiff's poems, counsel said they were, as Lord Alfred had said, merely imitations of Swinburne. Counsel then read a quotation from that poet.

His Lordship: Did Swinburne really write that?  
Mr. Hayes: Yes, my lord; here is the volume.  
His Lordship: Well, it sounded to me like what you would expect to read on a valentine. (Lord laughter.)

Mr. Hayes next quoted from Shakespeare, who, however, he said, wasn't in the same street with Swinburne. (Laughter.) Lord Alfred's style came somewhere between Swinburne and Shakespeare.

Counsel was still speaking when the court adjourned till Tuesday.

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.  
"INNOCENT EXPRESSIONS OF PLATONIC AFFECTION."  
On his lordship taking his seat on Tuesday he called attention to the argument which Mr. Hayes (counsel for the plaintiff) was addressing to the court at the time of the adjournment on Monday, when he quoted Swinburne and Shakespeare and compared their writings with the poems of Lord A. Douglas about which the defendants had complained.

"Yesterday," said the Judge, "you read Shakespeare's sonnets. Is your argument this, that Shakespeare was addicted to the same vice as was alleged against Oscar Wilde?"  
Mr. Hayes: Certainly not.

The Judge: I understand, then, that your argument is that Shakespeare's sonnets are perfectly innocent expressions of platonic affection, and that it is open to any other person to write in the same way without any aspersion upon them which should not also be cast upon Shakespeare?

Mr. Hayes: Yes, my lord—that exotic license which poets have.

Counsel then resumed his address for the plaintiff in reply, and again referred to the absence from the witness-box of Mr. Ross, Wilde's literary executor, whose name has been frequently mentioned in the course of the case.

The Judge: Rather than that you should have any grievance on that ground you may call Mr. Ross yourself now.

Mr. Hayes: I cannot do that, because I should have to cross-examine him, and treat him as a hostile witness.

The Judge: You may re-open your case, and say that the law said they were not liable for the circulation of books that might be libellous if they proved that they acted upon himself to write concerning the conduct of a witness who gave evidence for the defence. I desire him to know, through his counsel, that defendants' counsel know exactly what has passed. I shall not treat the letter as private. It may be that the witness who is named in the letter sent to me may desire to take proceedings.

"It is not my duty to shelter Lord Alfred Douglas if he does, and I certainly shall not put myself in the position of being a witness in the case. This letter was handed by express messenger to my clerk, and if it is necessary to prove the receipt of it my clerk will do it. If this is an attempt to engage me in any controversy it will absolutely fail. In order that the letter may be kept by those whom it concerns, as I owe no kind of duty to Lord Alfred Douglas if he chooses to commit a breach of the law with regard to a witness, I shall hand it to counsel for the defendants, so that it may be handed to their solicitors, and if it is demanded by the witness, the letter will be at his disposal in order that he may take proceedings if he chooses to do so. Everyone must agree that to write a defamatory letter concerning a witness to the judge who tried the case is a matter which cannot possibly oblige the judge to attempt in any way to shelter the person who is guilty of it."

"There is the letter, Mr. Smith (handing it down to him). You can show it to Mr. Hayes and see give it to your client."  
Mr. Smith: I will give it to my clerk to take it to the solicitors.

His Lordship: As I mention the letter publicly, I may as well take this occasion of saying that Lord Alfred Douglas will receive no letter from me. Should he attempt to remove the correspondence he has begun, I desire he will not write to me again, because if any proceedings should be taken by this witness I shall hand over all the letters I get and it will amount to an aggravation of any offence he may have committed against that gentleman.

His Lordship pointed out that Lord Alfred's name was not mentioned in the book from cover to cover. Apparently it took his wife to know what was meant, for Lord Alfred did not profess that anyone else called his attention to it, but Lord Alfred had said, she did not believe it. He said, "She knew everything before I married her." He (his lordship) hoped she did. He was glad that the press had omitted the disgusting parts of this case, and had made it as decent as it could be made. Well, Lord Alfred had said that his wife had not left him because of this case, and the jury—if they should come to consider damages—must remember that they must, on retiring, decide whether the words complained of were a libel, or whether they were true, and also whether the "Times" Book Club had been guilty of negligence.

Several questions of detail were asked by the jury, Lord Alfred Douglas being absent, and in allusion to this his Lordship remarked that the plaintiff should have been present to answer the questions. He never knew the court to be treated by a litigant in this fashion before.

After the jury had retired Mr. Campbell, K.C., intimated that he was instructed by Sir George Lewis, solicitor to Lady Alfred Douglas, to say that she had done her best to prevent these proceedings.

Mr. Hayes said such a statement as that ought to be made in the witness-box.  
The Judge replied that if Lord Alfred wished to go into the witness-box to reply to what Mr. Campbell had said he could do so, but Lord Alfred was not there.

"As I have just said to the jury," added the judge, "I never knew a court to be treated in such a way as Lord Alfred Douglas has treated this court."

Mr. Hayes: I apologise for him.  
The Judge: You need not apologise, Mr. Hayes: you are here, but he is not.

Mr. Hayes: He is my client.  
The Judge: He is not here, and he does not apologise.

THE VERDICT.  
The jury returned after deliberating for an hour and three-quarters. They answered the questions put to them by his lordship as follows:—

(1) Are the words complained of by plaintiff on page 157 of Mr. Ransome's book a libel on plaintiff?—Yes.  
(2) If so, are they true?—Yes.  
(3) Are the words complained of on page 157 a libel on plaintiff?—Yes.  
(4) Are they true?—Yes.  
(5) Are the words complained of on page 158 a libel on plaintiff?—No.  
(6) Were the defendants, the "Times" Book Club, guilty of negligence in circulating or selling the book?—No.

Mr. J. H. Campbell, K.C., M.P., on these answers asked for judgment for the defendants.

His Lordship assented, and judgment was entered accordingly, with costs. His lordship also certified for a special jury.

The Judge (sarcastically): When were those poems published first?  
Mr. Hayes: About 1892.

The Judge: And you say it was this that corrupted Lord Alfred Douglas?  
Mr. Hayes: I am afraid that Lord Alfred was not the only young man who read these extraordinary things.

The Judge: I am not saying that there were not more corrupted young men. You say these things corrupted him?  
Mr. Hayes: I am showing the jury the influence of Wilde on Douglas.

HEAVY DAMAGES NOT WANTED.  
Continuing, counsel said it was a libel on Wilde at Naples after the latter came out of prison. Why, Wilde had merely an income of £3 a week, whilst this young nobleman had his villa at Naples. But for Douglas Wilde would have been as lonely as a leper. Douglas gave him a roof, and paid his funeral expenses when he died.

The Judge: I believe someone has put up a monument to him in St. Napoleon.  
Mr. Hayes: That has been done since the date of his regeneration. He has arisen from the dead.

Mr. E. E. Smith, K.C. (for the "Times" Book Club): There is no evidence of that. (Laughter.)

Mr. Hayes, continuing, asked the jury to imagine what the feelings of Lord Alfred must have been when his wife bought this book and read the passages referred to.

The Judge: I shall have to ask the plaintiff a question about that when you have finished.

Lord Alfred Douglas, who had left the court, returned just in time to hear his lordship's observation, and took a seat at the solicitors' table.

Mr. Hayes, passing on, declared that the defence set up was merely one in mitigation of damages. Lord Alfred did not want heavy damages; he did not want big money. (Laughter.)

You may laugh," added counsel; "I do not like this laughter. I am not referring to you, my lord, but to Mr. Campbell." (Much laughter, whilst the judge smiled.)

LORD ALFRED AND HIS WIFE.  
Upon the close of counsel's address Lord Alfred Douglas, by direction of the judge, again went into the witness-box.

The Judge: Lord Alfred Douglas, you have heard your counsel say how you came to bring this action and the imaginary conversation between you and Lady Alfred. Did you hear him?—I cannot say I did, my lord. Just at that time I was out of court.

The Judge: Is it by the request of Lady Alfred that you are bringing this action?  
Lord Alfred: Not exactly by her request, but she showed me the book, and said: "Have you seen this? What are you going to do about it?" I said, "I suppose I shall have to bring an action," and she said, "Yes, I suppose you will." She has always

thought I ought to take it; so have all my family and relations.  
The Judge: That was in March of last year?—Yes.

Did she believe what was said?—No, of course not. She knew all the circumstances when she married me.

Is she still living with you?—I cannot say she is living with me at this moment—she is staying with her father; but I have received an affectionate letter from her within the last fortnight, and I fully expect that she will return.

The Judge: Is she living with you or not?  
Lord Alfred: I have answered your question, and I do not think it is fair to ask me again. I say she is not at this moment staying in my house, but I expect her to return. She is staying with her father, but not in consequence of this action.

The Judge: Are you on good terms with her father?  
Lord Alfred: No, and I never have been. He has always disliked me, and been an enemy of mine, and tried to make mischief between myself and my wife.

THE SUMMING UP.  
His Lordship then summed up what he described as a very unpleasant case. He said the character of the writings in Mr. Ransome's book—writings which admittedly referred to the plaintiff—were such that they might be libellous. It was for the jury to say whether they were. If the jury thought they were libellous, then they must consider whether Mr. Ransome had made out his defence that what he had written was true. With regard to the "Times" Book Club, the law said they were not liable for the circulation of books that might be libellous if they proved that they acted upon themselves to write concerning the conduct of a witness who gave evidence for the defence. I desire him to know, through his counsel, that defendants' counsel know exactly what has passed. I shall not treat the letter as private. It may be that the witness who is named in the letter sent to me may desire to take proceedings.

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Every line in the defendant's book was proved by the plaintiff's own admissions, though no doubt he came to that court thinking that time had destroyed much of the evidence.

His Lordship said that the plaintiff's bare-faced bluffing and denials would pull him through.



In conclusion, Mr. Campbell said that every line of the defence had been proved to be true, and that, therefore, there could be no question of libel from any point of view. There was overwhelming evidence that the plaintiff never had the prospect of getting one shilling of damages. It was plain that the plaintiff could never have expected that any useful result would have followed his action, except to blast the character of Oscar Wilde, to whom he had referred in language for which he hoped plaintiff would be ashamed for the rest of his natural life.

#### THE RUIN OF OSCAR WILDE.

He had reviled the man who had shielded him and had made a splendid defence of him, and to whom, on his dying bed, plaintiff sent a message of undying love and affection. Plaintiff had gone into the box and blurted out, with no provocation, but with malice aforethought, that this man—whom a few years ago he worshipped—was, in his private life, a man of monstrously vicious habits. Plaintiff had tried to overthrow him, not because he differed from his views of life and his habits, but because Wilde, in the solitary seclusion of Reading Gaol, wrote that document in which he threw the fullest light on the facts which had caused that ruin, into the abyss of which he sank.

#### "THE BATTLE OF HIS LIFE."

#### COUNSEL'S SPEECH FOR THE PLAINTIFF.

Mr. Hayes then replied for the plaintiff, and commented strongly on the fact that neither Mr. Ransome nor Mr. Rose had been called by the defence.

It was a terrible charge that had been made against Lord Alfred Douglas, who was fighting the battle of his life. What Oscar Wilde might have written to another person was no justification for the libel which the defendants had published against the plaintiff. Dealing with the complaints made about the plaintiff's poems, counsel said they were, as Lord Alfred had said, merely imitations of Swinburne. Counsel then read a quotation from that poet:

His Lordship: Did Swinburne really write that?

Mr. Hayes: Yes, my lord; here is the volume. His Lordship: Well, it sounded to me like

what you would expect to read on a valentine. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. Hayes next quoted from Shakespeare, who, however, he said, wasn't in the same street with Swinburne. (Laughter.) Lord Alfred's style came somewhere between Swinburne and Shakespeare.

Counsel was still speaking when the court adjourned till Tuesday.

#### SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

#### "INNOCENT EXPRESSIONS OF PLATONIC AFFECTION."

On his lordship taking his seat on Tuesday he called attention to the argument which Mr. Hayes (counsel for the plaintiff) was addressing to the court at the time of the adjournment on Monday, when he quoted Swinburne and Shakespeare and compared their writings with the poems of Lord A. Douglas about which the defendants had complained.

"Yesterday," said the Judge, "you read Shakespeare's sonnets. Is your argument this, that Shakespeare was addicted to the same vice as was alleged against Oscar Wilde?"

Mr. Hayes: Certainly not. The Judge: I understand, then, that your argument is that Shakespeare's sonnets are perfectly innocent expressions of platonic affection, and that it is open to any other person to write in the same way without any aspersion upon them which should not also be cast upon Shakespeare?

Mr. Hayes: Yes, my lord—that exotic license which poets have.

#### COUNSEL AND MR. ROSS.

Counsel then resumed his address for the plaintiff in reply, and again commented upon the absence from the witness-box of Mr. Ross, Wilde's literary executor, whose name has been frequently mentioned in the course of the case.

The Judge: Rather than that you should have any grievance on that ground you may call Mr. Ross yourself now.

Mr. Hayes: I cannot do that, because I should have to cross-examine him.

The Judge: You may re-open your case, and treat him as a hostile witness.

Mr. Hayes: I say it is for them to justify their case. If I called Ross, I should be bound by his answers. I do not suggest what he would do, but what he could do. Mr. Campbell did not call him.

Mr. Campbell (interposing): I really protest. The Judge: I have listened in vain for any reasons why Mr. Campbell should call him. You will remember, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Ross was Wilde's literary executor, to whom he left "De Profundis" to do with it as he thought best, and who was responsible for the publication of "De Profundis" without the piece at the British Museum, which was not to be produced for fifty years.

#### SOME EPIGRAMS.

Mr. Hayes went on to contend that Ross should be able to say how it came about that parts of "De Profundis" referring to Lord Alfred were put in the book last year, although "De Profundis" was not to be published till 1960.

Proceeding, he denied that the influence of Lord Alfred was the cause of Wilde's public disgrace, and accused the other side of not only throwing mud, but brimstone and thunderbolts at the plaintiff, in order to evade the issue.

He again referred to the absence of Mr. Ransome from the witness-box, and, passing on, commented upon the speech of Mr. Campbell. The latter, in order to influence the jury against Lord Alfred, had dragged in his reference to the Old Bailey jury who found Oscar Wilde guilty as "merely a group of shopkeepers," but, said counsel, the jury who convicted Wilde was only a common jury—(laughter)—whereas the gentlemen now trying this case were a special jury, and, therefore, his friend's point—if it was to show that Lord Alfred insulted all jurors—failed. (More laughter.)

Arguing further against the idea that Lord Alfred—a boy at the time—could have been the evil influence of Oscar Wilde's life, counsel quoted from Wilde's epigrams to show that the contrary was the case, amongst them being such sayings as "It is better to be beautiful than good"—(laughter); "If a man is a gentleman he knows quite enough. If he is not a gentleman, whatever he knows is bad for him"—(laughter); "There is no such thing as a moral book or an immoral book—books are well written or badly written, that is all"; "2019-03-17 I resist everything except temptation." (More laughter.)

The Judge (sarcastically): When were those gems published first?

Mr. Hayes: About 1892.

The Judge: And you say it was this that corrupted Lord Alfred Douglas?

Mr. Hayes: I am afraid that Lord Alfred was not the only young man who read these extraordinary things.

The Judge: I am not saying that there were not more corrupted young men. You say these things corrupted him?

Mr. Hayes: I am showing the jury the influence of Wilde on Douglas.

#### HEAVY DAMAGES NOT WANTED.

Continuing, counsel said it was a libel on Lord Alfred to say that he lived on Wilde at Naples after the latter came out of prison. Why, Wilde had merely an income of £3 a week, whilst this young nobleman had his villa at Naples.

But for Douglas Wilde would have been as lonely as a leper. Douglas gave him a roof, and paid his funeral expenses when he died.

The Judge: I believe someone has put up a monument to him fit for Napoleon.

Mr. Hayes: That has been done since the date of his regeneration. He has arisen from the dead.

Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C. (for the "Times" Book Club): There is no evidence of that. (Laughter.)

Mr. Hayes, continuing, asked the jury to imagine what the feelings of Lord Alfred must have been when his wife bought this book and read the passages referred to.

The Judge: I shall have to ask the plaintiff a question about that when you have finished.

Lord Alfred Douglas, who had left the court, returned just in time to hear his lordship's observation, and took a seat at the solicitors' table.

Mr. Hayes, passing on, declared that the defence set up was merely one in mitigation of damages. Lord Alfred did not want heavy damages; he did not want big money. (Laughter.)

"You may laugh," added counsel; "I do not like this laughter. I am not referring to you, my lord, but to Mr. Campbell." (Much laughter, whilst the judge smiled.)

#### LORD ALFRED AND HIS WIFE.

Upon the close of counsel's address Lord Alfred Douglas, by direction of the judge, again went into the witness-box.

The Judge: Lord Alfred Douglas, you have heard your counsel say how you came to bring this action and the imaginary conversation between you and Lady Alfred. Did you hear him?—I cannot say I did, my lord. Just at that time I was out of court.

The Judge: Is it by the request of Lady Alfred that you are bringing this action?

Lord Alfred: Not exactly by her request, but she showed me the book, and said: "Have you seen this? What are you going to do about it?" I said, "I suppose I shall have to bring an action," and she said, "Yes, I suppose you will." She has always

thought I ought to take it; so have all my family and relations.

The Judge: That was in March of last year?—Yes.

Did she believe what was said?—No, of course not. She knew all the circumstances when she married me.

Is she still living with you?—I cannot say she is living with me at this moment—she is staying with her father; but I have received an affectionate letter from her within the last fortnight, and I fully expect that she will return.

The Judge: Is she living with you or not?

Lord Alfred: I have answered your question, and I do not think it is fair to ask me again. I say she is not at this moment staying in my house, but I expect her to return. She is staying with her father, but not in consequence of this action.

The Judge: Are you on good terms with her father?

Lord Alfred: No, and I never have been. He has always disliked me, and been an enemy of mine, and tried to make mischief between myself and my wife.

#### THE SUMMING UP.

His Lordship then summed up what he described as a very unpleasant case. He said the character of the writings in Mr. Ransome's book—writings which admittedly referred to the plaintiff—were such that they might be libellous. It was for the jury to say whether they were. If the jury thought they were libellous, then they must consider whether Mr. Ransome had made out his defence that what he had written was true. With regard to the "Times" Book Club, the law said they were not liable for the circulation of books that might be libellous if they proved that they acted without negligence. Many great works, such as Lecky's "History of Morals" and Gibbon's "Roman Empire," necessarily had references to indecent subjects, but no one would say they should not be circulated by a library. The proper guardians of young girls were their parents, not a libra-ry. Rabelais had been referred to, but he (the judge) could not read a chapter of Rabelais without being bored to death. No one disputed that Oscar Wilde was a great literary artist, a great manager of words, whether they liked his ideas or not, or whether they thought his ideas were cheap paradoxes, each one of which took a whole day to elaborate. Everybody agreed that he was a great artist in words, and he wrote plays which were played over and over again. His "De Profundis" was a remarkable and interesting document as a study of what a bad man, but a man of genius, went through in prison and the effect of prison on him. But one might make a mistake if they assumed that everything he said was gospel. As a member of the Court of Criminal Appeal he knew that people in prison often made grossly unfair attacks on other people in order to excuse and apologise for themselves. But neither must it be supposed that all Oscar Wilde wrote was untrue. This "De Profundis" was a study of a remarkable man. It was deposited at the British Museum, and would have remained there unpublished for sixty years if the plaintiff had not brought this action. What right had he to complain that the defendants had broken the seal and disclosed the manuscript to the jury in their own defence? It reminded him of a naturalist who wrote of a badger: "This animal is very vicious; he will defend himself when attacked." (Laughter.)

His Lordship referred to the practices which the plaintiff had apparently advocated in his younger years, and asked the jury what they thought of the plaintiff's letters to Mr. Labouchere, of "Truth," his letters to Wilde, and his poems. Plaintiff was a man of undoubted ability. He had talents, which, if cultivated, might have taken him to a high position in literature. He had written poems which showed genius. Instead of utilising the undoubted advantages he possessed by reason of his position, he had, in his country, at the age of 27 he was writing these things.

His Lordship pointed out that Lord Alfred's name was not mentioned in the book from cover to cover. Apparently it took his wife to know what was meant, for Lord Alfred did not profess that anyone else called his attention to it, but Lord Alfred had said, she did not believe it. He said, "She knew everything before I married her." He (his lordship) hoped she did. He was glad that the press had omitted the disgusting parts of this case, and had made it as decent as it could be made. Well, Lord Alfred had said that his wife had not left him because of this case, and the jury—if they should come to consider damages—must remember that they must, on retiring, decide whether the words complained of were a libel, or whether they were true, and also whether the "Times" Book Club had been guilty of negligence.

Several questions of detail were asked by the jury, Lord Alfred Douglas being absent, and in allusion to this his Lordship remarked that the plaintiff should have been present to answer the questions. He never knew the court to be treated by a litigant in this fashion before.

After the jury had retired Mr. Campbell, K.C., intimated that he was instructed by Sir George Lewis, solicitor to Lady Alfred Douglas, to say that she had done her best to prevent these proceedings.

Mr. Hayes said such a statement as that ought to be made in the witness-box.

The Judge replied that if Lord Alfred wished to go into the witness-box to reply to what Mr. Campbell had said he could do so, but Lord Alfred was not there.

"As I have just said to the jury," added the judge, "I never knew a court to be treated in such a way as Lord Alfred Douglas has treated this court."

Mr. Hayes: I apologise for him.

The Judge: You need not apologise, Mr. Hayes; you are here, but he is not.

Mr. Hayes: He is my client.

The Judge: He is not here, and he does not apologise.

#### THE VERDICT.

The jury returned after deliberating for an hour and three-quarters. They answered the questions put to them by his lordship as follows:—

- (1) Are the words complained of by plaintiff on page 157 of Mr. Ransome's book a libel on plaintiff?—Yes.
- (2) If so, are they true?—Yes.
- (3) Are the words complained of on pages 182-3 a libel on plaintiff?—Yes.
- (4) Are they true?—Yes.
- (5) Are the words complained of on page 194 a libel on plaintiff?—No.
- (6) Were the defendants, the "Times" Book Club, guilty of negligence in circulating or selling the book?—No.

Mr. J. H. Campbell, K.C., M.P., on these answers asked for judgment for the defendants.

His Lordship assented, and judgment was entered accordingly, with costs. His lordship also certified for a special jury.

#### "LIBELLOUS" LETTER.

#### MR. JUSTICE DARLING'S INDIGNATION.

On Wednesday in the King's Bench Division Mr. Justice Darling mentioned that he had received a letter from Lord Alfred Douglas.

Addressing himself to Mr. Hayes, who appeared for the plaintiff, and to Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C., M.P., who represented the "Times" Book Club, his Lordship said: "I desire, in the presence of counsel who were engaged in the case I tried yesterday, to state that I have received since I have been sitting here, by special messenger, a letter which is marked 'Private,' and which is from Lord Alfred Douglas to me; and it encloses a copy of a letter which he informs me in the letter he sent to me he has written to a person who was a witness for the defence in the case."

"That letter is, undoubtedly, libellous—the letter which he writes to the witness—whether it is true or not I do not know. He may if he is proceeded against for writing to the witness have a good defence. Of that I say nothing, but it is a most improper thing that he should attempt to engage the judge who tried the case in any kind of controversy in connection with a dispute which he is about to engage in with a person who gave evidence in the case. Of course, there can be no question of private and confidential correspondence between myself and Lord Alfred Douglas, especially when he takes upon himself to write concerning the conduct of a witness who gave evidence for the defence. I desire him to know, through his counsel, that defendants' counsel knows exactly what has passed. I shall not treat the letter as private. It may be that the witness who is named in the letter sent to me may desire to take proceedings."

"It is not my duty to shelter Lord Alfred Douglas if he does, and I certainly shall not put myself in the position of being a witness in the case. This letter was handed by express messenger to my clerk, and if it is necessary to prove the receipt of it my clerk will do it. If this is an attempt to engage me in any controversy it will absolutely fail. In order that the letter may be kept by those whom it concerns, as I owe no kind of duty to Lord Alfred Douglas if he chooses to commit a breach of the law with regard to a witness, I shall hand it to counsel for the defendants, so that it may be handed to their solicitors, and if it is demanded by the witness the letter will be at his disposal in order that he may take proceedings if he chooses to do so. Everyone must agree that to write a defamatory letter concerning a witness to the judge who tried the case is a matter which cannot possibly oblige the judge to attempt in any way to shelter the person who is guilty of it."

"There is the letter, Mr. Smith (handing it down to him). You can show it to Mr. Hayes and then give it to your clients."

Mr. Smith: I will give it to my clerk to take it to the solicitors.

His Lordship: As I mention the letter publicly, I may as well take this occasion of saying that Lord Alfred Douglas will receive no letter from me. Should he attempt to pursue the correspondence he has begun, I desire he will not write to me again, because if any proceedings should be taken by this witness I shall hand over all the letters I get, and it will amount to an aggravation of any offence he may have committed against that gentleman.







