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Oscar Wilde  
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Vol. 3



JANUARY 28, 1905.

DAILY NEWS, S

ST. JAMES'S. Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER.  
Sole Lessee and Manager.  
TO-DAY, at 2.45, and 8.15, THE KING, at 8 sharp.  
LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN.  
By Oscar Wilde.  
Mr. C. Aubrey Smith, Mr. Ben Webster.  
Mr. Eric Lewis, Mr. Leslie Faber.  
Miss Marion Terry.  
Miss Lillian Braithwaite, Miss Fanny Coleman.  
2.15 and 8.30, a new play in one act, by Alfred Suter, entitled  
"A MARKER OF MEN."  
MATINEE (both plays), WEDS. and SATS., at 2.15.

### ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

There are a couple of changes in the cast of "Lady Windermere's Fan." Mr. Robert Horton has contented himself with an imitation of Mr. Vano Tempest's Charles Danby, and the imitation strikes one as a caricature. Mr. Eric Lewis, however, is a delightful Lord Augustus. By many subtle touches he makes a real character of the part which Mr. Sydney Brough was inclined to burlesque. Once again Miss Marion Terry showed the younger generation of actresses the distinction of bearing and gesture and the command of voice which have almost disappeared from the English stage.

E. A. B.

110 Dorian Gray: Choice Large Paper Copy.—OSCAR WILDE'S THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, a copy of the rare large paper issue, only 250 having been printed. This copy is signed by OSCAR WILDE himself, crown 4to, elegantly bound in half vellum, a CHOICE VOLUME, £1 11s.6d. 1891

156 — Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and other Stories, 1st edition, 12mo, illus. uncut, 25s.  
156A — Salome Drame en un acte, 1st Edition, small 4to, wrappers, rare, 21s. Paris and Elkin Mathews et John Lane, Londres, 1893

"DAILY CHRONICLE" MARCH 7, 1905.

### "MR. SMITH" IN DRAMA.

He Refuses to Barter his Name for a Duchess's Daughter.

A really admirable notion finds itself embedded in an otherwise somewhat commonplace and novelettish drawing-room melodrama called "Mr. Smith." This is by Mr. Frank Reynolds, and was produced last night with some favour at the Camden Theatre.

The particular Mr. Smith celebrated in the title is, it may be explained, supposed to be a world-famous engineer of comparatively lowly origin. He is paying unsanctioned but honourable attention to the daughter of a Duchess.

For the greater part of two acts, it must be confessed, his course of true love flows somewhat drearily. Suddenly, however, it and the play are both enlivened by quite a brilliant idea on the part of the duchess—not to say, of the author.

It is suggested that in spite of all lesser obstacles Mr. Smith might aspire reasonably to the hand of the duchess's daughter if only he would change his name. Thereupon Mr. Smith, who is played by a very personable and curiously grave actor (Mr. Hamilton Stewart) draws himself to his full height, and standing as one might say upon the dignity of the name of Smith, refuses to change a letter of it.

He will not even subscribe to the compromise of "Smithy." "Smith," he said, he, a name neither he nor his fathers had disgraced. Why should he change it? No, he would not, for all the daughters of all the duchesses in the world!

And as, with something of Mr. Hayden Coffin's manner, Mr. Hamilton Stewart folded his arms and declared he would be loved as Smith or not at all, there was a fleeting moment of really choice comedy.

The rest of the play is unfortunately not to be taken quite as seriously as its author seems to intend, though there is a charming American girl in it played quite delightfully by Miss Phyllis Ralph.

Still, that "Smith" notion really deserves a bright treatment. After all, the importance of being serious might under some circumstances be rivalled by the unimportance of being Smith.

## Durrant's Press Cuttings,

St. ANDREW'S HOUSE,

HOLBORN CIRCUS, LONDON, E.C.

(Late 57, Holborn Viaduct.)

Cutting from the *Mercur de France*

Dated September 1905

### LETTRES ANGLAISES

R. L. Stevenson: *Le Reflux*, trad. par Teodor de Wyzewa, Perrin, 3 fr. 50.—  
Oscar Wilde: *Intentions*, trad. par Hugues Rebelle, Carrington, 6 fr.

L'œuvre d'Oscar Wilde demande à être traduite à la fois avec précision et avec art. Les phrases ont des significations si ténues et le choix des mots est si habile qu'une traduction défectueuse, abondante en contre-sens ou en coquilles, risquerait de décevoir grandement le lecteur. Car il faut bien compter que ceux qui se soucient de connaître Oscar Wilde ne peuvent être ni des concierges ni des cochers de fiacre; ils n'appartiennent certainement pas à ce « grand public » qui se délecte aux émouvants feuilletons de nos quotidiens populaires ou qui savoure avidement les élocutions égrillardes de certains fabricants de prétendue littérature. C'est ce qu'avait compris l'éditeur Carrington quand il chargea Hugues Rebelle de lui traduire *Intentions*. Ces essais d'Oscar Wilde représentent plus particulièrement le côté paradoxal et frondeur de sa personnalité. Il y exprime ses idées ou plutôt ses subtilités esthétiques; il y « cause » plus qu'ailleurs, à tel point que trois de ces essais sur cinq sont dialogués; l'auteur s'entretient avec des personnages qu'il suppose aussi cultivés, aussi beaux esprits que lui-même: « s'entretient » est beaucoup dire, car ce sont plutôt des contradicteurs auxquels il suggère les objections dont il a besoin pour poursuivre le développement et le triomphe de ses arguments. La conversation vagabonde à plaisir et le causeur y fait étalage de toutes les richesses de son esprit, de son imagination, de sa mémoire. Au milieu de ces citations, de ces allusions, de ces exemples innombrables empruntés à tous les temps et à tous les pays,

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"Salome" (John Lane), by Oscar Wilde, is an adroit translation from the French original. If it is, I assume, not by the author, but it seems to be delicately and sensitively done. I am afraid the Germans have overestimated this extremely artificial exercise in decadence. It rings false throughout. At its best it is a feeble echo of Maeterlinck. At its worst it is the conventional jargon of sensualism. Jokanaan (John the Baptist) is only a patchwork of Biblical quotations. Herod is naïve. Herodias is a voluble hag. Salome is a neurotic mix. The tragedy tries to be tragic, and succeeds only in being comic. Here and there one finds literary felicities, pictorial phrases, cloying conceits, such as the metaphor: "She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver." There are false euphuisms such as: "The red blazes of trumpets." There are many plagiarisms, such as: "The beatings of the wings of the angel of death," which is stolen from John Bright. I suppose that "You hath sworn" is a misprint. There is a pretty description of a collar of pearls—like unto moons chained with rays of silver. Herod's catalogue of jewels is ornate, "Opals that burn with an icelike flame" is a phrase that recalls Pater's "hard gem-like flame." The phrase about the sea wandering in the sapphires is happy. But "Salome" is not art. Its theme is as suitable for art as the Chicago meat-packing scandals. It does not horrify or terrify. It is merely dully dirty and dully dull. It has not even the iridescence of puerescence. It stinks without simulating. Pass the normaldehyde.

JAMES DOUGLAS

102 Reynolds 13 Nov. 1904

### IS OSCAR WILDE DEAD? AN EXTRAORDINARY RUMOUR.

("REYNOLDS'S" SPECIAL.)

In certain literary circles in the United States the opinion is being freely expressed that Mr. Oscar Wilde is still alive. It is even suggested that articles from his pen are still appearing over unfamiliar signatures. That these articles are not in all respects equal to the high level of sparkling epigram associated with the brilliancy of Mr. Wilde's genius is accounted for by the depressing experiences through which he passed.

Now, we have no hesitation in characterizing this story as baseless. We have perfect confidence in the genuineness of the narratives that *Reynolds's News* has published on the subject of Mr. Wilde's sad death. The event is vouched for by several reliable persons, one of whom, M. La Jeunesse, definitely asserts that he followed the remains to the grave.

It is only in America that our narrative would be doubted for a moment. In London and in Paris the death of the famous writer is recognised as a fact established upon irrefutable evidence.

BOYCOTTING A NAME.

Whilst we are referring to Mr. Wilde, it is just as well to enter a protest against a new method of treating his work. A play recently produced in London has been advertised upon the hoardings as "By the Author of 'Lady Windermere's Fan.'" To us this seems an insinuation that the dramatist's name must not be mentioned in polite circles. Here and there, indeed, we are in the habit of referring to a writer by the title of the work by which he or she achieved fame. Thus we correctly speak of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman." This custom does not apply to Mr. Wilde. His name was always much more widely known than that of anything he wrote.

In this connection, we are able to quote from an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The great German daily paper writes as follows:—

"The only paper that all the time had the honesty to print in black and white the hated name was *Reynolds's Newspaper*. It has a right now to scoff at its opponents. Other journals were too Christian to imitate Christ. They gratified themselves, and it seems that they gratified their readers with ridiculous periphrases and beatings about the bush, using such terms as 'the poet of Salome' for the intellectually-gifted author who came to grief so pitifully."

We are glad to find that one journal of high standing appreciates our desire to show fair treatment to a fallen man's reputation.

Daily Express 30 June 1905

### SAVOY LOSSES.

#### MRS. BROWN POTTER'S HOME UNDER THE HAMMER.

Many expressions of regret were heard yesterday at the private view of the costly and artistic household effects of Mrs. Brown Potter, at Bray Lodge, Maidenhead, which are to be sold by auction to-day, mainly because of losses incurred at the Savoy Theatre.

The catalogue makes quite a volume, there being 694 lots, starting with a deal kitchen table and ending with a magnificent 7-h.p. Panhard motor-car, purchased this year.

Among the lots to be sold to-day is included a fine Chinese four-leaf screen, with boldly designed panels of landscape and river scenery, presented to the famous actress by Li Hung Chang.

The 340 volumes of books include the "Anglo-Saxon Review," with a presentation inscription to Mrs. Brown Potter from Queenie Randolph Churchill, and Oscar Wilde's "Happy Prince," a presentation from the author.

Among the oil paintings in the Dutch hall is a splendid full-length portrait of Mrs. Brown Potter as "Midi" in "The Three Musketeers," by the Hon. John Collier, which was exhibited at the Grafton Gallery in 1900.

An effort is to be made to buy in for Mrs. Brown Potter a number of presentation and personal souvenirs.

rusait Wilde de « chiper » les bons mots. Un jour Whistler ayant dit une jolie chose. Wilde se récriait: « Quel mot adorable! Que je voudrais l'avoir dit! — Vous le direz, riposta le sarcastique coloriste. Et il est vrai que Wilde, comme d'Annunzio, prenait partout, et forçait à « ser-rer l'argenterie ».

Mallarmé avait trop d'indulgence ex-

### STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

#### FIRST PERFORMANCE AT DRESDEN

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

BERLIN, Sunday Night.

As anticipated the first performance at the Dresden Opera House of Richard Strauss's "Salome" has met with most divergent criticisms. One is simply enthusiastic in its praise; others are full of blame. All agree, however, that Oscar Wilde's text in no wise harmonises with Strauss's music, that the instrumentation is wonderful, whilst the singers have very ungrateful tasks to solve, their parts being very poor from the musical point of view.

Summarising the various reports the impression is gained that Strauss would have enriched the musical world by a valuable composition had he set Wilde's piece to music as a symphony, instead of an opera, however great in his case its numerous musical beauties may be. Besides, the performance requires such a enormously augmented orchestra that only few stages will be able to enjoy the privilege of giving it. As regards the Berlin Opera-house, it is more than doubtful whether the performance, considering the nature of Wilde's text "Salome," will be permitted.

### THE NEW MUSIC.

#### TRE ENDOUS SUCCESS OF STRAUSS'S "SALOME"

#### TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Berlin, Sunday.

Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera "Salomé" was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the élite of the artistic society not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

#### Difficulties.

For over six months the preparations for "Salomé" have occupied the authorities at the Dresden Opera House. Unable to find sufficient technical skill in their own city to mount and stage the forthcoming work, they sent to Munich and Berlin for assistance, and the result has been one of the most perfectly finished pieces of staging since the palmy days of Bayreuth.

The work at first met with serious difficulty, it is believed, in Court circles, where the sternly religiously Catholic element introduced by the present King's father and uncle have obtained considerable power. The Austrian Court had opposed the production of "Salomé" on religious rather than æsthetic grounds, and the Dresden Court, it was thought, followed suit. We shall probably never know why the embargo was removed. This is one reason, but probably the real reason of the delay in presenting Strauss's masterpiece consisted rather in the inherent difficulties of the opera itself.

These, as the leader of the orchestra has been heard to declare, are "colossal." Strauss has produced a work of rare complexity, both orchestra and singers being confronted with difficulties almost insurmountable. The leading prima donna, Frau Wittich, studied her part for nearly eight months, and the parts of the Baptist and Herod are no less formidable. Strauss insisted that he should have an orchestra of 120 musicians—nothing less would satisfy him—and to accommodate them the two front rows of the stalls have been removed, and the stage set back a distance of three feet.

The success of this performance was unqualified. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

cables pour en faire de Pérouse, devint un objet de pitié. Décidément c'était trop. On songea à une pétition pour obtenir que ce malheureux fût au moins dispensé du terrible hard-labour. Des écrivains, des poètes, se devaient de faire ce geste pour un homme qui, après tout, avait pensé et écrit avec talent.

Je me souviens que M. Stuart Merrill vint me parler de cela. J'acceptai bien volontiers de porter cette pétition chez

& JONES, 350, Fulham Road, London,

### UTOGRAPH LETTERS.

Following Autograph Letters of this distinguished writer were addressed to his publisher from various Continental Cities, and all in their ORIGINAL ENVELOPES, with the POSTAL and OFFICIAL STAMPS attached.

WILDE (Oscar) A.L., signed (no envelope), 2, 1 page, 4to, inviting his Publisher to visit to Paris at once, wishes to see him at the Play, very important 15s

WILDE (O.) A.L., signed (no envelope), 1 e, 4to, Havre, asks for the loan of a Tenner ch 10 — R — will repay, describes the ther, and requests the Money be sent at 15s

A.L., signed, undated, in which he forwarding MSS. for correction, considers editions worse than a New Play, is quite austed, mentions the St. James's Theatre, but appeals for Money, upon asking the ind he is staying with for Money, says he is yellow and takes to his bed, each day finds a new fault in him, he only gives Swiss wine to drink, and finishes this entertaining Letter with a final appeal Money, 3 pages, 8vo, *Gland*, 1899 21s  
1 page, A.L., dated Havre, July 1899, another urgent appeal to his Publisher for Money, if for 4 days only, he is in for Paris 15s

### Out-Wagnering Wagner.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration. Another critic exclaims—"Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unqualified success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted "second-rate librettists" to work for him as Gounod and Verdi did, nor has he written his own text like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows. Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marvelling at the wonderful orchestration and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached. Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera-houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced. For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful.

### Nothing to Carry Away.

There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only here and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "Tristan and Isolde." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "Salomé." Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salomé" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase, which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif; the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

### Morals.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, Is this culture sort of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "Dame Musica" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "Salomé"? Frau Wittich sang the title-role with marvellous power and certainty. Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod; Herr Perren, as the Baptist, was extremely effective; but all three artists gave the impression that they were performing a thoroughly thankless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.

CAMILLE MAUCLAIR.



le traducteur a chance de s'égarer s'il n'est lui-même homme d'une culture très sûre et très variée. Hugues Rebelle pouvait, sans danger de paraître ignorant ou ridicule, entreprendre de donner une version d'*Intentions*. Il n'avait certes pas fait de la littérature anglaise contemporaine, non plus que d'aucune époque, l'objet d'études spéciales. Mais il connaissait cette littérature dans son ensemble beaucoup mieux que certains qui s'autorisent de quelques excursions à Londres pour clamer à tout venant leur compétence douteuse. J'ai souvenir de maintes occasions où Rebelle, avec cet air mystérieux qu'il ne pouvait s'empêcher de prendre pour les choses les plus simples, m'attirait à l'écart de tel groupe d'amis, où la conversation était générale, pour me parler de tel jeune auteur sur qui l'une de mes chroniques avait attiré son attention. Et, chaque fois, il faisait preuve, en ces matières, d'un savoir très étendu.

Hugues Rebelle fit donc cette nécessaire traduction, et, dit l'éditeur dans une note préliminaire, « c'est le dernier travail auquel il put se livrer. Il nous en remit les derniers feuillets peu de jours avant sa mort ». Rebelle devait préfacer ce travail d'une étude sur la vie et les œuvres du poète anglais, étude qu'il ne put qu'ébaucher, malheureusement, car, avec Gide, — mais celui-ci d'un point de vue différent et peut-être opposé, — il était exclusivement qualifié pour saisir, décrire et interpréter l'étrange personnalité de Wilde. Quelques fragments de cette étude nous sont donnés, cependant, et ils nous font très vivement regretter que le vigoureux et paradoxal auteur de *l'Union des trois aristocraties* n'ait pu achever son travail.

Mais ce regret bien légitime se mitige grandement à mesure qu'on lit la belle préface de M. Charles Grolleau. Prenant pour épigraphe cette pensée de Pascal : « Je blâme également et ceux qui prennent parti de louer l'homme, et ceux qui le prennent de le blâmer, et ceux qui le prennent de se divertir ; et je ne puis approuver que ceux qui cherchent en gémissant », M. Grolleau s'efforce de comprendre et de résoudre ce « douloureux problème » que fut Wilde. Et il le fait avec cette réserve et ce parfait bon goût que doivent s'imposer les véritables amis et les sincères admirateurs d'Oscar Wilde. Il y a plus, dans ces cinquante pages : il y a l'une des meilleures études qui aient jamais été faites du brillant dramaturge. Bien qu'il s'en défende, M. Grolleau, dans cette langue élégante et harmonieuse que lui connaissent ceux qui ont lu ses beaux vers, réussit à discerner mieux et à mieux révéler que certaines diatribes « l'âme et la passion » de l'auteur de *De Profundis*.

Je me suis interdit d'écrire une biographie. Je ne connais que l'écrivain, et l'homme est trop vivant encore et si blessé ! J'ai la dévotion des plaies, et le plus beau rite de cette dévotion est le geste qui voile.

Toute « cette méditation sur une âme très belle » est écrite avec ce

novelistic drawing-room melodrama called "Mr. Smith." This is by Mr. Frank Reynolds, and was produced last night with some favour at the Camden Theatre.

The particular Mr. Smith celebrated in the title is, it may be explained, supposed to be a world-famous engineer of comparatively lowly origin. He is paying unsanctioned but honourable attentions to the daughter of a Duchess.

For the greater part of two acts, it must be confessed, his course of true love flows somewhat drearily. Suddenly, however, it and the play are both enlivened by quite a brilliant idea on the part of the duchess—not to say, of the author.

It is suggested that in spite of all lesser obstacles Mr. Smith might aspire reasonably to the hand of the duchess's daughter if only he would change his name. Thereupon Mr. Smith, who is played by a very personable and curiously grave actor (Mr. Hamilton Stewart) draws himself to his full height, and standing as one might say upon the dignity of the name of Smith, refuses to change a letter of it.

He will not even subscribe to the compromise of "Smythe." "Smith," said he, a name neither he nor his fathers had disgraced. Why should he change it? No, he would not, for all the daughters of all the duchesses in the world!

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Still, that "Smith" notion really deserves a bright treatment! After all, the importance of being serious might under some circumstances be rivalled by the unimportance of being Smith.

tact délicat et cette tendre sympathie. Ainsi, après avoir admiré ces émouvantes pages, le lecteur peut aborder dans un état d'esprit convenable les essais parfois déconcertants qui sont réunis sous le titre significatif d'*Intentions*. C'est dans cette belle édition qu'il faut les lire. On sait avec quel souci d'artiste M. Carrington établit ses volumes ; il n'y laisse pas de ces incroyables coquilles, de ces épais mastics qui ressemblent si fort à des contre-sens, et, sachant quel public intelligent et éclairé voudrait ce livre, il n'a pas eu l'idée saugrenue d'abîmer ses pages par d'inutiles notes assurant le lecteur par exemple que Dante a écrit la Divine Comédie, que Shelley fut un grand poète, que Keats mourut poitrinaire, que George Eliot était femme de lettres et Lancret peintre. Un portrait de l'auteur est reproduit en tête de cette excellente édition.

HENRY-D. DAVRAY.

from the *Museum of Fine Arts*  
Dated November 1905.

— Oscar Wilde : *Le Crime de Lord Arthur Savile*, 3, 50 ;

Plusieurs lecteurs m'ont fait, ces derniers temps, l'honneur de m'écrire pour me demander la liste complète des traductions en français des œuvres d'Oscar Wilde. J'ai déjà indiqué la très belle traduction des *Intentions*, qu'Hugues Rebelle acheva avant de mourir et qu'a publiée en une superbe édition l'éditeur Carrington, avec une préface émue et noble de M. Charles Grolleau. Voici maintenant l'éditeur Stock, qui réimprime la version parue jadis du *Portrait de Dorian Gray*, et nous donne *Le Crime de Lord Arthur Savile*, et autres nouvelles. C'est M. Albert Savine qui, avec sa netteté et son exactitude coutumières, a établi le texte français de ces nouvelles, d'après la bonne édition anglaise, celle avec laquelle on n'est pas exposé à faire de contresens : une courte et sage préface commente l'œuvre, mais le consciencieux traducteur a eu le bon goût de s'abstenir de ces notes imaginatives dont certains amateurs complètent copieusement leurs fantaisistes traductions. Quelques-

unes de ces nouvelles avaient paru déjà dans un recueil que traduisit Georges Knopff et qui fut publié jadis aux éditions de *La Plume*.

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### MRS. BROWN-POTTER'S HOME UNDER THE HAMMER.

Many expressions of regret were heard yesterday at the private view of the costly and artistic household effects of Mrs. Brown Potter, at Bray Lodge, Maidenhead, which are to be sold by auction to-day, mainly because of losses incurred at the Savoy Theatre.

The catalogue makes quite a volume, there being 694 lots, starting with a deal kitchen table and ending with a magnificent 7-h.p. Panhard motor-car, purchased this year.

Among the lots to be sold to-day is included a fine Chinese four-leaf screen, with boldly designed panels of landscape and river scenery, presented to the famous actress by Li Hung Chang.

The 340 volumes of books include the "Anglo-Saxon Review," with a presentation inscription to Mrs. Brown Potter from "Three Musketeers," by the Hon. John Collier, which was exhibited at the Grafton Gallery in 1900.

An effort is to be made to buy in for Mrs. Brown Potter a number of presentation and personal souvenirs.

rusait Wilde de « chiper » les bons mots. Un jour Whistler ayant dit une jolie chose. Wilde se récriait : « Quel mot adorable ! Que je voudrais l'avoir dit ! — Vous le direz, riposta le sarcastique coloriste. Et il est vrai que Wilde, comme d'Annunzio, prenait partout, et forçait à « servir l'argenterie ».

Mallarmé avait trop d'indulgence ex-

## STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

### FIRST PERFORMANCE AT DRESDEN

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

BERLIN, Sunday Night.

As anticipated the first performance at the Dresden Opera House of Richard Strauss's "Salome" has met with most divergent criticisms. One is simply enthusiastic in its praise; others are full of blame. All agree, however, that Oscar Wilde's text in no wise harmonises with Strauss's music, that the instrumentation is wonderful, whilst the singers have very ungrateful tasks to solve, their parts being very poor from the musical point of view.

Summarising the various reports the impression is gained that Strauss would have enriched the musical world by a valuable composition had he set Wilde's piece to music as a symphony, instead of an opera, however great in his case its numerous musical beauties may be. Besides, the performance requires such an enormously augmented orchestra that only few stages will be able to enjoy the privilege of giving it. As regards the Berlin Opera House, it is more than doubtful whether the performance, considering the nature of Wilde's drama "Salome," will be permitted.

## THE NEW MUSIC.

### TRE ENDOUS SUCCESS OF STRAUSS'S "SALOME"

#### TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Berlin, Sunday.

Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera "Salome" was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the élite of the artistic society not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

Difficulties.

For over six months the preparations for "Salome" have occupied the authorities at the Dresden Opera House. Unable to find sufficient technical skill in their own city to mount and stage the forthcoming work, they sent to Munich and Berlin for assistance, and the result has been one of the most perfectly finished pieces of staging since the palmy days of Bayreuth.

The work at first met with serious difficulty, it is believed, in Court circles, where the sternly religiously Catholic element introduced by the present King's father and uncle have obtained considerable power. The Austrian Court had opposed the production of "Salome" on religious, rather than aesthetic grounds, and the Dresden Court, it was thought, followed suit. We shall probably never know why the embargo was removed. This is one reason, but probably the real reason of the delay in presenting Strauss's masterpiece consisted rather in the inherent difficulties of the opera itself.

These, as the leader of the orchestra, has been heard to declare, are "colossal." Strauss has produced a work of rare complexity, both orchestra and singers being confronted with difficulties almost insurmountable. The leading prima donna, Frau Wittich, studied her part for nearly eight months, and the parts of the Baptist and Herod are no less formidable. Strauss insisted that he should have an orchestra of 120 musicians—nothing less would satisfy him—and to accommodate them the two front rows of the stalls have been removed, and the stage set back a distance of three feet. The success of this performance was unequalled. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

cables pour en faire de l'écloupe, devint un objet de pitié. Décidément c'était trop. On songea à une pétition pour obtenir que ce malheureux fût au moins dispensé du terrible hard-labour. Des écrivains, des poètes, se devaient de faire ce geste pour un homme qui, après tout, avait pensé et écrit avec talent.

Je me souviens que M. Stuart Merrill vint me parler de cela. J'acceptai bien volontiers de porter cette pétition chez

& JONES, 350, Fulham Road, London,

## UTOGRAPH LETTERS.

Following Autograph Letters of this distinguished writer were addressed to his Publisher from various Continental Cities, are ALL in their ORIGINAL ENVELOPES, with the POSTAL and OFFICIAL STAMPS attached.

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## Out-Wagnering Wagner.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its volume." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims— "Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unequalled success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted "second-rate librettists" to work for him as Gounod and Verdi did, nor has he written his own text like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows. Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marveling at the wonderful orchestration and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached. Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera-houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced. For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful.

## Nothing to Carry Away.

There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only here and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "Tristan and Isolde." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "Salome." Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salome" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase, which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif; the result is an aspersing tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

## Morals.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, is this entire sort of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "Dame Music" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "Salome"? Frau Wittich sang the title-role with marvellous power and certainty. Herr Barrian was a magnificent Herod; Herr Perren, as the Baptist, was extremely effective; but all three artists gave the impression that they were performing a thoroughly thankless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.

CAMILLE MAUCLAIR.



**ST. JAMES'S.** Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER, Sole Lessee and Manager. TO-DAY, at 2.30, and EVERY EVENING, at 8 sharp, **LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN.** By Oscar Wilde. Mr. C. Aubrey Smith, Mr. Ben Webster, Mr. Eric Lewis, Mr. Leslie Fawcett, Miss Lillian Braithwaite, Miss Fanny Coleman. 2.15 and 8.30, a new play in one act, by Alfred Sutro, entitled **A MARKER OF MEN.** MATINEE (both plays), WEDNESDAYS, at 2.15.

## ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

There are a couple of changes in the cast of "Lady Windermere's Fan." Mr. Robert Horton has contented himself with an imitation of Mr. Vano Tempest's Charles Danby, and the imitation strikes one as a caricature. Mr. Eric Lewis, however, is a delightful Lord Augustus. By many subtle touches he makes a real character of the part which Mr. Sydney Brough was inclined to burlesque. Once again Miss Marion Terry showed the younger generation of actors the distinction of bearing and gesture and the command of voice which have almost disappeared from the English stage.

E. A. E.

Morning Leader. 11 Dec. 1905

STRAUSS'S "SALOME."  
BRILLIANT PRODUCTION OF THE  
OPERA AT DRESDEN.

From Our Own Correspondent.

DRESDEN, Sunday. The production of Strauss's new opera, "Salome," leaves a mixed impression on the mind.

The music is exceedingly complex, and the composer's conception of the subject is startlingly original, but is objected to by admirers of Oscar Wilde's play because the atmosphere is too realistic and the passion too strenuous.

The orchestral effects are the most daring in the history of opera, the difficulty of the whole being almost superhuman. The work lasts an hour and a half.

Very striking is the duet between Salome and Jochanaan, and the elaborate orchestral interludes in Salome's dance.

The audience included many musical celebrities from all parts of Europe. The applause lasted nearly 20 minutes.

The performance was most brilliant, especially that of the orchestra, under Herr Schuch, which was beyond praise. Frau Wittich, Herr Burrian, and Herr Perron were very fine in the chief parts.

## OPINION OF BERLIN CRITICS.

From Our Own Correspondent.

BERLIN, Sunday. The production of "Salome" is described by the musical critics in the Berlin newspapers as a brilliant achievement.

The success of the work is undoubted, and the effect on the audience was such that, when the curtain fell at the close of the last scene, everybody sat perfectly still, as if entranced. When the applause did break out, it was tumultuous, and Herr Strauss and the conductor, Herr Schuch, were compelled to appear before the curtain upwards of 40 times.

The critics vie with each other in finding words descriptive of the beauty, the force, of the originality of the revolutionary character of the music, and the only fault they find is that the "master of orchestration" makes such enormous demands on the orchestra and the singers.

It is believed "Salome" will not soon become popular, as such an immense orchestra and such unusually fine voices are required for its proper production.

After all, the importance of the work might under some circumstances be rivalled by the unimportance of being Smith.

## THE NEW MUSIC.

## Tremendous Success of Herr Strauss's Salome.

## TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

[From Our Correspondent.]

BERLIN, Sunday. Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera, "Salome" was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the élite of the artistic society, not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

The success of the performance was unqualified. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims: "Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unqualified success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages, Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted a second rate librettist to work for him as Gounod or Verdi did, nor has he written his own text, like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

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Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salome" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs.

Every person has his or her motif; every passage has its motif; the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, Is this sultry story of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "Dame Musica" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "Salome"? Frau Wittich sang the title-role with marvellous power and certainty, Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod, Herr Perron as the Baptist was extremely effective, but all three artists gave the impression they were performing a thoroughly thankless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.

JAMES DOUGLAS

## DAILY NEWS, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1904.

## THE DRAMA.

## "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN."

(By E. A. Baughan.)

Mr. George Alexander is to be thanked for having revived Oscar Wilde's play. It is always interesting to check impressions of the past. Twelve years make a great difference in the outlook of the whole community, as well as of the individual. Even ten years has given a passé complexion to such a play as "The Second Mrs. Tangueray." How brilliant "Lady Windermere's Fan" seemed to us in the days when the author was at the height of his fame! How we laughed at his wit, laughed at it as well as laughed with it! The wit of the piece has worn well, and one can imagine that "The Importance of Being Ernest" would meet with success once again. On Saturday night the epigrams of the first act of "Lady Windermere's Fan" aroused deep-toned laughter—that slow and growing laughter which tells that the audience has gradually seen the point. "I can resist anything but temptation," "To be intelligible is to be found out," the lady who is always making ugly things for the poor, the well-brought-up Lady Agatha, who can only say "Yes, mamma" and "No, mamma," and the Duchess herself, with her fussy, ill-natured chatter, were as exhilarating as ever; but the sentiment of the piece and its workmanship seemed strangely old-fashioned.

## Theatre-made Situations.

The motive of the play seems more preposterous than ever. Can we believe that Lord Windermere would endanger his domestic happiness in order to keep his wife ignorant of her mother's story? Which is worse, that a wife should be brought face to face with the knowledge that the mother whose memory is one of the sweet things in her life is a woman of an undoubted past, or that she should believe that her young husband is carrying on an infamous intrigue? As a man of the world Lord Windermere knows that his relations with Mrs. Erynn must come to the ears of his wife; he must also know that in insisting on his wife receiving Mrs. Erynn he was guilty of an insult which the law holds to be tantamount to cruelty. In the original version of the play the fact that Mrs. Erynn is not Lord Windermere's mistress but his wife's mother was kept secret to the last. But the author afterwards cleared the matter up by making Lord Windermere exclaim at the end of the first act, "I can't tell the woman is her own mother; the shame would break her heart." That lets the audience into the secret, but one longs to shake the husband into grasping the idea that what he proposes to do is even more likely to break Lady Windermere's heart. Then, apart from this serious dramatic blemish, the play is carried on with too patent an ingenuity. The fan itself brings about the situations. What would have happened if Lady Windermere had not taken it with her to Lord Darlington's rooms? Or if, having taken it with her, she had not left it conveniently on the sofa? One almost forgives this piece of Scribe-Sardou ingenuity for the brilliant use the author makes of it. That Mrs. Erynn should vow that she had taken it by mistake, and thus in saving her daughter from scandal sacrificed her own name is an inspiration from a theatrical point of view.

## A Good Acting Play.

The mixture of originality and conventionality in this play is extraordinary. Oscar Wilde naively makes use of the soliloquy in order to carry on his drama; his scenes are contrived for theatrical effect, and yet in the comedy he has written much that is worthy of a Congreve. I must say that the wit and the epigrams and the characters of the Duchess of Berwick, Mr. Charles Dumby, and Mr. Cecil Graham appeal to me more than the theatrically-conceived Mrs. Erynn. Lady Windermere, her husband, and Darlington are creatures of straw. All the serious scenes have the air of insincerity. But the Duchess's talk in the first act and the conversation of the five men in Lord Darlington's rooms in the third act reach a high level of comedy.

## A Triumph for Miss Marion Terry.

Mr. Alexander was fortunate in being able to engage this clever actress for her old part. Her conception seems to have broadened with the years. What a lesson it was to the many young actresses of the modern stage in emotional restraint and grasp! How easily the beautiful Terry voice conveys shades of meaning! How surely she holds the stage! This is acting, and not self-conscious posing. Miss Marion Terry's Mrs. Erynn has a real life of her own. One believes in her past, and that she has an existence outside the theatre. We hear a good deal about the technique of acting, but I dare say that Miss Marion Terry could not tell you how she makes her effects; the secret is, probably, that she feels the part at first hand, and that her imagination and the intensity of her emotion make artificiality impossible. By her side, the Lady Windermere of Miss Lillian Braithwaite was conventional and stiff, although the sincerity and art of the older actress more than once inspired her, notably in the scene in which Lady Windermere speaks to Mrs. Erynn of her mother. Miss Braithwaite's impersonation, however, had a certain charm. If only she could control her voice so that she did not appear to be listening to it her acting would have the naturalness it now lacks. Miss Fanny Coleman as the Duchess and Mr. Ben Webster as Charles Dumby took their old parts, and fine comedy sketches they are. Mr. Ben Webster was rather nervous as Lord Windermere, but he did well in the colourless character. Mr. C. Aubrey Smith might have been a trifle less sombre. He should remember that Darlington has to speak several of Oscar Wilde's epigrams. But as a foil to the frivolity of Dumby and Graham his impersonation was effective. Mr. Sydney Brough was inclined to be too farcical as Lord Augustus. Of the minor characters, Miss Corisande Hamilton's denunciations of Lady Agatha was interesting. "Lady Windermere's Fan" should attract the town until the new play is ready for production. In the meantime, the matinees to be given by Mr. George Alexander are being anticipated with interest.

## NOVEMBER 22, 1904.

The libretto of Richard Strauss's new opera has been founded by Herr Ernest von Wolzogen on Oscar Wilde's play, "Salome." The work will be produced either at Berlin (if Imperial objection be not made) or at Dresden.

## DECEMBER 7, 1904.

What is described as the "last will and testament" of the late Oscar Wilde is at length to appear in a volume from Messrs. Methuen. It is a little book written during his imprisonment in Reading Gaol, and entrusted to the care of his literary executor, containing, as we are told, the philosophy of his art as well as the cry of his solitude. The title is "De Profundis." It will be issued early next year.

privés d'ongles à force de déchiqueter les câbles pour en faire de l'étaupe, devint un objet de pitié. Décidément c'était trop. On songea à une pétition pour obtenir que ce malheureux fût au moins dispensé du terrible labeur. Des écrivains, des poètes, se devaient de faire ce geste pour un homme qui, après tout, avait pensé et écrit avec talent.

mais accordons à son œuvre innocente une justice élémentaire, digne d'honnêtes gens : lisons-la, aimons-y ce qui prouve le talent, sans l'auréole du malheur de l'homme, mais sans y poursuivre lâchement, avec étroitesse et sottise, le souvenir d'une tare que déroba à jamais le silence du cercueil.

CAMILLE MAUCLAIR.

Je me souviens que M. Stuart Merrill vint me parler de cela. J'acceptai bien volontiers de me faire cette édition avec

WRIGHT & JONES, 350, Fulham Road, London,

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624 — 1 page, A.L., dated Havre, July 27th, 1899, another urgent appeal to his publisher for Money, if for 4 days only, he is leaving for Paris 15s

625 — 2 pages, A.L., Oct. 19th, 1898, dated Paris, still harping on the same string, namely, making incessant appeals for Money, has been ill in bed, asking for proofs of his Play ("An Ideal Husband"), &c. 17s 6d

626 — A.L., signed, Paris, Aug. 8, 1898, has reference to a MS., forwarded of which he had received no acknowledgment, fears he will be turned out from his hotel, indeed the whole Letter is a chronicle of misery and despair, and nearly hopeless 21s

627 — A.L., signed and dated, Paris, March 1st, 1898, writes in respect to the Ballad of Reading Gaol as to the dedication inserted, it will give an interest to the edition, &c., refers to a list of persons to whom presentation copies should be sent, a reference to America, and its possibilities, expresses anxiety as to the Reviewers, &c. 25s

628 — A.L., signed, 4 pages, 8vo, Napoli, Nov. 20, 1897, paying a compliment to the good nature of his Publisher, annoyance at going to Cook's twice a day and no Money arrived, refers to his Two Plays, "The Importance of Being Ernest," "An Ideal Husband," makes witty remarks at the expense of his Publisher's habit of paying his debts, as to the shape of his book, and the importance of copyright in America, and closes with an amusing reference to Carlyle's oft-quoted saying in reference to the number of people and their capacities, &c. 25s

629 — A.L., signed, Paris, April 25th, 1898, 1 page, 8vo, returns thanks for a Cheque and anticipates a visit 15s

630 — A.L., 1 page, has gone to breakfast and fears there is but little chance of meeting him at the Grand Cafe, &c. 15s

631 — A.L., signed, May 11th, 1898, Paris, more weariness and fruitless journeys to Cook's, so acute are his financial affairs he has not dined, 1 page, 8vo 15s

632 — 4 pages, 8vo, A.L., signed, Chalet Bourlat, Bernval, Sunday, August 22, 1897, returns thanks for kind letters in his own choice language, refers to the Stannards and Pall's Stanley Weyman, &c., suggests an edition of Beckford, suggests that to be an editor of a paying magazine is a degrading position for any man, &c. 17s 6d

633 EARLY ITALIAN DRAWING. 1899 of Babington, size 12 by 14 1/2 in. 2s 6d

634 DEONSHIRE. Water-Colour Drawing. 1899 of Babington, size 12 by 14 1/2 in. 2s 6d

635 O'NEILL'S. (G.) 4 Engravings of Temperance. 1899 of Babington, size 12 by 14 1/2 in. 2s 6d

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ACCUSED R.A.

MR. A. GILBERT ON HIS GOLDEN IDEALS.

A CURIOUS REPLY.

PLEA OF "ECCENTRICITIES OF GENIUS."

Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A., against whom Mrs. Frankau, an authoress, who writes as Frank Danby, has brought a charge of grave breach of contract, originally in the columns of "Truth," has spoken in his own defence.

The Brussels Correspondent of "The Daily Chronicle" had an interview with Mr. Gilbert at his house in Bruges yesterday. Mr. Gilbert spoke freely on the matter, but declared himself perfectly ignorant of what had occurred except through what he described as threatening letters which he had received in connection with it.

He did not deny the accuracy of Mrs. Frankau's account of the agreement that was made between them. Mr. Gilbert explained, however, in showing our correspondent the model of the monument which was in his studio, that it was representative of many phases and alterations which his first essay had undergone.

He added that he had had many difficulties to contend with during its execution—how he was obliged to modify this or suppress and replace that portion of his model—and how ultimately, after having worked for months, he was dissatisfied with the result and demolished the whole in order to begin anew.

Mr. Gilbert pointed out that owing to an action at law he had been debarred of his studio, and that it was while he was thus handicapped by the want of an atelier that Mr. Withers (the solicitor) came to see him and found him working in the garden.

Mr. Gilbert declared that he will face any difficulty rather than degrade his art or his ideals. He explained that since October he has been forfeiting a pound daily, so that to finish his work as he would have it finished, the balance accruing to him will be nothing, for he must pay for the execution and erection of the monument out of the sum agreed upon.

Money, said Mr. Gilbert, was as brassy but his ideals were golden. Had Lucie entered more into his consideration, he would have had a thousand pounds for the monument, for that was the sum originally offered by Mrs. Frankau. He considered the figure, however, unnecessarily high.

"TRIUMPH OF HIS ART."

"In the course of our conversation," says our correspondent, "Mr. Gilbert intimated to me that he has already had difficulties of a somewhat similar kind with other clients, but that on each occasion he has succeeded ultimately in convincing them, by the triumph of his art, that nothing was lost by waiting. Troubles of this kind, however, occasioned him much worry and imposed him for work, but even in the face of such difficulties, never, out of courtesy, has he delivered up his work until he himself was satisfied with it."

In the face of this explanation, it is useful to recall that on May 3, 1905, an agreement was signed by which 150 guineas were paid to Mr. Gilbert on his undertaking that the monument should be erected by the end of October following; that four subsequent payments of fifty guineas each were made on his written guarantee that the work was proceeding satisfactorily; and that he has never given his client, Mrs. Frankau, any opportunity of judging whether the monument has yet any material existence.

It is quite true that Mrs. Frankau offered the sculptor £1,000 for the work he undertook. As the monument was to be twelve feet in height, and was to be carried in marble, bronze and granite, that was, perhaps, not an extravagant sum. Mr. Gilbert, as he says, thought it was too much. (Mrs. Frankau has a patent for a method of sculpture, which is distinguished as Mr. Gilbert's design as he conceived it in his original sketch could scarcely have been realised, for the cost of material alone, the figure of which Mr. Gilbert accepted the commission.)

Mrs. Frankau, therefore, concludes that Mr. Gilbert never had any intention of carrying out the work.

We print below a further selection of the letters we have received. It may be noted that Mr. Gilbert's defenders make their appeal on his behalf of misfortune. The only comment that need be made is that if art and commerce are to be divorced, at least it should be known that the decree has been made absolute, so that people who, like Mrs. Frankau, wish to engage the services of great artists should know how they stand.

"QUESTION OF TEMPERAMENT."

"I am extremely sorry," writes F. W. Sullivan, from 19, Teyford-mansions, Weymouth-street, W., "to read in your columns 'Truth's' attack on Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A. While sympathising with Mrs. Frankau in her pecuniary and sentimental loss, I should like to suggest that Mr. Gilbert is to be classed as one of those eccentric misuses to whom the world owes more than it has paid. I know neither Mrs. Frankau nor Mr. Gilbert personally—have never seen either of them, though I know something of the work and worth of both—and so I have no interest in pleading the cause of either."

But I would remind you that there was once a Francois Villon, and, more recently, an Oscar Wilde. Both aimed against Society more than Gilbert. But to-day they are forgotten, and their names will live. Can we not take a charitable view, club together to recoup Mrs. Frankau her loss, and forget this eccentricity of genius? We cannot apply to art the canons of commerce. That fickle abomination the "divine afflatus" will not always rest on the artist, and meanwhile the artist must live.

"It is largely a question of temperament. Mr. Gilbert has transcending artistic qualities, but they are not always at his beck and call. Perhaps his will is weak—well, I shall be slow to throw a stone. But let us be careful how in this period of our nascent artistic inspiration we pilory one of its foremost pioneers."

"H. E. A. E." suggests that Mrs. Frankau had been wiser to have employed an average monumental mason is scarcely in good taste, but it is wise; for at least Mrs. Frankau would have been able to place a memorial on her husband's grave. But Mrs. Frankau wanted to honour her dear one's memory with the best work obtainable, which proves to be unobtainable. She was willing to pay for the best, she did pay, some hundreds of pounds, and a clay sketch in Mr. Gilbert's studio is the result."

SOUL OF HONOUR.

"That Mr. Alfred Gilbert is the soul of honour, none who know him will deny, but that his methods are erratic all will agree," declares Mr. Thomas A. Polo, of 10, Gray's-in-square.

"Knowing him personally for many years, as I have done, and also his methods of work, it is incoercible to me that in the matter of the commission referred to this morning, he had any other intention but that of producing a work that would satisfy his own high ideals."

"I can recall many instances of commission and work set aside, until he felt himself fitted to his ideals, but I think the instances of anyone suffering from his 'artistic conscience' are very few. Genius is rare, and its ways are not as those of common things; punctuality, convention, and the every-day observances of every-day individuals, are as foreign customs to it."

"This lady appears to think a great genius can produce works of art to order, as one would order a suit of clothes. It is well known that the late Queen was content to give Mr. Gilbert his own time, and the Clarence Memorial at Windsor is an evidence of a happy result. Alfred Gilbert's inability to produce works of art in any but his own way and his own time is well known, as is known of every great genius that ever lived."

"That a lady who accounts herself an authoress should be ignorant of this is small tribute to her knowledge; that she should be guilty of wounding genius to the extent she has done betrays a callousness and state of mind it is difficult to fathom. Mr. Gilbert's friends who read this brutal attack on a man weighed down by other misfortunes cannot let it pass unnoticed."

THE NEW MUSIC.

Tremendous Success of Herr Strauss's Salome.

TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

[From Our Correspondent.]

BERLIN, Sunday. Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera, "Salome," was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the elite of the artistic society, not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

The success of the performance was unequalled. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims: "Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unequalled success be repeated or be maintained? I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages, Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted a second rate librettist to work for him as Gounod or Verdi did, nor has he written his own text, like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed."

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows, Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marvelling at the wonderful orchestration, and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached. Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced.

For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful. There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only once and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "Tristan and Isolde." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "Salome."

Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salome" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif; the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, "Is this sultry story of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is 'Dame Salome' not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to 'Salome'?" Frau Wittich sang the title role with marvellous power and certainty, Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod, Herr Peron as the Baptist was extremely effective, but all three artists gave the impression they were performing a thoroughly thankless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.

DAILY NEWS, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1904.

THE DRAMA.

"LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN."

(By E. A. Baughan.)

Mr. George Alexander is to be thanked for having revived Oscar Wilde's play. It is always interesting to check impressions of the past. Twelve years make a great difference in the outlook of the whole community, as well as of the individual. Even ten years has made a great difference to such a play as "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." How brilliant "Lady Windermere's Fan" seemed to us in the days when the author was at the height of his fame! How we laughed at his wit, laughed at it as well as laughed with it! The wit of the piece has worn well, and one can imagine that "The Importance of Being Earnest" would meet with success once again. On Saturday night the epigrams of the first act of "Lady Windermere's Fan" aroused deep-toned laughter—that slow and growing laughter which tells that the audience has gradually seen the point. "To be intelligible is to be found out," the lady who is always making ugly things for the poor, the well-brought-up Lady Agatha, who can only say "Yes, mamma" and "No, mamma," and the Duchess herself, with her fussy, ill-natured chatter, were as exhilarating as ever; but the sentiment of the piece and its workmanship seemed strangely old-fashioned.

Theatre-made Situations.

The motive of the play seems more preposterous than ever. Can we believe that Lord Windermere would endanger his domestic happiness in order to keep his wife ignorant of her mother's story? Which is worse, that a wife should be brought face to face with the knowledge that the mother whose memory is one of the sweet things in her life is a woman of an undoubted past, or that she should believe that her young husband is carrying on an infamously untrue life? As a man of the world Lord Windermere knows that his relations with Mrs. Elynne must come to the ears of his wife; he must also know that in insisting on his wife receiving Mrs. Elynne he was guilty of an insult which the law holds to be tantamount to cruelty. In the original version of the play the fact that Mrs. Elynne is not Lord Windermere's mistress but his wife's mother was kept secret to the last. But the author afterwards cleared the matter up by making Lord Windermere exclaim at the end of the first act, "I can't tell her the woman is her own mother; the shame would break her heart." That lets the audience into the secret, but one longs to shake the husband into grasping the idea that what he proposes to do is even more likely to break Lady Windermere's heart. Then, apart from this serious dramatic blemish, the play is carried on with too patent an ingenuity. The fan itself brings about the situations. What would have happened if Lady Windermere had not taken it with her to Lord Darlington's rooms? Or if, having taken it with her, she had not left it conveniently on the sofa? One almost forgives this piece of Scribe-Sardou ingenuity for the brilliant use the author makes of it. That Mrs. Elynne should vow that she had taken it by mistake, and thus in saving her daughter from scandal sacrificed her own name is an inspiration from a theatrical point of view.

A Good Acting Play.

The mixture of originality and conventionality in this play is extraordinary. Oscar Wilde naively makes use of the soliloquy in order to carry on his drama; his scenes are contrived for theatrical effect, but yet in the comedy he has written much that is worthy of a Congreve. I must say that the wit and the epigrams and the characters of the Duchess of Berwick, Mr. Charles Dunby, and Mr. Cecil Graham appeal to me more than the theatrically-conceived Mrs. Elynne. Lady Windermere, her husband, and Darlington are creatures of straw. All the serious scenes have the air of insincerity. But the Duchess's talk in the first act and the conversation of the five men in Lord Darlington's rooms in the third act reach a high level of comedy.

A Triumph for Miss Marion Terry.

Mr. Alexander was fortunate in being able to engage this clever actress for her old part. Her conception seems to have broadened with the years. What a lesson it was to the many young actresses of the modern stage in emotional restraint, and grasp! How easily the beautiful Terry voice conveyed shades of meaning! How surely she holds the stage! This is acting, and not self-conscious posing. Miss Marion Terry's Mrs. Elynne has a real life of her own. One believes in her past, and that she has an existence outside the theatre. We hear a good deal about the technique of acting, but I dare say that Miss Marion Terry could not tell you how she makes her effects; the secret is, probably, that she feels the part at first hand, and that she adheres to the intensity of her emotion make artificiality impossible. By her side, the Lady Windermere of Miss Lillian Braithwaite was conventional and stiff, although the sincerity and art of the actress more than once inspired her, notably in the scene in which Lady Windermere speaks to Mrs. Elynne of her mother. Miss Braithwaite's impersonation, however, had a certain charm. If only she could control her voice so that she did not appear to be listening to it her acting would have the naturalness of a wife should be brought face to face with the knowledge that the mother whose memory is one of the sweet things in her life is a woman of an undoubted past, or that she should believe that her young husband is carrying on an infamously untrue life? As a man of the world Lord Windermere knows that his relations with Mrs. Elynne must come to the ears of his wife; he must also know that in insisting on his wife receiving Mrs. Elynne he was guilty of an insult which the law holds to be tantamount to cruelty. In the original version of the play the fact that Mrs. Elynne is not Lord Windermere's mistress but his wife's mother was kept secret to the last. But the author afterwards cleared the matter up by making Lord Windermere exclaim at the end of the first act, "I can't tell her the woman is her own mother; the shame would break her heart." That lets the audience into the secret, but one longs to shake the husband into grasping the idea that what he proposes to do is even more likely to break Lady Windermere's heart. Then, apart from this serious dramatic blemish, the play is carried on with too patent an ingenuity. The fan itself brings about the situations. What would have happened if Lady Windermere had not taken it with her to Lord Darlington's rooms? Or if, having taken it with her, she had not left it conveniently on the sofa? One almost forgives this piece of Scribe-Sardou ingenuity for the brilliant use the author makes of it. That Mrs. Elynne should vow that she had taken it by mistake, and thus in saving her daughter from scandal sacrificed her own name is an inspiration from a theatrical point of view.

NOVEMBER 22, 1904.

The libretto of Richard Strauss's new opera has been founded by Herr Ernest von Wolzogen on Oscar Wilde's play, "Salome." The work will be produced either at Berlin (if Imperial objection be not made) or at Dresden.

DECEMBER 7, 1904.

What is described as the "last will and testament" of the late Oscar Wilde is at length to appear in a volume from Messrs. Methuen. It is a little book written during his imprisonment in Reading Gaol, and entrusted to the care of his literary executor, containing, as we are told, "the philosophy of his art as well as the cry of his solitude." The title is "De Profundis." It will be issued early next year.

Une violente du poseur esthète, et il accusait Wilde de « chipper » les bons mots. Un jour Whistler ayant dit une jolie chose, Wilde se recroûtait : « Quel mot adorable ! Que je voudrais l'avoir dit ! — Vous le direz, riposta le sarcasme coloriste. Il est vrai que Wilde, comme d'habitude, n'avait pas partout, et forçait à « serrer l'argenterie ».

privés d'ongles à force de décoller des lettres pour en faire de petits objets de pitié. Décidément c'est un songe à une pétition pour que ce malheureux fût au moins séduite terrible hard-labour. Des des poètes, se devait de faire pour un homme qui, après tout, pensait et écrivait avec talent.

WRIGHT & JONES, 350, Fulham Road, London,

AUTOGRAPH LETTERS.

The following Autograph Letters of this distinguished writer have been addressed to his Publisher from various Continental Cities, are ALL in their ORIGINAL ENVELOPES, with the POSTAL AND OFFICIAL STAMPS attached.

621 WILDE (Oscar) A.L., signed (no envelope), Paris, 1 page, 4to, inviting his Publisher to go over to Paris at once, wishes to see him about the Play. very important 15s

622 WILDE (O.) A.L., signed (no envelope), page, 4to, Havre, asks for the loan of a Tennyson which R. R. will repay, describes the weather, and requests the Money be sent at once 15s

623 — A.L., signed, undated, in which he is forwarding MSS. for correction, considers corrections worse than a New Play, is quite exhausted, mentions the St. James's Theatre, urgent appeals for Money, upon asking the Friend he is staying with for Money, says he finds a new fault in him, he only gives him Swiss wine to drink, and finishes his letter with a final appeal for Money, 3 pages, 8vo, Glend, 1899 21s

624 — 1 page, A.L., dated Havre, July 27th, 1899, another urgent appeal to his Publisher for Money, if for 4 days only, he is leaving for Paris 15s

625 — 2 pages, A.L., Oct. 19th, 1898, dated Paris, still harping on the same string, namely, making incessant appeals for Money, has been ill in bed, asking for proofs of his Play ("An Ideal Husband"), &c. 17s 6d

626 — A.L., signed, Paris, Aug. 8, 1898, has reference to a MS. forwarded of which he had received no acknowledgment, fears he will be turned out from his hotel, indeed the whole letter is a chronicle of misery and despair, and nearly hopeless 21s

627 — A.L., signed and dated, Paris, March 1st, 1898, writes in respect to the Ballad of Reading Gaol as to the dedication inserted, it will give an interest to the edition, &c., refers to a list of persons to whom presentation copies should be sent, a reference to America, and its possibilities, expresses anxiety as to the Reviewers, &c. 25s

628 — A.L., signed, 4 pages, 8vo, Napoli, Nov. 20, 1897, paying a compliment to the good nature of his Publisher, annoyance at going to Cook's twice a day, and no Money going to Cook's twice a day, and the importance of being Ernest, "An Ideal Husband," makes witty remarks at the expense of his Publisher's habit of paying his debts, as to the shape of his book, and the importance of copyright in America, closes with an amusing reference to Carlyle's oft-quoted saying in reference to the number of people and their capacities, &c. 25s

629 — A.L., signed, Paris, April 25th, 1898, 1 page, 8vo, returns thanks for a Cheque and a complimentary visit 15s

630 — A.L., 1 page, has gone to breakfast and fears there is but little chance of meeting him at the Grand Cafe, &c. 15s

631 — A.L., signed, May 11th, 1898, Paris, more wearisome and fruitless journeys to Cook's, so acute are his financial affairs he has not dined, 1 page, 8vo 15s

632 — 4 pages, 8vo, A.L., signed, Chalet Bonkat, Bernval, Sunday, August 23, 1897, returns thanks for kind letters in his own choice language, refers to the Stanbards and Pall's Stanley Weyman, &c., suggests an edition of Beckford, suggests that to be an editor of a paying magazine is a degrading position for any man to occupy, &c., the limits of a catalogue forbids a more exhaustive description (it must be seen) 30s

633 WILDE (O.) A 4-page 8vo A.L. of highest interest, mentioning his financial position, a description of a dinner party told in his own inimitable style, and mentioning a man that have since become exceedingly interesting to the public in the light of later events, a famous book, also a famous lady is here put on record, and indeed it would be most difficult to mention a more Characteristic Letter, which from reasons that must be obvious, we refrain from quoting at large, Paris, July 26th, 1898 35s

634 "I leave to-morrow for Geneva, please send the £30, also a copy of the Play ("An Ideal Husband"), &c., "I hope the Large Paper are finished by this," &c., Nice, Feb. 26th, 1899, 1 page, 4to 17s 6d

635 — "FRANK HARRIS must have a Japanese Paper, one for you and one for me; Large Paper, six for you and one for me; me, should I chance to see O'SULLIVAN, I shall say nothing about KALIDAYA," &c., &c., 1 March 1899, Paris, July 3rd, 1899 17s 6d

636 — A 4-page A.L. signed, beseeching his Publisher to forward through Cook's, he appears to be stranded here, and to quote his words, "Mental anxiety is not good for poets," &c., Villa Glinde, Posillipo, Oct. 15th, 1897 25s

MAUCLAIR.

unve innocent digne d'honneur, s'y ce qui prouver du malheur poursuite la sottise, le souvenir à jamais le



## DAILY CHRONICLE

## A DRAMA AND ITS STORY.

DER HERZOGIN VON PADUA, eine Tragödie von Oscar Wilde. Deutsch von Max Meyerfeld. Berlin, Egon Fischer und Co.

By William Archer.

When "Lady Windermere's Fan" was produced, some of us thought, and said, that a first play which, with all its defects, showed such mastery of the stage, was almost unprecedented. That was substantially a sound opinion; but, as a matter of fact, the play was not a first play. Oscar Wilde had, about 1883, written for Miss Mary Anderson a five-act tragedy, named "The Duchess of Padua." Miss Anderson never produced it. There is a report that it was acted in America by the late Lawrence Barrett, but on that point I have no definite information. At any rate, it has now been translated into German from what the translator believes to be a unique manuscript. The rendering is spirited and good; but German is scarcely the idiom in which the author would have chosen to come before the world.

## An Astonishing Talent.

This youthful effort more than confirms all that has been said of Wilde's astonishing talent for the stage. It is imitative in method, over-luxuriant in style; but it has the breath of dramatic life in every scene. Like all the author's work, it lacks sincerity. It is not the outcome of a deep artistic impulse, but of superabundant cleverness delighting to exercise itself. A much less accomplished piece of work might have given more certain promise of poetic greatness. But its cleverness, and especially its feeling for stage-effect, are marvellous. Our best playwrights—Shakespeare himself—fumble awkwardly with their tools at first; but here is a writer who, without passing through any apprenticeship, has the technique of his art at his fingers' ends. The spirit and style are Elizabethan, but the craftsmanship French.

Guido Ferranti, a youth of unknown parentage, is summoned by a mysterious letter to see a mysterious stranger in the market-place of Padua. He finds awaiting him an old man, Count Moranzone, who has much to tell him. The count was a devoted servant of Guido's father, who was none other than the Prince of Parma. While Guido was a child, the prince was foully betrayed to torture and death by a man who passed as his bosom friend. That man still lives, and Moranzone lays upon Guido the duty of avenging his sire. Simple assassination will not satisfy the count, who is an epicure in vengeance. He makes Guido swear to worm himself into the confidence of the betrayer, and become his bosom friend. Before, at a signal from Moranzone, he reveals himself to his victim and slaughters him with every circumstance of ferocity. But who is the betrayer? A troop of gaily-dressed nobles crosses the market-place, and Moranzone says to Guido, "The man to whom you shall see me kneel is your father's murderer." He kneels of course, to the Duke of Padua.

## Of Deepest Dye.

In the second act we find Guido the favourite attendant of the Duke, who is a cynical tyrant of the deepest dye. He jeers at his subjects' sufferings, and when his young and lovely Duchess pleads their cause, he scornfully rejects her suit, and forbids her to accour them on her own account. Then comes a passionate declaration of love between the Duchess and Guido, interrupted by the arrival of a packet for Guido, containing a dagger with two leopards for its hilt. This—his father's dagger—is a token from Moranzone, signifying that the time has come to strike; and Guido has deeply sworn to proceed to action the moment it reaches him.

being a first play, might under some circumstances be rivalled by the unimportance of being Smith.

NOVEMBER 21, 1904.

horror-struck at the reminder, declares wildly that an insuperable barrier has arisen between him and the Duchess, and bids her farewell for ever. Beatrice (for that is the Duchess's name), feeling her life doubly intolerable since this lightning-flash of love has come and gone, resolves to kill herself that very night.

So far the play is commonplace enough—a compound of motives from Victor Hugo ("Hernani") and Alfred de Musset ("Lorenzaccio"), with Shakespearean echoes in the passage between the Duke and the citizens, and in the lyrical love scene. Guido's talk of an "insuperable barrier" even seems a little far-fetched. In carrying out his own legitimate vendetta, he will free Padua from a tyrant and Beatrice from a brutal husband, far older than herself, whom she has never loved. Would this, in the eyes of a sixteenth-century Italian, seem any fatal let or hindrance to his passion? One would scarcely think so. But Guido's tenderness of conscience, as we shall see, is essential to the development of the action.

## At Dead of Night.

The third act passes at dead of night, in a corridor outside the Duke's bedchamber. Here Guido declares to Moranzone that he will keep his oath. He has convinced himself that his father's spirit will be far better appeased if, instead of killing the Duke, he lays the dagger on the sleeper's breast, with a writing signifying that he renounces the vengeance which he held in his hand. This is not at all Moranzone's view, who, after bitter remonstrances, washes his hands of Guido and retires. Then Guido directs his steps towards the Duke's chamber, from which, by the way, some mysterious sounds have been heard. Just as he is about to pass the crimson curtain, it is drawn aside from within, and the Duchess stands in the doorway. Guido sees in her an angel of light sent by heaven to bless his humaner purpose. All is now well between them—they will fly that very night—but Guido must leave her for a moment.

Guido: First into the Duke's chamber must I glide.

And lay this letter with this dagger there, That when he wakes—

BEATRICE: When who awakes?

Guido: The Duke.

BEATRICE: He will no more awaken.

Guido: Is he dead?

Yes, he is dead. Beatrice has done what Guido shrank from doing. She drew her dagger to kill herself; but when she beheld the Duke, laden with years and crimes, muttering curses in his sleep, she recognised in him the barrier whereof Guido spoke, "saw red," and slew him. She has given her soul to hell for Guido's sake; but, in the meantime, they will live their life on earth in happiness. Alas! she has left Guido's character out of account. His intractable conscience declares that she has built the barrier higher than ever; and the more passionately she implores him to remember that what she did was done for love of him, the more harshly and even savagely does he cast her off. At last she gives up the struggle and rushes away in desperation. Guido is left alone for a moment, when the tramp of soldiers is heard approaching, and above it the voice of the Duchess bidding them seize the murderer of her husband. He is taken, as it were, red-handed, holding the poniard with which the deed was done.

## A Trial Scene.

The fourth act represents the trial of Guido. Moranzone, who shrewdly suspects the truth, urges him to defend himself, while the Duchess vehemently declares that he has placed himself outside the pale of the law, and has no right to be heard. The judges, after long deliberation, decide against her, and decree

ing scandals. It does not horrify or terrify. It is merely dully dirty and dirtily dull. It has not even the iridescence of putrescence. It stinks without scintillating. Pass the formaldehyde.

JAMES DOUGLAS.

Samedi 27 Mai 1905

## UN FOUDROYÉ

M. Joseph Renaud, qui est un écrivain fort connu et un lettré de talent et de goût, vient de publier une traduction d'*Intentions*, le volume d'essais critiques d'Oscar Wilde. La lecture de ce petit livre m'a évoqué quelques souvenirs. J'ai connu Oscar Wilde en 1891. J'avais dix-neuf ans et je publiais quelques sonnets passablement obscurs dans un mince fascicule, *La Conque*, qu'éditait chez lui Pierre Louys, alors ignoré du public. C'est dans son cabinet que je vis un jour arriver Wilde, escorté de jeunes poètes dévoués. Il faisait à Paris un voyage triomphal, et une réputation énorme le précédait. Durant cette visite, où bien entendu je n'osai dire mot, Wilde pérorait dans un murmure d'admiration. Il me parut que ce gros Anglais était un poseur assommant, et que sa préciosité jurait avec son physique. Il disait d'une voix chantante des paradoxes beaucoup moins fins que ceux de Mallarmé ou de Rodenbach que je commençais à fréquenter, et son esprit était pénible. Il empruntait énormément à Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, à Baudelaire, à Gautier, à Huysmans, et son dandysme ironique, son cynisme élégant, ses discours mélangeant Platon, Brummel et la Renaissance, le plus drôlement du monde, à des axiomes sur la coupe des gilets, m'ennuyaient intensément. Je gardai modestement cette opinion. Je trouvais seulement que Wilde avait l'air, au fond, d'un brave homme, bien que snob et blutteur, et ses yeux bleus me parurent bons, et révélateurs d'une âme sans haine. Il remarquait sans doute que je n'étais pas « épâté »; j'étais inconnu, mal vêtu. Il me parla fort aimablement et m'invita à venir prendre du thé à l'hôtel Scriba, le lendemain, avec quelques amis. J'y allai, par politesse. Mais il y avait une telle affluence de littérateurs cotés, et notamment M. Mendès faisait tant de gestes et était tant de vers latins en se trompant d'auteurs, ce qui lui arrive souvent, que je m'esquivai, ayant pu tout juste saluer Wilde.

Je ne le revis jamais. On l'invita, le lendemain, on fit des bassesses pour l'avoir, chez des gens qui, plus tard, mentirent carrément quand on leur parla du poète qu'ils avaient reçu, du forçat qu'ils ne voulaient pas avoir connu. Je me souviens de ce tapage, de ces exhibitions. Je gardai de Wilde un vague souvenir. Ne sachant pas l'anglais, je ne pouvais décider si le personnage était vraiment un grand écrivain ou simplement une façon de Bourget décadent. J'en ouïs parler de loin en loin. Whistler disait de lui : « Ce n'est rien du tout. » Mais Whistler était peu tendre ! Un soir, chez Mallarmé, on attendait la venue de Wilde. Whistler savait qu'il devait venir ce soir-là chez son vieil ami ; un peu avant dix heures, Mallarmé reçut ce télégramme : « Si Wilde vient, serrez l'argenterie. — Whistler. » Le peintre des *Nocturnes*, rival de Wilde dans la faveur des raffinés londoniens, le détestait. Il était d'une élégance bien trop discrète pour n'avoir pas l'antipathie violente du poseur esthète, et il accusait Wilde de « chipper » les bons mots. Un jour Whistler ayant dit une jolie chose, Wilde se récriait : « Quel mot adorable ! Que je voudrais l'avoir dit ! — Vous le direz, riposta le sarcasme coloriste. Et il est vrai que Wilde, comme d'Annunzio, prenait partout, et forçait à « serrez l'argenterie ».

Mallarmé avait trop d'indulgence exquise pour dire du mal de personne. Marcel Schwob m'assurait que Wilde était un grand esprit. Mais le cher et pauvre camarade était tellement anglo-mane, et surtout si railleur et si mystificateur, qu'on ne savait jamais au juste... Enfin j'oubliai à peu près ce gros Anglais qui après tout ne m'intéressait pas. Des années passèrent. Je lus une traduction de son roman *Le Portrait de Dorian Gray*. On criait au chef-d'œuvre. J'y constatai un démarquage littéral de tout un chapitre d'*A Rebours* d'Huysmans, sur les pierreries ; l'action était composée sans gêne avec deux nouvelles d'Edgar Poe, le *Portrait ovale* et *William Wilson*, accommodées dans une intrigue de mélodrame. Avec cela, un pêle-mêle de préciosité puérile, de paradoxes sentant le bouquin, de concettisme et de banalités. Je pensai que les Anglais n'étaient pas difficiles à étonner, que les écrivains parisiens étaient des niais, que ce gros Anglais s'était moqué d'eux et de leur snobisme, et qu'en fin de compte, auprès de Meredith, de Paler, de Henley, de Moore, ce n'était décidément « rien du tout », comme me l'avait dit Whistler avec un sourire pincé que j'avais cru méchant.

Le scandale du procès de Londres éclata. Il apparut bientôt que, si Wilde était coupable, le rebulandier ivrogne qui l'accusait ne valait pas grand'chose. Le poseur Wilde se révélait incapable de se défendre, et tellement féru de réclame qu'il allait jusqu'à la perversité de se faire condamner. Il prononça ce mot éblouissant : « Je ne résiste pas à la tentation de devenir un forçat ». Le malheureux passait encore ! Dans *Le Rouge et le Noir* de Stendhal, Mathilde de La Mole dit, en parlant de Julien Sorel : « Je ne vois que la condamnation à mort qui distingue un homme ; c'est la seule chose qui ne s'achète pas ». Wilde fit des mots et prit des attitudes, avec une inconscience navrante, un fatalisme de théâtre. La pudibonderie anglaise se rua à la curée, les gens qu'il avait moqués se vengèrent. Pour couvrir cent scandales plus vils, on voulut frapper ce bouc émissaire, et, du même coup, la déference due aux écrivains en général fut bafouée. C'était légendaire, cet acharnement, ces prati-

ques de basse police, ces questionnaires stupides sur les droits de l'art, ces convocations de jeunes invertis professionnels dont on adoptait sans restriction les témoignages plutôt suspects, plus suspects en somme que celui de l'accusé. C'était plus dégoûtant que sa faute, si elle existait — car le procès ne l'a nullement prouvée dans le fait. En tous cas elle n'avait nui qu'à Wilde même, et il n'avait démolir ni vicieux personnage, même le jeune lord Douglas qui savait ce qu'il avait à faire, et dont le père grossier et alcoolique n'osait même pas articuler de faits directs. Wilde avait mené cette affaire en maladroite, en blutteur et en ignorant de la vie, avec toupet et entêtement. La haine d'un peuple prude s'acharna.

Il fut forcé, sans aucun crime, car on pouvait lui refuser la main si on le croyait capable de telles mœurs, mais de quel droit enfermer au bagne un homme qui n'a nui à personne, dont le vice n'était pas apparent, et à qui ses ennemis mêmes n'imputaient que des relations avec des professionnels consentants et payés, sans scènes sur la voie publique, sans corruption de personnes jusqu'alors ignorantes ? Condamnation monstrueuse en vérité, dont les effets furent atroces. Famille exilée, enfants ruinés et voués à la honte, pièces interdites, livres brûlés ; on eût moins fait pour un assassin ! Wilde, malade à Reading, les doigts privés d'ongles à force de déliquetter les câbles pour en faire de l'étoffe, devint un objet de pitié. Décidément c'était trop. On songea à une pétition pour obtenir que ce malheureux fût au moins dispensé du terrible hard-labour. Des écrivains, des poètes, se devaient de faire ce geste pour un homme qui, après tout, avait pensé et écrit avec talent.

Je me souviens que M. Stuart Merrill vint me parler de cela. J'acceptai bien volontiers de porter cette pétition chez divers écrivains. Il arriva ceci : nous songions à demander la signature de M. Coppée, qui passait pour avoir bon cœur et avait alors une grande influence par ses chroniques du *Journal*. Suit-il le projet ? Avant même que nous eussions fait la démarche, il publia un article d'une pudibonderie prétentieuse, disant que des jeunes gens s'étaient présentés chez lui (c'était inexact), et qu'il ne pourrait, en conscience, signer une telle demande pour un scélérat, sinon comme membre de la Société protectrice des animaux ! J'envoyai un démenti qu'on n'inséra pas. Je fis alors un article violent, rappelant M. Coppée à la bonté évangélique qu'il prônait, à la pitié décente envers un malheureux qui n'était plus qu'une ruine humaine ; bien entendu, nul ne voulut de l'article, et je dus le publier dans une revue belge. Le philanthrope académicien le reçut par mes soins et demeura muet. Il devait plus tard avoir d'autres tendresses pour Syverson ! Je crois bien que son article fit complètement avorter le projet.

Wilde subit sa peine dans toute son horreur. Il sortit du bagne, il erra, fantôme sinistre de lui-même, essaya d'écrire, n'y parvint plus, traîna, s'éteignit dans une chambre misérable, après s'être fait catholique. La préface de M. Joseph Renaud, écrite avec tact, sobriété, mesure, vous racontera tout cela, car je vous conseille de lire *Intentions*. Ces souvenirs me sont revenus assez tristement en ouvrant ce volume. Vraiment la chute d'un grand homme puéril et compliqué, l'effrayante infortune d'un terminant en agonie grandiose une existence de mandarin de lettres. Elle a réussi à faire crier cette âme que le talent artificiel faisait faire. Wilde a écrit un poème sur sa prison : la *Ballade de la geôle de Reading* est un chef-d'œuvre admirable et poignant, un grand chef-d'œuvre, auprès duquel tous les livres ingénieux et creux de son époque heureuse ne valent rien.

*Intentions* démontre bien que Wilde était un esprit critique et non créateur. Il y a là des dialogues sur l'art, sur le rôle de la critique, sur Shakespeare, qui sont de beaux morceaux, médités par un soigneux et intelligent artiste. Cela vaut tout à fait la peine d'être lu. Quel dommage que la furieuse manie d'étonner les gens ait étreint ce cerveau ! Quand il ne cède pas au désir de dire un aphorisme prétentieux et bizarre, quand il n'affecte pas une sagesse cynique qui, au fond, est souvent aussi banale qu'agaçante, Wilde se prouve un érudit, un logicien, un homme de grand goût et un charmant esprit. Oh ! ce n'est pas un génie, et nous avons mieux ici. A côté d'un Anatole France, c'est un honorable talent de second ordre. Mais enfin c'était quelqu'un, avec peu d'idées mais un art propre à les faire valoir, aucune originalité mais une rhétorique souple, une jolie forme, plus d'esprit qu'on n'en trouve aux Anglais. M. Joseph Renaud a eu tout à fait raison d'avoir la courageuse pensée de traduire ce livre plein d'excellentes remarques sur l'art, et plus personnel que la *Salomé* imitée de Flaubert ou les contes de la *Maison des Grenades*, nourris de souvenirs antiques. Il est humain, juste et sensé d'en finir avec l'ostentatisme sauvage qui a voulu écraser cette pauvre mémoire et ce talent. L'homme a souffert immensément, et il est mort. Comparons sa faute, discutable en droit, indémontrée en fait, et son châtiment inouï. Nous verrons que la disproportion est scandaleuse. Ne faisons pas un martyr de Wilde, encore qu'il l'ait été du *cant* et de la prudence britanniques. Mais accordons à son œuvre innocente une justice élémentaire, digne d'honnêtes gens : lisons-la, aimons-y ce qui prouve le talent, sans l'auréole du malheur de l'homme, mais sans y poursuivre lâchement, avec étroitesse et sottise, le souvenir d'une tare que dérobe à jamais le silence du cercueil.

CAMILLE MAULAIR.



JANUARY 28, 1905.

DAILY NEWS, S

**S**T. JAMES'S. Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER,  
Sole Lessee and Manager.  
TO-DAY, at 2.45, and EVERY EVENING, at 8 sharp,  
LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN.  
By Oscar Wilde.  
Mr. C. Aubrey Smith, Mr. Ben Webster,  
Mr. Eric Lewis, Mr. Leslie Faber;  
Miss Marion Terry,  
Miss Lillian Braithwaite, Miss Fanny Coleman.  
2.15 and 8.30, a new play in one act, by Alfred Sutre, entitled  
A MAKER OF MEN.  
MATINEE (both plays), WEDS. and SATS., at 2.15.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

There are a couple of changes in the cast of "Lady Windermere's Fan." Mr. Robert Horton has contented himself with an imitation of Mr. Vane Tempest's Charles Danby, and the imitation strikes one as a caricature. Mr. Eric Lewis, however, is a delightful Lord Augustus. By many subtle touches he makes a real character of the part which Mr. Sydney Brough was inclined to burlesque. Once again Miss Marion Terry showed the younger generation of actress the distinction of bearing and gesture and the command of voice which have almost disappeared from the English stage.



110 **Dorian Gray: Choice Large  
Paper Copy.**—OSCAR WILDE'S THE PIC-

TURE OF DORIAN GRAY, a copy of the rare  
large paper issue, only 250 having been

printed. *This copy is signed by OSCAR WILDE*

*himself, crown 4to, elegantly bound in half*

*vellum, A CHOICE VOLUME, £1 11s6d 1891*

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156 — Lord Arthur Savile's Crime  
and other Stories, 1st edition, 12mo, bds.  
uncut, 25s 1891

156A Salome Dorey, 1st  
Edition, small 4to, wrappers, rare, 21s  
Paris and Elkin Mathews et John Lane,  
Londres, 1893



# "MR. SMITH" IN DRAMA.

## He Refuses to Barter his Name for a Duchess's Daughter.

A really admirable notion finds itself embedded in an otherwise somewhat commonplace and novelettish drawing-room melodrama called "Mr. Smith." This is by Mr. Frank Reynolds, and was produced last night with some favour at the Camden Theatre.

The particular Mr. Smith celebrated in the title is, it may be explained, supposed to be a world-famous engineer of comparatively lowly origin. He is paying unsanctioned but honourable attentions to the daughter of a Duchess.

For the greater part of two acts, it must be confessed, his course of true love flows somewhat drearily. Suddenly, however, it and the play are both enlivened by quite a brilliant idea on the part of the duchess—not to say, of the author.

It is suggested that in spite of all lesser obstacles Mr. Smith might aspire reasonably to the hand of the duchess's daughter if only he would change his name. Thereupon Mr. Smith, who is played by a very personable and curiously grave actor (Mr. Hamilton Stewart) draws himself to his full height, and standing as one might say upon the dignity of the name of Smith, refuses to change a letter of it.

He will not even subscribe to the compromise of Smythe. "Smith" was, said he, a name neither he nor his fathers had disgraced. Why should he change it? No, he would not, for all the daughters of all the duchesses in the world!

And as, with something of Mr. Hayden Coffin's manner, Mr. Hamilton Stewart folded his arms and declared he would be loved as Smith or not at all, there was a fleeting moment of really choice comedy.

The rest of the play is unfortunately not to be taken quite as seriously as its author seems to intend, though there is a charming American girl in it played quite delightfully by Miss Phyllis Relph.

Still, that "Smith" notion really deserves a bright triumph. The chance of being earnest might under some circumstances be rivalled by the unimportance of being Smith.



for C. S. Millard  
**Durrant's Press Cuttings,**

St. ANDREW'S HOUSE,  
HOLBORN CIRCUS, LONDON, E.C.  
(Late 57, Holborn Viaduct.)

Cutting from the Mercur de France

Dated September \_\_\_\_\_ 1905

LETTRES ANGLAISES

R. L. Stevenson : *Le Reflux*, trad. par Teodor de Wyzewa, Perrin, 3 fr. 50.—  
Oscar Wilde : *Intentions*, trad. par Hugues Rebell, Carrington, 6 fr.

§

L'œuvre d'Oscar Wilde demande à être traduite à la fois avec précision et avec art. Les phrases ont des significations si ténues et le choix des mots est si habile qu'une traduction défectueuse, abondante en contre-sens ou en coquilles, risquerait de décevoir grandement le lecteur. Car il faut bien compter que ceux qui se soucient de connaître Oscar Wilde ne peuvent être ni des concierges ni des cochers de fiacre; ils n'appartiennent certainement pas à ce « grand public » qui se délecte aux émouvants feuilletons de nos quotidiens populaires ou qui savoure avidement les élucubrations égrillardes de certains fabricants de prétendue littérature. C'est ce qu'avait compris l'éditeur Carrington quand il chargea Hugues Rebell de lui traduire *Intentions*. Ces essais d'Oscar Wilde représentent plus particulièrement le côté paradoxal et frondeur de sa personnalité. Il y exprime ses idées ou plutôt ses subtilités esthétiques; il y « cause » plus qu'ailleurs, à tel point que trois de ces essais sur cinq sont dialogués; l'auteur s'entretient avec des personnages qu'il suppose aussi cultivés, aussi beaux esprits que lui-même: « s'entretient » est beaucoup dire, car ce sont plutôt des contradicteurs auxquels il suggère les objections dont il a besoin pour poursuivre le développement et le triomphe de ses arguments. La conversation vagabonde à plaisir et le causeur y fait étalage de toutes les richesses de son esprit, de son imagination, de sa mémoire. Au milieu de ces citations, de ces allusions, de ces exemples innombrables empruntés à tous les temps et à tous les pays,



le traducteur a chance de s'égarer s'il n'est lui-même homme d'une culture très sûre et très variée. Hugues Rebell pouvait, sans danger de paraître ignorant ou ridicule, entreprendre de donner une version d'*Intentions*. Il n'avait certes pas fait de la littérature anglaise contemporaine, non plus que d'aucune époque, l'objet d'études spéciales. Mais il connaissait cette littérature dans son ensemble beaucoup mieux que certains qui s'autorisent de quelques excursions à Londres pour clamer à tout venant leur compétence douteuse. J'ai souvenir de maintes occasions où Rebell, avec cet air mystérieux qu'il ne pouvait s'empêcher de prendre pour les choses les plus simples, m'attirait à l'écart de tel groupe d'amis, où la conversation était générale, pour me parler de tel jeune auteur sur qui l'une de mes chroniques avait attiré son attention. Et, chaque fois, il faisait preuve, en ces matières, d'un savoir très étendu.

Hugues Rebell fit donc cette nécessaire traduction, et, dit l'éditeur dans une note préliminaire, « c'est le dernier travail auquel il put se livrer. Il nous en remit les derniers feuillets peu de jours avant sa mort ». Rebell devait préfacier ce travail d'une étude sur la vie et les œuvres du poète anglais, étude qu'il ne put qu'ébaucher, malheureusement, car, avec Gide, — mais celui-ci d'un point de vue différent et peut-être opposé, — il était exclusivement qualifié pour saisir, dé mêler et interpréter l'étrange personnalité de Wilde. Quelques fragments de cette étude nous sont donnés, cependant, et ils nous font très vivement regretter que le vigoureux et paradoxal auteur de *l'Union des trois aristocraties* n'ait pu achever son travail.

Mais ce regret bien légitime se mitige grandement à mesure qu'on lit la belle préface de M. Charles Grolleau. Prenant pour épigraphe cette pensée de Pascal : « Je blâme également et ceux qui prennent parti de louer l'homme, et ceux qui le prennent de le blâmer, et ceux qui le prennent de se divertir ; et je ne puis approuver que ceux qui cherchent en gémissant », M. Grolleau s'efforce de comprendre et de résoudre ce « douloureux problème » que fut Wilde. Et il le fait avec cette réserve et ce parfait bon goût que doivent s'imposer les véritables amis et les sincères admirateurs d'Oscar Wilde. Il y a plus, dans ces cinquante pages : il y a l'une des meilleures études qui aient jamais été faites du brillant dramaturge. Bien qu'il s'en défende, M. Grolleau, dans cette langue élégante et harmonieuse que lui connaissent ceux qui ont lu ses beaux vers, réussit à discerner mieux et à mieux révéler que certaines diatribes « l'âme et la passion » de l'auteur de *De Profundis*.

Je me suis interdit d'écrire une biographie. Je ne connais que l'écrivain, et l'homme est trop vivant encore et si blessé ! J'ai la dévotion des plaies, et le plus beau des vœux.

Toute « cette méditation sur une âme très belle » est écrite avec ce



tact délicat et cette tendre sympathie. Ainsi, après avoir admiré ces émouvantes pages, le lecteur peut aborder dans un état d'esprit convenable les essais parfois déconcertants qui sont réunis sous le titre significatif d'*Intentions*. C'est dans cette belle édition qu'il faut les lire. On sait avec quel souci d'artiste M. Carrington établit ses volumes; il n'y laisse pas de ces incroyables coquilles, de ces épais mastics qui ressemblent si fort à des contre-sens, et, sachant quel public intelligent et éclairé voudrait ce livre, il n'a pas eu l'idée saugrenue d'abîmer ses pages par d'inutiles notes assurant le lecteur par exemple que Dante a écrit la Divine Comédie, que Shelley fut un grand poète, que Keats mourut poitrinaire, que George Eliot était femme de lettres et Lancret peintre. Un portrait de l'auteur est reproduit en tête de cette excellente édition.



from the

*Manuscrit de France*

Dated November

1905.

— Oscar Wilde : *Le Crime de Lord Arthur Savile*, 3.50 ;

8

Plusieurs lecteurs m'ont fait, ces derniers temps, l'honneur de m'écrire pour me demander la liste complète des traductions en français des œuvres d'Oscar Wilde. J'ai déjà indiqué la très belle traduction des *Intentions*, qu'Hugues Rebell acheva avant de mourir et qu'a publiée en une superbe édition l'éditeur Carrington, avec une préface émue et noble de M. Charles Grolleau. Voici maintenant l'éditeur Stock, qui réimprime la version parue jadis du *Portrait de Dorian Gray*, et nous donne **Le Crime de Lord Arthur Savile**, et autres nouvelles. C'est M. Albert Savine qui, avec sa netteté et son exactitude coutumières, a établi le texte français de ces nouvelles, d'après la bonne édition anglaise, celle avec laquelle on n'est pas exposé à faire de contresens : une courte et sage préface commente l'œuvre, mais le consciencieux traducteur a eu le bon goût de s'abstenir de ces notes imaginatives dont certains amateurs complètent copieusement leurs fantaisistes traductions. Quelques-

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unes de ces nouvelles avaient paru déjà dans un recueil que traduisit Georges Khnopff et qui fut publié jadis aux éditions de *La Plume*.



"Salome" (John Lane), by Oscar Wilde, is an adroit translation from the French original. It is, I assume, not by the author, but it seems to be delicately and sensitively done. I am afraid the Germans have overestimated this extremely artificial exercise in decadence. It rings false throughout. At its best it is a feeble echo of Maeterlinck. At its worst it is the conventional jargon of sensualism. Jokanaan (John the Baptist) is only a patchwork of Biblical quotations. Herod is naughty. Herodias is a voluble hag. Salome is a neurotic minx. The tragedy tries to be tragic, and succeeds only in being comic. Here and there one finds literary felicities, pictorial phrases, cloying conceits, such as the metaphor: "She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver." There are false euphuisms such as: "The red blasts of trumpets." There are many plagiarisms, such as: "The beatings of the wings of the angel of death," which is stolen from John Bright. I suppose that "You hath sworn" is a misprint. There is a pretty description of a collar of pearls—"like unto moons chained with rays of silver." Herod's catalogue of jewels is ornate, "Opals that burn with an icelike flame" is a phrase that recalls Pater's "hard gem-like flame." The phrase about the sea wandering in the sapphires is happy. But "Salome" is not art. Its theme is as suitable for art as the Chicago meat-packing scandals. It does not horrify or terrify. It is merely dully dirty and dirtily dull. It has not even the iridescence of putrescence. It stinks without scintillating. Pass the formaldehyde.

JAMES DOUGLAS

Star 16-6-06

Dupl



Reynolds's 13 Nov. 1904

# IS OSCAR WILDE DEAD? AN EXTRAORDINARY RUMOUR.

("REYNOLDS'S" SPECIAL.)

In certain literary circles in the United States the opinion is being freely expressed that Mr. Oscar Wilde is still alive. It is even suggested that articles from his pen are still appearing over unfamiliar signatures. That these articles are not in all respects up to the high level of sparkling epigram associated with the brilliancy of Mr. Wilde's genius is accounted for by the depressing experiences through which he passed.

Now, we have no hesitation in characterizing this story as baseless. We have perfect confidence in the genuineness of the narratives that *Reynolds's Newspaper* has published on the subject of Mr. Wilde's sad death. The event is vouched for by several reliable persons, one of whom, M. La Jeunesse, definitely asserts that he followed the remains to the grave.

It is only in America that our narrative would be doubted for a moment. In London and in Paris the decease of the famous writer is recognised as a fact established upon irrefutable evidence.

## BOYCOTTING A NAME.

Whilst we are referring to Mr. Wilde, it is just as well to enter a protest against a new method of treating his work. A play recently produced in London has been advertised upon the hoardings as "By the Author of 'Lady Windermere's Fan.'" To us this seems an insinuation that the dramatist's name must not be mentioned in polite circles. Here and there, indeed, we are in the habit of referring to a writer by the title of the work by which he or she achieved fame. Thus we correctly speak of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman." This custom does not apply to Mr. Wilde. His name was always much more widely known than that of anything he wrote.

In this connection, we are able to quote from an article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The great German daily paper writes as follows:—

"The only paper that all the time had the honesty to print in black and white the hated name was *Reynolds's Newspaper*. It has a right now to scoff at its opponents. Other journals were too Christian to imitate Christ. They gratified themselves, and it seems that they gratified their readers with ridiculous periphrases and beatings about the bush, using such terms as 'the poet of Salomé' for the intellectually-gifted author who came to grief so pitifully."

We are glad to see that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* standing appreciates our desire to show fair treatment to a fallen man's reputation.



Daily News 4 Dec. 1905

# STRAUSS'S NEW OPERA.

## FIRST PERFORMANCE AT DRESDEN

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

BERLIN, Sunday Night.

As anticipated the first performance at the Dresden Opera House of Richard Strauss's "Salome" has met with most divergent criticisms. One is simply enthusiastic in its praise; others are full of blame. All agree, however, that Oscar Wilde's text in no wise harmonises with Strauss's music, that the instrumentation is wonderful, whilst the singers have very ungrateful tasks to solve, their parts being very poor from the musical point of view.

Summarising the various reports the impression is gained that Strauss would have enriched the musical world by a valuable composition had he set Wilde's piece to music as a symphony, instead of an opera, however great in his case its numerous musical beauties may be. Besides, the performance requires such an enormously augmented orchestra that only a few stages will be able to enjoy the privilege of giving it. As regards the Berlin Opera House, it is doubtful whether the performance, considering the nature of Wilde's drama "Salome," will be permitted.



Daily Express 30 June 1905

## SAVOY LOSSES.

### MRS. BROWN POTTER'S HOME UNDER THE HAMMER.

Many expressions of regret were heard yesterday at the private view of the costly and artistic household effects of Mrs. Brown Potter, at Bray Lodge, Maidenhead, which are to be sold by auction to-day, mainly because of losses incurred at the Savoy Theatre.

The catalogue makes quite a volume, there being 694 lots, starting with a deal kitchen table and ending with a magnificent 7-h.p. Panhard motor-car, purchased this year.

Among the lots to be sold to-day is included a fine Chinese four-leaf screen, with boldly designed panels of landscape and river scenery, presented to the famous actress by Li Hung Chang.

The 340 volumes of books include the "Anglo-Saxon Review," with a presentation inscription to Mrs. Brown Potter "from Queenie Randolph Churchill"; and Oscar Wilde's "Happy Prince," a presentation from the author.

Among the oil paintings in the Dutch hall is a splendid full-length portrait of Mrs. Brown Potter as "Miladi" in "The Three Musketeers," by the Hon. John Collier, which was exhibited at the Grafton Gallery in 1900.

An early sale is to be made to-day in for Mrs. Brown Potter a number of presentation and personal souvenirs.

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Glasgow Herald. 11 Jan. 1906

## THE NEW MUSIC.

### TRE ENDOUS SUCCESS OF STRAUSS'S "SALOME."

#### TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Berlin, Sunday.

Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera "Salomé" was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the *élite* of the artistic society not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

#### Difficulties.

For over six months the preparations for "Salomé" have occupied the authorities at the Dresden Opera House. Unable to find sufficient technical skill in their own city to mount and stage the forthcoming work, they sent to Munich and Berlin for assistance, and the result has been one of the most perfectly finished pieces of staging since the palmy days of Bayreuth.

The work at first met with serious difficulty, it is believed, in Court circles, where the sternly religiously Catholic element introduced by the present King's father and uncle have obtained considerable power. The Austrian Court had opposed the production of "Salomé" on religious, rather than æsthetic grounds, and the Dresden Court, it was thought, followed suit. We shall probably never know why the embargo was removed. This is one reason, but probably the real reason of the delay in presenting Strauss's masterpiece consisted rather in the inherent difficulties of the opera itself. These, as the leader of the orchestra has been heard to declare, are "colossal." Strauss has produced a work of rare complexity, both orchestra and singers being confronted with difficulties almost insurmountable. The leading prima donna, Frau Wittich, studied her part for nearly eight months, and the parts of the Baptist and Herod are no less formidable. Strauss insisted that he should have an orchestra of 120 musicians—nothing less would satisfy him—and to accommodate them the two front rows of the stalls have been removed, and the stage set back a distance of three feet. The success of this performance was complete, and after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.



## Out-Wagnering Wagner.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims—"Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unqualified success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted "second-rate librettists" to work for him as Gounod and Verdi did, nor has he written his own text like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows. Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marvelling at the wonderful orchestration and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached. Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera-houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced. For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful.

## Nothing to Carry Away.

There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only here and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "Tristan and Isolde." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "Salome." Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salome" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase, which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif; the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

## Morals.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking. Is this sultry sort of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "Dame Musica" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "Salomé?" Frau Wittich sang the title-role with marvellous power and certainty. Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod; Herr Perron, as the Baptist, was extremely effective; but all three artists gave an impression that they were performing a thoroughly thankless task, and that their hearts were not in their work.



morning Leader. 11 Dec. 1905

## STRAUSS'S "SALOME."

### BRILLIANT PRODUCTION OF THE OPERA AT DRESDEN.

#### From Our Own Correspondent.

DRESDEN, Sunday.

The production of Strauss's new opera, "Salome," leaves a mixed impression on the mind.

The music is exceedingly complex, and the composer's conception of the subject is startlingly original, but is objected to by admirers of Oscar Wilde's play because the atmosphere is too realistic and the passion too strenuous.

The orchestral effects are the most daring in the history of opera, the difficulty of the whole being almost superhuman. The work lasts an hour and a half.

Very striking is the duet between Salome and Joachanaan, and the elaborate orchestral interludes in Salome's dance.

The audience included many musical celebrities from all parts of Europe. The applause lasted nearly 20 minutes.

The performance was most brilliant, especially that of the orchestra, under Herr Schuch, which was beyond praise. Frau Wittich, Herr Burrian, and Herr Perron were very fine in the chief parts.

#### OPINION OF BERLIN CRITICS.

##### From Our Own Correspondent

BERLIN, Sunday.

The production of "Salome" is described by the musical critics in the Berlin newspapers as a brilliant achievement.

The success of the work is undoubted, and the effect on the audience was such that, when the curtain fell at the close of the last scene, everybody sat perfectly still, as if entranced. When the applause did break out, it was tumultuous, and Herr Strauss and the conductor, Herr Schuch, were compelled to appear before the curtain upwards of 40 times.

The critics vie with each other in finding words descriptive of the beauty, of the force, of the originality, of the revolutionary character of the music, and the only fault they find is that the "master of orchestration" makes such enormous demands on the orchestra and the singers.

It is believed "Salome" will not, soon become popular, as such an immense orchestra is required for its proper production.



# ACCUSED R.A.

## MR. A. GILBERT ON HIS GOLDEN IDEALS.

## A CURIOUS REPLY.

### PLEA OF "ECCENTRICITIES OF GENIUS."

Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A., against whom Mrs. Frankau, an authoress, who writes as Frank Danby, has brought a charge of grave breach of contract, originally in the columns of "Truth," has spoken in his own defence.

The Brussels Correspondent of "The Daily Chronicle" had an interview with Mr. Gilbert at his house in Bruges yesterday. Mr. Gilbert spoke freely on the matter, but declared himself perfectly ignorant of what had occurred except through what he described as threatening letters which he had received in connection with it.

He did not deny the accuracy of Mrs. Frankau's account of the agreement that was made between them. Mr. Gilbert explained, however, in showing our correspondent the model of the monument which was in his studio, that it was representative of many phases and alterations which his first essay had undergone.

He added that he had had many difficulties to contend with during its execution—how he was obliged to modify this or suppress and replace that portion of his model—and how ultimately, after having worked for months, he was dissatisfied with the result and demolished the whole in order to begin anew.

Mr. Gilbert pointed out that owing to an action at law he had been deprived of his studio, and that it was while he was thus handicapped by the want of an atelier that Mr. Withers (the solicitor) came to see him and found him working in the garden.

Mr. Gilbert declared that he will face any difficulty rather than degrade his art or his ideals. He explained that since October he has been forfeiting a pound daily, so that to finish his work as he would have it finished, the balance accruing to him will be nothing, for he must pay for the execution and erection of the monument out of the sum agreed upon.

Money, said Mr. Gilbert, was as brass, but his ideals were golden. Had lucre entered more into his consideration, he would have had a thousand pounds for the monument, for that was the sum originally offered by Mrs. Frankau. He considered the figure, however, unnecessarily high.

#### "TRIUMPH OF HIS ART."

"In the course of our conversation," says our correspondent, "Mr. Gilbert intimated to me that he has already had difficulties of a somewhat similar kind with other clients, but that on each occasion he has succeeded ultimately in convincing them, by the triumph of his art, that nothing was lost by waiting. Troubles of this kind, however, occasioned him much worry and indisposed him for work, but even in the face of such difficulties, never, *coute que coute*, has he delivered up his work until he himself was satisfied with it."

In the face of this explanation, it is useful to recall that on May 3, 1905, an agreement was signed by which 150 guineas were paid to Mr. Gilbert on his undertaking that the monument should be erected by the end of October following; that four subsequent payments of fifty guineas each were made on his written guarantee that the work was proceeding satisfactorily; and that he has never given his client, Mrs. Frankau, any opportunity of judging whether the monument has yet any material existence.

It is quite true that Mrs. Frankau offered the sculptor £1,000 for the work he undertook. As the monument was to be twelve feet in height, and was to be carried out in marble, bronze and granite, that was, perhaps, not an extravagant sum. Mr. Gilbert, as he says, thought it was too much. Mrs. Frankau has since learnt from sculptors who are almost as distinguished as Mr. Gilbert that the design as he conceived it in his original sketch could scarcely have been realised, for the cost of material alone, at the figure for which Mr. Gilbert accepted the commission.

Mrs. Frankau, therefore, concludes that Mr. Gilbert never had any intention of carrying out the work.

We print below a further selection of the letters we have received. It may be noted that Mr. Gilbert's defenders make their appeal on his behalf *ad misericordiam*. The only comment that need be made is that if art and commerce are to be divorced, at least it should be known that the decree has been made absolute, so that people who, like Mrs. Frankau, wish to engage the services of great artists should know how they stand.

#### "QUESTION OF TEMPERAMENT."

"I am extremely sorry," writes F. W. Sullivan, from 19, Twyford-mansions, Weymouth-street, W., "to read in your columns 'Truth's' attack on Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A. While sympathising with Mrs. Frankau in her pecuniary and sentimental loss, I should like to suggest that Mr. Gilbert is to be classed as one of those eccentric geniuses to whom the world owes more than has paid. I know neither Mrs. Frankau nor Mr. Gilbert personally—have never seen either of them, though I know something of the work and worth of both—and so I have no interest in pleading the cause of either."

"But I would remind you that there was once a François Villon, and, more recently, an Oscar Wilde. Both sinned against Society more than Gilbert. But to-day they are forgiven, and their names will live. Can we not take a charitable view, club together to recoup Mrs. Frankau her loss, and forget this eccentricity of genius? We cannot apply to art the canons of commerce. That fickle abomination the 'divine afflatus' will not always rest on the artist, and meanwhile the artist must live."

"It is largely a question of temperament. Mr. Gilbert has transcending artistic qualities, but they are not always at his beck and call. Perhaps his will is weak—well, I shall be slow to throw a stone. But let us be careful how in this period of our nascent artistic inspiration we pillory one of its foremost pioneers."

"H. E. A. F.'s" suggestion that Mrs. Frankau had been wiser to have employed an average monumental mason is scarcely in good taste, but it is wise; for at least Mrs. Frankau would have been able to place a memorial on her husband's grave. But Mrs. Frankau wanted to honour her dear one's memory with the best work obtainable, which proves to be unobtainable. She was willing to pay for the best, she did pay, some hundreds of pounds, and a clay sketch in Mr. Gilbert's studio is the result."

#### SOUL OF HONOUR.

"That Mr. Alfred Gilbert is the soul of honour, none who know him will deny, but that his methods are erratic all will agree," declares Mr. Thomas A. Pole, of 10, Gray's-inn-square.

"Knowing him personally for many years, as I have done, and also his methods of work, it is inconceivable to me that in the matter of the commission referred to this morning, he had any other intention but that of producing a work that would satisfy his own high ideals."

"I can recall many instances of commission and work set aside, until he felt himself fitted to his ideals, but I think the instances of anyone suffering from his 'artistic conscience' are very few. Genius is rare, and its ways are not as those of common things; punctuality, convention, and the every-day observances of every-day individuals, are as foreign customs to it."

"This lady appears to think a great genius can produce works of art to order, as one would order a suit of clothes. It is well known that the late Queen was content to give Mr. Gilbert his own time, and the Clarence Memorial at Windsor is an evidence of a happy result. Alfred Gilbert's inability to produce works of art in any but his own way and his own time is well known, as is known of every great genius that ever lived."

"That a lady who accounts herself an authoress should be ignorant of this is small tribute to her knowledge; that she should be guilty of wounding genius to the extent she has done betrays a callousness and state of mind it is difficult to fathom. Mr. Gilbert's friends who read this brutal attack on a man weighed down with sorrow and anxiety will let it pass unnoticed."



*O. Chron. 11 Dec. 1903*

# THE NEW MUSIC.

## Tremendous Success of Herr Strauss's Salome.

### TANGLE OF MOTIFS.

[From Our Correspondent.]

BERLIN, Sunday.

Last night, at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, Richard Strauss's one-act opera, "Salomé" was given for the first time. For months past the event had been looked forward to by the entire musical world, and in consequence the Opera House was filled from floor to gallery with the élite of the artistic society, not only of Dresden, but of the entire empire, and the directors of nearly every prominent opera house in Europe and America were present.

The success of the performance was unqualified. Long after the curtain had fallen the audience remained in their places applauding Strauss, and applauding still more the leader of the orchestra.

The music is described by the critics as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence." "A musical genius has appeared. Indescribable are the rich and original invention, the overpowering dramatic character of the music on the stage, and the bewildering colours of the orchestration." Another critic exclaims: "Wagner has been at last surpassed."

The question, however, is asked, "Will this unqualified success be repeated or be maintained?" I am inclined to reply in the negative. With the exception of two or three redundant passages, Strauss adheres to the exact text of Oscar Wilde. He has neither permitted a second rate librettist to work for him as Gounod or Verdi did, nor has he written his own text, like Wagner. This is the first novelty noticed.

Secondly, he has given the voices an entirely secondary part; the orchestra is everything. As a matter of fact, through the greater part of the opera the singers may or may not be singing, for all the audience knows. Strauss, therefore, is justified in calling his work a musical drama. Everyone seems united in marvelling at the wonderful orchestration, and in expressing the conviction that the highest attainable in this direction has been reached. Strauss has given the orchestra something which only perfect musicians, perfectly trained and conducted, could master, and so varied is the score, so full of colour, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera houses to reproduce this work as it ought to be produced.

For this reason, if for no other, the success of the opera is doubtful. There are, besides, other peculiarities which will hinder its success. Only here and there can singers be found able to master the enormous difficulties of the music entrusted to them. One of the most difficult tasks known to operatic singers is the mastery of the dreaded third act of "Tristan and Isolde." But the requirements of Wagner's wonderful work are nothing compared with those demanded by Strauss in "Salomé."

Besides, neither for the voices nor for the orchestra is there anything which even a musically educated people can carry away with them. "Salomé" can never be popular. It contains not one single melody, hardly a single melodious phrase which abides in the memory. The opera is packed with motifs. Every person has his or her motif; every passion has its motif; the result is an exasperating tangle of motifs impossible to unravel.

Finally, there is the ethical difficulty. People are asking, Is this sultry story of Oriental passion, with its milieu of all that is degrading, a suitable one for musical treatment? Is "Dame Musica" not too ideal, too delightful, too dainty a lady to stoop to "Salomé." Frau Wittich sang the title-rôle with marvellous power and certainty, Herr Burrian was a magnificent Herod, Herr Peron as the Baptist was extremely effective, but all three artists gave the impression they were performing a task, and that their hearts were not in their work.



## THE DRAMA.

## "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN."

(By E. A. Baughan.)

Mr. George Alexander is to be thanked for having revived Oscar Wilde's play. It is always interesting to check impressions of the past. Twelve years make a great difference in the outlook of the whole community, as well as of the individual. Even ten years has given a passé complexion to such a play as "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." How brilliant "Lady Windermere's Fan" seemed to us in the days when the author was at the height of his fame! How we laughed at his wit, laughed at it as well as laughed with it! The wit of the piece has worn well, and one can imagine that "The Importance of Being Ernest" would meet with success once again. On Saturday night the epigrams of the first act of "Lady Windermere's Fan" aroused deep-toned laughter—that slow and growing laughter which tells that the audience has gradually seen the point. "I can resist anything but temptation," "To be intelligible is to be found out," the lady who is always making ugly things for the poor, the well-brought-up Lady Agatha, who can only say "Yes, mamma" and "No, mamma," and the Duchess herself, with her fussy, ill-natured chatter, were as exhilarating as ever; but the sentiment of the piece and its workmanship seemed strangely old-fashioned.

## Theatre-made Situations.

The motive of the play seems more preposterous than ever. Can we believe that Lord Windermere would endanger his domestic happiness in order to keep his wife ignorant of her mother's story? Which is worse, that a wife should be brought face to face with the knowledge that the mother whose memory is one of the sweet things in her life is a woman of an undoubted past, or that she should believe that her young husband is carrying on an infamous intrigue? As a man of the world Lord Windermere knows that his relations with Mrs. Erylne must come to the ears of his wife; he must also know that in insisting on his wife receiving Mrs. Erylne he was guilty of an insult which the law holds to be tantamount to cruelty. In the original version of the play the fact that Mrs. Erylne is not Lord Windermere's mistress but his wife's mother was kept secret to the last. But the author afterwards cleared the matter up by making Lord Windermere exclaim at the end of the first act, "I can't tell her the woman is her own mother; the shame would break her heart." That lets the audience into the secret, but one longs to shake the husband into grasping the idea that what he proposes to do is even more likely to break Lady Windermere's heart. Then, apart from this serious dramatic blemish, the play is carried on with too patent an ingenuity. The fan itself brings about the situations. What would have happened if Lady Windermere had not taken it with her to Lord Darlington's rooms? Or if, having taken it with her, she had not left it conveniently on the sofa? One almost forgives this piece of Scribe-Sardou ingenuity for the brilliant use the author makes of it. That Mrs. Erylne should vow that she had taken it by mistake, and thus in saving her daughter from scandal sacrificed her own reputation, is an ingenuity from a theatrical point of view.

## A Good Acting Play.

The mixture of originality and conventionality in this play is extraordinary. Oscar Wilde naively makes use of the soliloquy in order to carry on his drama; his scenes are contrived for theatrical effect, and yet in the comedy he has written much that is worthy of a Congreve. I must say that the wit and the epigrams and the characters of the Duchess of Berwick, Mr. Charles Dumby, and Mr. Cecil Graham appeal to me more than the theatrically-conceived Mrs. Erylne. Lady Windermere, her husband, and Darlington are creatures of straw. All the serious scenes have the air of insincerity. But the Duchess's talk in the first act and the conversation of the five men in Lord Darlington's rooms in the third act reach a high level of comedy.

## A Triumph for Miss Marion Terry.

Mr. Alexander was fortunate in being able to engage this clever actress for her old part. Her conception seems to have broadened with the years. What a lesson it was to the many young actresses of the modern stage in emotional restraint and grasp! How easily the beautiful Terry voice conveys shades of meaning! How surely she holds the stage! This is acting, and not self-conscious posing. Miss Marion Terry's Mrs. Erylne has a real life of her own. One believes in her past, and that she has an existence outside the theatre. We hear a good deal about the technique of acting, but I daresay that Miss Marion Terry could not tell you how she makes her effects; the secret is, probably, that she feels the part at first hand, and that her imagination and the intensity of her emotion make artificiality impossible. By her side, the Lady Windermere of Miss Lilian Braithwaite was conventional and stiff, although the sincerity and art of the older actress more than once inspired her, notably in the scene in which Lady Windermere speaks to Mrs. Erylne of her mother. Miss Braithwaite's impersonation, however, had a certain charm. If only she could control her voice so that she did not appear to be listening to it her acting would have the naturalness it now lacks. Miss Fanny Coleman as the Duchess and Mr. Vane Tempest as Charles Dumby took their old parts, and fine comedy sketches they are. Mr. Ben Webster was rather nervous as Lord Windermere, but he did well in the colourless character. Mr. C. Aubrey Smith might have been a trifle less sombre. He should remember that Darlington has to speak several of Oscar Wilde's epigrams. But as a foil to the frivolity of Dumby and Graham his impersonation was effective. Mr. Sydney Brough was inclined to be too farcical as Lord Augustus. Of the minor characters, Miss Corisande Hamilton's demure Lady Agatha was interesting. "Lady Windermere's Fan" should attract the town until the new play is ready for production. In the meantime, the matinées to be given by Mr. George Alexander are being anticipated with interest.

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The libretto of Richard Strauss's new opera has been founded by Herr Ernest von Wolzogen on Oscar Wilde's play, "Salome." The work will be produced either at Berlin (if Imperial objection be not made) or at Dresden.

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What is described as the "last will and testament" of the late Oscar Wilde is at length published in a volume from Messrs. Methuen. It is a little book written during his imprisonment in Reading Gaol, and entrusted to the care of his literary executor, containing, as we are told, "the philosophy of his art as well



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Jessen Wood's Oblivion Library



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Jessen Women's University Library  
2019-03-14



## AUTOGRAPH LETTERS.

The following Autograph Letters of this distinguished writer were addressed to his Publisher from various Continental Cities, are ALL in their ORIGINAL ENVELOPES, with the POSTAL and OFFICIAL STAMPS attached.

621 **WILDE** (Oscar) A.L., signed (no envelope), Paris, 1 page, 4to, inviting his Publisher to go over to Paris at once, wishes to see him about the Play, very important 15s

622 **WILDE** (O.) A.L., signed (no envelope), 1 page, 4to, Havre, asks for the loan of a Tenner which R—— R—— will repay, describes the weather, and requests the Money be sent at once 15s

623 ——— A.L., signed, undated, in which he is forwarding MSS. for correction, considers corrections worse than a New Play, is quite exhausted, mentions the St. James's Theatre, urgent appeals for Money, upon asking the Friend he is staying with for Money, says he grows yellow and takes to his bed, each day he finds a new fault in him, he only gives him Swiss wine to drink, and finishes this most entertaining Letter with a final appeal for Money, 3 pages, 8vo, *Gland*, 1899 21s

624 ——— 1 page, A.L., dated Havre, July 27th, 1899, another urgent appeal to his publisher for Money, if for 4 days only, he is leaving for Paris 15s

625 ——— 2 pages, A.L., Oct. 19th, 1898, dated Paris, still harping on the same string, namely, making incessant appeals for Money, has been ill in bed, asking for proofs of his Play ("An Ideal Husband"), &c. 17s 6d

626 ——— A.L., signed, Paris, Aug. 8, 1898, has reference to a MS., forwarded of which he had received no acknowledgment, fears he will be turned out from his hotel, indeed the whole Letter is a chronicle of misery and despair, and nearly hopeless 21s

627 ——— A.L., signed and dated, Paris, March 1st, 1898, writes in respect to the Ballad of Reading Gaol as to the dedication inserted, it will give an interest to the edition, &c., refers to a list of persons to whom presentation copies should be sent, a reference to America, and its possibilities, expresses anxiety as to the Reviewers, &c. 25s

628 ——— A.L., signed, 4 pages, 8vo, Napoli. Nov. 20, 1897, paying a compliment to the good nature of his Publisher, annoyance at going to Cook's twice a day and no Money arrived, refers to his Two Plays, "The Importance of being Ernest," "An Ideal Husband," makes witty remarks at the expense of his Publisher's habit of paying his debts, as to the shape of his book, and the importance of copyright in America, and closes with an amusing reference to Carlyle's oft-quoted saying in reference to the number of people and their capacities, &c. 25s

629 ——— A.L., signed, Paris, April 25th, 1898, 1 page, 8vo, returns thanks for a Cheque and anticipates a visit 15s

630 ——— A.L., 1 page, has gone to breakfast and fears there is but little chance of meeting him at the Grand Cafe, &c. 15s

631 ——— A.L., signed, May 11th, 1898, Paris, more wearisome and fruitless journeys to Cooks, so acute are his financial affairs he has not dined, 1 page, 8vo 15s

632 ——— 4 pages, 8vo, A.L., signed, Chalet Bourbat, Bernaval, Sunday, August 22, 1897, returns thanks for kind letters in his own choice language, refers to the Stannards and Pall's Stanley Weyman, &c., suggests an edition of Beckford, suggests that to be an editor of a paying magazine is a degrading position for any man to occupy, &c., the limits of a catalogue forbids a more exhaustive description (it must be seen) 30s

633 **WILDE** (O.) A 4-page 8vo A.L. of highest interest, mentioning his financial position, a description of a dinner party told in his own inimitable style, and mentioning names that have since become exceedingly interesting to the public in the light of later events, a famous book, also a famous lady is here put on record, and indeed it would be most difficult to mention a more Characteristic Letter, which from reasons that must be obvious, we refrain from quoting at large, *Paris, July 29th, 1898* 35s

634 ——— "I leave to-morrow for Geneva, please send the £30, also a copy of the Play ("An Ideal Husband"), &c., "I hope the Large Paper are finished by this," &c., *Nice, Feb. 26th, 1899*, 1 page, 4to 17s 6d

635 ——— "FRANK HARRIS must have a Japanese Paper, one for you and one for me; Large Paper, six for me; Small Paper, 15 for me, should I chance to see O'SULLIVAN, I shall say nothing about KALIDAYA," &c., *Hotel Marseilles, Paris, July 3rd, 1899* 17s 6d

636 ——— A 4-page A.L. signed, beseeching his Publisher to forward through Cook's, he appears to be stranded here, and to quote his words, "Mental anxiety is not good for poets," &c., *Villa Gindice, Posillipo, Oct. 15th, 1897* 25s

œuvre innocente  
digne d'honneur  
-y ce qui prou-  
er du malheur  
poursuivre la-  
t sottise, le sou-  
be à jamais le

LE MAUCLAIR.



## A DRAMA AND ITS STORY.

Die HERZOGIN VON PADUA, eine Tragödie von Oscar Wilde. Deutsch von Max Meyerfeld. Berlin, Egon Fleischel und Co.

By William Archer.

When "Lady Windermere's Fan" was produced, some of us thought, and said, that a first play which, with all its defects, showed such mastery of the stage, was almost unprecedented. That was substantially a sound opinion; but, as a matter of fact, the play was not a first play. Oscar Wilde had, about 1883, written for Miss Mary Anderson a five-act tragedy, named "The Duchess of Padua." Miss Anderson never produced it. There is a report that it was acted in America by the late Lawrence Barrett, but on that point I have no definite information. At any rate, it has now been translated into German from what the translator believes to be a unique manuscript. The rendering is spirited and good; but German is scarcely the idiom in which the author would have chosen to come before the world.

## An Astonishing Talent.

This youthful effort more than confirms all that has been said of Wilde's astonishing talent for the stage. It is imitative in method, over-luxuriant in style; but it has the breath of dramatic life in every scene. Like all the author's work, it lacks sincerity. It is not the outcome of a deep artistic impulse, but of superabundant cleverness delighting to exercise itself. A much less accomplished piece of work might have given more certain promise of poetic greatness. But its cleverness, and especially its feeling for stage-effect, are marvellous. Our best playwrights—Shakespeare himself—fumble awkwardly with their tools at that; but here is a writer who, without passing through any apprenticeship, has the technique of his art at his fingers' ends. The spirit and style are Elizabethan, but the craftsmanship French.

Guido Ferranti, a youth of unknown parentage, is summoned by a mysterious letter to meet a mysterious stranger in the market-place of Padua. He finds awaiting him an old man, Count Moranzone, who has much to tell him. He is counted as a devoted servant of Guido's father, who was none other than the Prince of Parma. While Guido was a child, the prince was foully betrayed to torture and death by a man who passed as his bosom friend. That man still lives, and Moranzone lays upon Guido the duty of avenging his sire. Simple assassination will not satisfy the count, who is an epicure in vengeance. He makes Guido swear to worm himself into the confidence of the betrayer, and become his bosom friend. Before, at a signal from Moranzone, he reveals himself to his victim and slaughters him with every circumstance of ferocity. But who is the betrayer? A troop of gaily-dressed nobles crosses the market-place, and Moranzone says to Guido, "The man to whom you shall see me kneel is your father's murderer." He kneels, of course, to the Duke of Padua.

## Of Deepest Dye.

In the second act we find Guido the favourite attendant of the Duke, who is a cynical tyrant of the deepest dye. He jeers at his subjects' sufferings, and when his young and lovely Duchess pleads their cause, he scornfully rejects her suit, and forbids her to succour them on her own account. Then comes a passionate declaration of love between the Duchess and Guido, interrupted by the arrival of a packet for Guido, containing a dagger with two leopards for its hilt. This—his father's dagger—is a token from Moranzone, signifying that the time has come to strike; and Guido has deeply sworn to proceed to action the moment it reaches him.

He is horror-struck at the reminder, declares wildly that an insuperable barrier has arisen between him and the Duchess, and bids her farewell for ever. Beatrice (for that is the Duchess's name), feeling her life doubly intolerable since this lightning-flash of love has come and gone, resolves to kill herself that very night.

So far the play is commonplace enough—a compound of motives from Victor Hugo ("Hernani") and Alfred de Musset ("Lorenzaccio"), with Shakespearean echoes in the passage between the Duke and the citizens, and in the lyrical love scene. Guido's talk of an "insuperable barrier" even seems a little far-fetched. In carrying out his own legitimate vendetta, he will free Padua from a tyrant and Beatrice from a brutal husband, far older than herself, whom she has never loved. Would this, in the eyes of a sixteenth-century Italian, seem any fatal let or hindrance to his passion? One would scarcely think so. But Guido's tenderness of conscience, as we shall see, is essential to the development of the action.

## At Dead of Night.

The third act passes at dead of night, in a corridor outside the Duke's bedchamber. Here Guido declares to Moranzone that he will keep his oath. He has convinced himself that his father's spirit will be far better appeased if, instead of killing the Duke, he lays the dagger on the sleeper's breast, with a writing signifying that he renounces the vengeance which he held in his hand. This is not at all Moranzone's view, who, after bitter remonstrances, washes his hands of Guido and retires. Then Guido directs his steps towards the Duke's chamber, from which, by the way, some mysterious sounds have been heard. Just as he is about to pass the crimson curtain, it is drawn aside from within, and the Duchess stands in the doorway. Guido sees in her an angel of light sent by heaven to bless his humaner purpose. All is now well between them—they will fly that very night—but Guido must leave her for a moment:—

GUIDO: First into the Duke's chamber must I glide.

And lay this letter with this dagger there,  
That when he wakes—

BEATRICE: When who awakes?

GUIDO: The Duke.

BEATRICE: He will no more awaken.

GUIDO: Is he dead?

Yes, he is dead. Beatrice has done what Guido shrank from doing. She drew her dagger to kill herself; but when she beheld the Duke, laden with years and crimes, muttering curses in his sleep, she recognised in him the barrier whereof Guido spoke, "saw red," and slew him. She has given her soul to hell for Guido's sake; but, in the meantime, they will live their life on earth in happiness. Aias! she has left Guido's character out of account. His intractable conscience declares that she has built the barrier higher than ever; and the more passionately she implores him to remember that what she did was done for love of him, the more harshly and even savagely does he cast her off. At last she gives up the struggle and rushes away in desperation. Guido is left alone for a moment, when the tramp of soldiers is heard approaching, and above it the voice of the Duchess bidding them seize the murderer of her husband. He is taken, as it were, red-handed, holding the poniard with which the deed was done.

## A Trial Scene.

The fourth act represents the trial of Guido. Moranzone, who shrewdly suspects the truth, urges him to defend himself, while the Duchess vehemently declares that he has placed himself out of the law. He has no right to be heard. The judges, after long deliberation, decide against her, and decree

that the prisoner may give his own version of the affair. Then Beatrice, feigning anger at the over-ruling of her will, tries to escape from the court; but the judges again intervene, and declare that the law demands her presence. Guido then addresses the Court, while Beatrice sits in an agony of dread, expecting him to denounce her; but when he has declared who he is, and why he hated the Duke, he ends his speech by avowing himself the murderer, and is led away to death. The act, a very elaborate one, is full of breathless moments of suspense. After it, the fifth act—the death

of the now reconciled lovers—is necessarily an anti-climax.

In spite of the familiarity of its material and the conventionality of its methods, this play reveals a theatrical craftsman of the first order. It is the work of a man who knew what he wanted to do, and did it. What he wanted to do was to create a great part for a romantic actress. To that end all other considerations were sacrificed; but assuredly the end was achieved. This youth, who had had no practical experience of the stage, showed a skill worthy of Sardou writing for Sarah Bernhardt—and he had not, in 1883, Sardou's "Théodora" or "La Tosca" to serve him as a model.

## A New Beatrice.

The part of Beatrice runs the whole gamut of dramatic effect. In the first act she has not a word to say. She merely appears under a silver canopy, descending the steps of a cathedral, and dazzling with her beauty the eyes of her predestined lover. That conception in itself reveals the instinct of the craftsman, throwing the actress's personality into relief, and forecasting, without discounting, the developments to follow. In the second act, Beatrice is first the saintly benefactress pleading with her tyrant lord for the humble and oppressed; then the passionate woman making her first confession of love; then the same woman stricken by an incomprehensible fate, and nerving herself to die. The third act shows her as a murderess, fresh from her crime, who encounters horror and loathing where she had looked for adoration, and has to plead, and plead in vain, for the love for which she has cast away her soul. In the fourth act she is the traitress who, in her rage and despair, has wrongfully denounced an innocent man, and now fights a fierce and relentless battle, in defiance of formal as well as substantial justice, to prevent him from retorting her denunciation upon her own head. Finally, she is restored by his self-sacrifice to her better self, and the lovers whose course of love has run so tempestuously are united in the calm of death. Thus she passes from saintliness to passion, from passion to despair, from despair to crime, from crime to bitter disillusion, from disillusion to baseness, frenzy, panic-stricken ferocity, and finally back again to tragic elevation and pathos. The character may not be a great character, but the part is a great part, beyond all doubt. It would not take much, indeed, to make me recant the distinction here suggested, and defend the Duchess Beatrice even from the psychological point of view.



Je ne le revis jamais. On l'invita, le 18-  
la, on fit des bassesses pour l'avoir, chez  
des gens qui, plus tard, mentirent carré-  
ment quand on leur reparla du poète  
qu'ils avaient reçu, du forçat qu'ils ne  
voulaient pas avoir connu. Je me sou-  
viens de ce tapage, de ces exhibitions. Je  
gardai de Wilde un vague souvenir. Ne  
sachant pas l'anglais, je ne pouvais dé-  
cider si le personnage était vraiment un  
grand écrivain ou simplement une façon  
de Bourget décadent. J'en ouïs parler de  
loin en loin. Whistler disait de lui : « Ce  
n'est rien du tout. » Mais Whistler était  
peu tendre ! Un soir, chez Mallarmé, on  
attendait la venue de Wilde. Whistler  
savait qu'il devait venir ce soir-là chez  
son vieil ami ; un peu avant dix heures,  
Mallarmé reçut ce télégramme : « Si Wil-  
de vient, serrez argenterie. — Whistler. »  
Le peintre des *Nocturnes*, rival de Wil-  
de dans la faveur des raffinés londoniens,  
le détestait. Il était d'une élégance bien  
légère, discrète pour n'avoir pas l'antipa-  
thie violente du poseur esthète, et il ac-  
cusait Wilde de « chiper » les bons mots.  
Un jour Whistler ayant dit une jolie cho-  
se, Wilde se récriait : « Quel mot adora-  
ble ! Que je voudrais l'avoir dit ! — Vous  
le direz, riposta le sarcastique coloriste.  
Et il est vrai que Wilde, comme d'An-  
nunzio, prenait partout, et forçait à « ser-  
rer l'argenterie ».

Il fut forcé, sans aucun crime, car on pouvait lui refuser la main si on le croyait capable de telles mœurs, mais de quel droit enfermer au bagne un homme qui n'a nui à personne, dont le vice n'était pas apparent, et à qui ses ennemis mêmes n'imputaient que des relations avec des professionnels consentants et payés, sans scènes sur la voie publique, sans corruption de personnes jusqu' alors ignorantes ? Condamnation monstrueuse en vérité, dont les effets furent atroces. Famille exilée, enfants ruinés et voués à la honte, pièces interdites, livres brûlés : on eût moins fait pour un assassin ! Wilde, malade à Reading, les doigts privés d'ongles à force de déchiqueter les câbles pour en faire de l'étoupe, devint un objet de pitié. Décidément c'était trop. On songea à une pétition pour obtenir que ce malheureux fût au moins dispensé du terrible hard-labour. Des écrivains, des poètes, se dressèrent d'instinct pour un homme qui, après tout, avait pensé et écrit avec talent.

*Intentions* démontre bien que Wilde était un esprit critique et non créateur. Il y a là des dialogues sur l'art, sur le rôle de la critique, sur Shakespeare, qui sont de beaux morceaux, médités par un soigneux et intelligent artiste. Cela vaut tout à fait la peine d'être lu. Quel dommage que la furieuse manie d'étonner les gens ait étriqué ce cerveau ! Quand il ne cède pas au désir de dire un aphorisme prétentieux et bizarre, quand il n'affecte pas une sagesse cynique qui, au fond, est souvent aussi banale qu'agaçante, Wilde se prouve un érudit, un logicien, un homme de grand goût et un charmant esprit. Oh ! ce n'est pas un génie, et nous avons mieux ici. A côté d'un Anatole France, c'est un honorable talent de second ordre. Mais enfin c'était quelqu'un, avec peu d'idées mais un art propre à les faire valoir, aucune originalité mais une rhétorique souple, une jolie forme, plus d'esprit qu'on n'en trouve aux Anglais. M. Joseph Renaud a eu tout à fait raison d'avoir la courageuse pensée de traduire ce livre plein d'excellentes remarques sur l'art, et plus personnel que la *Salomé* imitée de Flaubert ou les contes de la *Maison des Grenades*, nourris de souvenirs antiques. Il est humain, juste et sensé d'en finir avec l'ostentatisme sauvage qui a voulu écraser cette pauvre mémoire et ce talent. L'homme a souffert immensément, et il est mort. Comparons sa faute, discutable en droit, indémontrée en fait, et son châtiment inouï. Nous verrons que la disproportion est scandaleuse. Ne faisons pas un martyr de Wilde, encore qu'il l'ait été du *cant* et de la prudence britanniques. Mais accordons à son œuvre innocente une justice élémentaire, digne d'honnêtes gens : lisons-la, aimons-y ce qui prouve le talent, sans l'auréoler du malheur de l'homme, mais sans y poursuivre lâchement, avec étroitesse et sottise, le souvenir d'une tare que dérobent jamais le silence du cercueil.