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Oscar Wilde
Scrapbook

Vol. 3

30 March 1906
Western Daily Press,

A new edition of Oscar Wilde's works is shortly to be published, and it will include an enlarged issue of his "De Profundis." The additions consist of passages which have only appeared in the German, Russian, and Italian versions of the book, and letters which Wilde wrote to a friend from Reading Gaol.

3 April 1906 **World,**

A uniform edition of the works of the late Oscar Wilde is announced as in preparation by Messrs. Methuen. A new play, *The Duchess of Padua*, will be included in the series, and the reprints will be from the last editions issued under the superintendence of the author, and will be published by the authority of his literary executor.

Bazaar 4 April 1906

A new edition of Oscar Wilde's works will shortly be published. In it will be found an enlarged issue of "De Profundis," for the English edition to which we are chiefly accustomed does not contain the whole of the work. For instance, the German version, which was completed before the English edition was contemplated, contains at least fifty pages of matter to be found nowhere else, and there are Italian and Russian editions as well. All these will be incorporated in the new and complete English version.

Daily Telegraph, 27 April 1906.

Messrs. Methuen are to publish on Nov. 30 the first volume of their collected uniform edition of the works of the late Mr. Oscar Wilde. It is to include all his hitherto published books and essays, with the exception of "The Picture of Dorian Grey," and, in addition, several poems and two plays which have never before been published. The plays are "The Duchess of Padua" and "A Florentine Tragedy," and the former will be the volume which Messrs. Methuen will issue in November.

23 Jan. 1907.

The interest excited by "De Profundis," that most remarkable of all the books of a man of wayward, original mind, endowed with a singular feeling for the nuances of literary expression, is in itself sufficient justification for an enterprise which was on many grounds to be welcomed—the publication of a uniform edition of the works of Oscar Wilde. This is announced by Messrs. Methuen. The text follows the latest corrections of the author. Much of the matter has been not merely out of print, but practically unobtainable. There is also to be included a long play entitled "The Duchess of Padua," which has only been published in Germany. Some of the poems given are also new. "Salome" is given in the original French, and in the same volume with it are a lately-discovered play, "A Florentine Tragedy," and an early work called "Vera," unknown to all but a very few. The edition is expected to be in more than a dozen volumes, and is limited to 1,000 copies.

OXFORD CHRONICLE.

Messrs. Methuen announce that they will soon commence the publication of a uniform edition of the works of Oscar Wilde. They contain the author's last corrections, and are published under the authority of his literary executor. They will include "The Duchess of Padua," a hitherto unpublished play; various poems before uncollected or unpublished; "Salome," in the original French, with a lately-discovered play, "A Florentine Tragedy," and "Vera," an early work; the whole of the acted plays of the writer; a collection of stories, essays, and other prose pieces; and "De Profundis," a longer and more complete form of the original book, with some letters to Mr. Robert Ross written from Reading Prison. The edition is limited to 1,000 copies.

JANUARY 25, 1907.

The Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette.

A new edition of Oscar Wilde's works is promised, including an enlarged edition of "De Profundis."

Glasgow Evening News,

It is no secret that a new edition of the works of Oscar Wilde has been in contemplation for some time by his friend and literary executor, Mr. Gilbert Ross. Very wisely, a preliminary prospectus was circulated privately, and the response has been so encouraging that no fear attends its success. Methuens are the publishers, and the set will be in eleven volumes, comprising Wilde's plays, poems, and essays, but, unfortunately, for copyright reasons probably "Dorian Grey," the story which many of his admirers think the best book, is not to be included. The idea of a handsome, limited edition is all very well, but surely some consideration should be shown to the book-lovers who can rarely afford so costly a set. It is true that first editions have fetched high prices, but it is also true that the demand has come principally from collectors, who too often have lost the sense of sweet intercourse with books because of mercenary considerations. The American editions of Wilde are more to my mind, for they have been produced with the more middle-class buyer in view. The plays can be had in two volumes for about ten shillings, and the complete poems for a similar price. A handy edition of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" would have an immense circulation.

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Messrs. Methuen announce that they will presently begin to issue a collated and uniform edition of the works of Oscar Wilde. This will include the "Duchess of Padua," a five-act tragedy in blank verse, produced in New York in 1891, and printed since Wilde's death in German, but never yet in the English original. We do not know whether Messrs. Methuen's edition will include "A Florentine Tragedy," written in 1895, nor, indeed, what has become of that play, which has never been printed.

Athenæum, 19 Jan. 1907

In the uniform edition of "The Works of Oscar Wilde" promised by Messrs. Methuen will be included "The Duchess of Padua," a play hitherto unpublished, and "De Profundis" in a fuller form, including some letters to Mr. Robert Ross.

TRIBUNE,

JANUARY 29, 1907.

Messrs. Methuen's list of forthcoming books for the first half of this year contains many interesting announcements. Not the least important is the preparation of a uniform edition of the works of Oscar Wilde, containing the last corrections of the author, and published by the authority of his literary executor. Many of the books have been out of print for some years, and can hardly be obtained. The edition will also contain some of the early works of the author, and various short pieces hitherto uncollected and unpublished.

Outlook,

With the authority of the author's literary executor, Messrs. Methuen are producing a uniform edition of works of Oscar Wilde, reproduced from the latest edition issued under his superintendence and in many cases containing his last corrections. The first volume will be *Duchess of Padua*, a long play hitherto unpublished.

Messrs. Methuen announce that they will soon commence the publication of a uniform edition of the works of Oscar Wilde. The books are reprinted from the latest editions issued under the superintendence of the author, and in many cases they contain his last corrections. They are published by the authority of literary executor. *The Duchess of Padua* is a new play and the other books have been out of print for years, and are now practically unobtainable. The edition is limited to 1,000 copies, and is printed hand-made paper, demy 8vo. The price of each volume is 12s. 6d. net. There is also an edition, limited to fifty copies for Great Britain, on Japanese vellum, net, each volume.

Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette.

Messrs. Methuen make the welcome announcement that they are about to produce a complete and uniform edition of Oscar Wilde's works. These are now a considerable vogue in foreign countries and foreign critics, and, though this foreign estimate me personally as in some instances unduly high, no reason that Wilde's literary work should not be presented in their own country. The fact that his life was on other sides so painful a disaster is more than the side in which he did good work should be ignored, or depreciated on irrelevant grounds. The new edition will include the unpublished play *Duchess of Padua*, and a fuller version of *De Profundis*, than that originally published in it under the editorship of Mr. Robert Ross.

10 June 1906
WEEKLY DISPATCH.

MR. JABEZ BALFOUR IN PARLIAMENT.

"Weekly Dispatch" Articles Quoted in Debate.

HORRORS OF PRISON LIFE

In a discussion in the House of Commons on the vote for the Expenses of Prisons in England and Wales, Mr. T. P. O'Connor rigorously denounced the unnecessary hardships of penal servitude, and quoted from the articles which are being written for the "Weekly Dispatch" by Mr. Jabez Balfour. "I have read those articles with keen and pathetic interest," said Mr. O'Connor. "In one of them Mr. Balfour wrote, 'I solemnly declare that to a great number of prisoners penal servitude is one long hunger.' That testimony will be heard with sympathy by this House, and perhaps with remorse." Fifty years hence, he continued, the prison treatment of to-day would be regarded with the same incredulity and horror with which we regard the state of things under which a man was formerly sent to Tyburn for stealing a sheep. A number of members of the Grand Committee on the Prisons Bill succeeded in getting the "starvation scale" removed from the prison dietary. When they had done that he thought they had accomplished something. They had accomplished nothing. He had heard many stories since which went to prove that starvation still existed. Oscar Wilde was reported to have said: "Can you imagine what it is to have a horrible sense of gnawing at your vitals all hours of the day—the very last sensation when you go to bed, the sensation that disturbs you in the watches of the night, and the sensation with which you begin the day? Possibly the sick might be sufficient to take the test of doctors and chemists, to keep body and soul together. But that was not enough. He had had the testimony of a prisoner after prisoner that men of robust physique, large frame, and vigorous appetite constantly suffered from hunger. Mr. Lynch, who had undergone a sentence of imprisonment, told him that he had constantly seen prisoners suffering from fierce physical torture for the want of food. To inflict constant hunger on any man was not only torture, but a disgrace to the Parliament that permitted it. He objected strongly also to the rigidity with which the silent system was maintained in the prisons. The late Mr. Davitt complained that this was one of the worst sufferings of convict life. If the object of inflicting all this suffering on the convict was vengeance we had no right to call ourselves a Christian nation. If discipline and reformation it was brutalising and demoralising, making the criminal not better but worse. He asked for a Select Committee to investigate the whole question, and containing a large representation of Labour members, "because," he pointed out, "they know that crime is largely a question of environment." Mr. Gladstone said that Mr. O'Connor had largely based his arguments on the experiences of Mr. Michael Davitt, Mr. Jabez Balfour, and Mr. Oscar Wilde, who all underwent imprisonment, wholly or mostly under the old system. The food scale was to-day altered, the silent system had been modified, alterations had been made in the number and character of the books supplied, the occupation of prisoners had been almost entirely changed.

Bystander,

Justice is to be done, in the eyes of the British reader, to the American school of poetry. The works of the greatest poets over the water—Bryant, Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Whitman, and Lunt—are to be published together by Messrs. Constable—under the title of "The Chief American Poets," by Curtis Hidden Page. Hitherto, American verse has been ranked as a "sort of English poetry." Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and others, have been classified with the minor muse of our own country, which is scarcely fair, for, taken collectively, there is sufficient of the distinctive American idiom—certainly in the case of Whitman—to entitle our cousins to claim their poetry as a school of itself. Without going so far as the late Oscar Wilde, who said that "England and America have everything in common—save language," the fact remains that so vast is the number of Americanisms—my dictionary of them is five inches thick—that, to all literary intents and purposes, theirs is a language distinct from ours, and their writers and poets, therefore, no more British than they are French or German.

Maxims and Moralising.

Women are made to be loved, not to be understood.

Nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

The only thing that one really knows about human nature is that it changes.

It is always with the best intentions that the worst work is done.

Charity creates a multitude of sins.

One's past is what one is. It is the only way by which people should be judged.

It is always a silly thing to give advice, but to give good advice is fatal.

It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing.

Better to take pleasure in the rose than to put its root under a microscope.

Experience is a question of instinct about life.

Maxims and Moralising. 23 June 1906.

Be amusing; never tell unkind stories—above all, never tell long ones.

Everyone loves power, even if he does not know what to do with it.

When men are pure, laws are useless; when men are corrupt, laws are broken.

The affections should not be forced; our feelings are our own property, often our best.

It is not in human nature to endure extremities, and sorrows soon destroy either us or themselves.

The world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes.

The art of conversation consists of the exercise of two fine qualities: you must originate and you must sympathise; you must possess at the same time the habit of communicating and the habit of listening. The union is rather rare, but irresistible.

MR. MANDEVILLE'S "WILDE" WIT.

We have received for publication the following correspondence between Mr. C. H. Norman and Mr. A. Moreton Mandeville, proprietor of "London Opinion":

4 N., Hyde Park Mansions, June 19, 1906.

Mr. A. Moreton Mandeville, Sir,—My attention has been called to some notes of yours in "London Opinion" of June 16th. Under the heading of "Maxims and Moralising," signed "A. M. M.," there appears a number of witty sayings of the late Mr. Oscar Wilde, which have been palpably extracted from "Sebastian Melmoth," without any acknowledgment of their source whatsoever.

In addition to printing the product of another person's brains without the usual intimation, you have had the impudence to attach your own initials, thus suggesting that the epigrams are your own. I should be glad to hear from you at the earliest possible moment, pending my taking steps which will give your methods of brain-picking an advertisement of a kind which you will not find very pleasant. I must ask you to be good enough to publish an apology in the ensuing week's issue of "London Opinion," also a statement giving the source from which you derived your "Maxims and Moralising," and publishing the author's name. I have taken a copy of this letter, which I have registered.—Yours, etc., C. H. Norman.

London and Paris Exchange, 20th June, 1906.

C. H. Norman, Esq. Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter, and thank you very much for drawing my attention to the matter. I should esteem it a favour if you would call and see me. If you would let me know when it would be convenient, I will arrange to keep the time free.—Yours faithfully, A. M. Mandeville.

We teach people how to remember; we never teach them how to grow.

Society often forgives the criminal, it never forgives the dreamer.

Duty is what one expects from others, it is not what one does oneself.

Discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or a nation.

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell you the truth.

The world has been made by fools that wise men may live in it.

We live in an age that reads too much to be wise and that thinks too much to be beautiful.

Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out. It is difficult not to be unjust to what one loves.

Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

To get back one's youth one has merely to repeat one's follies.

Men of the world have a knack of settling everything without discussion; they do it by tact.

To make others feel we must feel ourselves; and to feel ourselves we must be natural.

Before you influence others you must learn to influence yourself. A. M. M.

If you are not very clever, you should be conciliatory.

Comfort is the only thing our civilisation can give us.

A thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

The true perfection of man lies not in what man has, but in what man is.

It is always when the game is played that we discover the cause of the result.

True wisdom lies in the policy that would effect its aims by the influence of opinion, and yet by the means of existing forms.

It is the fashion of the present age to under-rate the influence of individual character. This is a consolation of mediocrity. Everything that is great has been accomplished by great men.

In this world there are only two tragedies—one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst—the last is a real tragedy. A. M. M.

A "HUGE BLUNDER" REPEATED WEEKLY.

21st June, 1906. Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 20th inst., but I cannot see that any advantage will be served by a personal interview. The facts are perfectly clear. I indicated the course that should be taken in my previous letter, and have nothing to add to that.—Yours faithfully, C. H. Norman.

Mr. A. Moreton Mandeville.

38, 37, and 39, Southampton-street, Strand, W.C., June 21st, 1906.

C. H. Norman, Esq. Dear Sir,—In further reply to your letter of the 19th June, the matter was, of course, a huge blunder, attention to which I am called in the next issue. If your kind interest in the matter extends further, you are very welcome to call to receive further explanation.—Yours faithfully, A. L. Landrith.

Editor.

In his covering letter to us, Mr. Norman adds:

This is an invitation which perhaps it is hardly necessary to say I have not accepted.

It will be remarked that no explanation has been offered yet by either Mr. Mandeville or his editor which will throw light on the action of Mr. Mandeville in crediting unto himself the fruit of another man's brains.

I had only seen the one number of "London Opinion" when I opened this correspondence, and that was the number for June 16th. On Thursday last, the 21st, there was published another number of "London Opinion" for the week ending June 23rd. In this later number the same sort of thing is to be found. There is again a paragraph headed "Maxims and Moralising," and it is again signed by "A. M. M." These "Maxims and Moralising" also have been pilfered from "Sebastian Melmoth." Whether Mr. Mandeville has adopted a similar method of filling up his pages in previous numbers I have not troubled to inquire. I neither know nor care. It is sufficient for my purpose that in the last two numbers of "London Opinion" Mr. Mandeville has put his name to material which he cannot claim as his own. Whether Mr. Wilde's literary executors or the publishers of "Sebastian Melmoth" have any remedy I do not profess to say. All I am concerned with is to expose as widely as possible a form of literary appropriation which is detestable.

30 March 1906

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The Evening Standard and
St. James's Gazette. 31. 3. 06

2013-08-08 Women's University Library 506

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2019-03 Jissen Women's University Library 507

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14 April 1906

Glasgow Herald,

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2019 Women's University Library

THE BOOKSELLER.

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27 April 1906.

"Times" Literary Supplement

The uniform edition of the works of Oscar Wilde, which Messrs. Methuen have in preparation for the autumn, will include a long and new play entitled *The Duchess of Padua*, which will fill one volume. The book containing "Salome, and other Plays" will include *Vera* and the major portion of another new play entitled *A Florentine Tragedy*. The volume of "Poems" will contain "Ravenna," "A Ballad of Reading Gaol," and various other poems hitherto uncollected, while several prose pieces will be added for the first time to the books entitled "Intentions" and "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime." The new edition of "De Profundis" will contain a longer form of the original work, and include some letters to Mr. Robert Ross and two letters on prison life.

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Uissen 2009-08-17 University Library

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191-1907

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Jissen 2009-03-15 University Library

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2019-03- Women's University Library 516

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10 June 1906

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Mr. Gladstone said that Mr. O'Connor had largely based his arguments on the experiences of Mr. Michael Davitt, Mr. Jabez Balfour, and Mr. Oscar Wilde, who all underwent imprisonment, wholly or mostly under the old system. The food scale was to-day altered, the silent system had been modified, alterations had been made in the number and character of the books supplied, and the conditions of prisoners had been almost entirely changed.

16 June 1906

✱ ✱ ✱ "London"
Opinion

Maxims and Moralising.

Women are made to be loved, not to be understood.

Nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

The only thing that one really knows about human nature is that it changes.

It is always with the best intentions that the worst work is done.

Charity creates a multitude of sins.

One's past is what one is. It is the only way by which people should be judged.

It is always a silly thing to give advice, but to give good advice is fatal.

It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing.

Better to take pleasure in the rose than to put its root under a microscope.

Experience is a question of instinct about life.

Maxims and Moralising. 23 June 1906.

Be amusing; never tell unkind stories—above all, never tell long ones.

Everyone loves power, even if he does not know what to do with it.

When men are pure, laws are useless; when men are corrupt, laws are broken.

The affections should not be forced; our feelings are our own property, often our best.

It is not in human nature to endure extremities, and sorrows soon destroy either us or themselves.

The world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes.

The art of conversation consists of the exercise of two fine qualities: you must originate and you must sympathise; you must possess at the same time the habit of communicating and the habit of listening.

The union is rather irresistible.

We teach people how to remember; we never teach them how to grow.

Society often forgives the criminal, it never forgives the dreamer.

Duty is what one expects from others, it is not what one does oneself.

Discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or a nation.

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell you the truth.

The world has been made by fools that wise men may live in it.

We live in an age that reads too much to be wise and that thinks too much to be beautiful.

Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out.

It is difficult not to be unjust to what one loves.

Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

To get back one's youth one has merely to repeat one's follies.

Men of the world have a knack of settling everything without discussion; they do it by tact.

To make others feel we must feel ourselves; and to feel ourselves we must be natural.

Before you influence others you must learn to influence yourself.

A. M. M.

If you are not very clever, you should be conciliatory.

Comfort is the only thing our civilisation can give us.

A thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

The true perfection of man lies not in what man has, but in what man is.

It is always when the game is played that we discover the cause of the result.

True wisdom lies in the policy that would effect its aims by the influence of opinion, and yet by the means of existing forms.

It is the fashion of the present age to under-rate the influence of individual character. This is a consolation of mediocrity. Everything that is great has been accomplished by great men.

In this world there are only two tragedies—one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst—the last is a real tragedy.

A. M. M.

Bystander.

28 March 1956

The American School of Poetry

Justice is to be done, in the eyes of the British reader, to the American school of poetry.

The works of the greatest poets over the water—Bryant, Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell, Whitman, and Lanier—are to be published together by Messrs. Constable—under the title of “The Chief American Poets,” by Curtis Hidden Page. Hitherto, American verse has been ranked as a “sort of English poetry.” Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and others, have been classified with the minor muse of our own country, which is scarcely fair, for, taken collectively, there is sufficient of the distinctive American idiom—certainly in the case of Whitman—to entitle our cousins to claim their poetry as a school of itself. Without going so far as the late Oscar Wilde, who said that “England and America have everything in common—save language,” the fact remains that so vast is the number of Americanisms—my dictionary of them is five inches thick—that, to all literary intents and purposes, theirs is a language distinct from ours, and their writers and poets, therefore, no more British than they are French or German.

13. last

MR. MANDEVILLE'S "WILDE" WIT.

We have received for publication the following correspondence between Mr. C. H. Norman and Mr. A. Moreton Mandeville, proprietor of "London Opinion":

4 N., Hyde Park Mansions,
June 19, 1906.

Mr. A. Moreton Mandeville.

Sir,—My attention has been called to some notes of yours in "London Opinion" of June 16th. Under the heading of "Maxims and Moralising," signed "A. M. M.," there appears a number of witty sayings of the late Mr. Oscar Wilde, which have been palpably extracted from "Sebastian Melmoth," without any acknowledgment of their source whatsoever.

In addition to printing the product of another person's brains without the usual intimation, you have had the impertinence to attach your own initials, thus suggesting that the epigrams are your own. I should be glad to hear from you at the earliest possible moment, pending my taking steps which will give your methods of brain-picking an advertisement of a kind which you will not find very pleasant. I must ask you to be good enough to publish an apology in the ensuing week's issue of "London Opinion," also a statement giving the source from which you derived your "Maxims and Moralising," and publishing the author's name.

I have taken a copy of this letter, which I have registered.—Yours, etc.,

C. H. Norman.

London and Paris Exchange,
20th June, 1906.

C. H. Norman, Esq.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter, and thank you very much for drawing my attention to the matter. I should esteem it a favour if you would call and see me. If you would let me know when it would be convenient, I will arrange to keep the time free.—Yours faithfully,
A. M. Mandeville.

P.S.—Trusting I may have the pleasure of meeting you at an early date, which will give me an opportunity of

A "HUGE BLUNDER" REPEATED WEEKLY.

21st June, 1906.

Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 20th inst., but I cannot see that any advantage will be served by a personal interview. The facts are perfectly clear. I indicated the course that should be taken in my previous letter, and have nothing to add to that.—Yours faithfully,
C. H. Norman.

Mr. A. Moreton Mandeville.

36, 37, and 39, Southampton-street,
Strand, W.C., June 21st, 1906.

C. H. Norman, Esq.

Dear Sir,—In further reply to your letter of the 19th June, the matter was, of course, a huge blunder, attention to which is to be called in the next issue. If your kind interest in the matter extends further, you are very welcome to call to receive further explanation.—Yours faithfully,

A. L. Landrith,
Editor.

In his covering letter to us, Mr. Norman adds:

This is an invitation which perhaps it is hardly necessary to say I have not accepted.

It will be remarked that no explanation has been offered yet by either Mr. Mandeville or his editor which will throw light on the action of Mr. Mandeville in crediting unto himself the fruit of another man's brains.

I had only seen the one number of "London Opinion" when I opened this correspondence, and that was the number for June 16th. On Thursday last, the 21st, there was published another number of "London Opinion" for the week ending June 23rd. In this later number the same sort of thing is to be found. There is again a paragraph headed "Maxims and Moralising," and it is again signed by "A. M. M." These "Maxims and Moralising" also have been pilfered from "Sebastian Melmoth." Whether Mr. Mandeville has adopted a similar method of filling up his pages in previous numbers I have not troubled to inquire. I neither know nor care. It is sufficient for my purpose that in the last two numbers of "London Opinion" Mr. Mandeville has put his name to material which he cannot claim as his own.

Whether Mr. Wilde's literary executors or the publishers of "Sebastian Melmoth" have any remedy I do not profess to say. All I am concerned with is to expose as widely as possible a form of literary dishonesty which is detestable.

26
June
1906

Daily News

A rather amateur performance of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" given at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, has set people interested in the drama talking again of the strange fate of many of these plays, which have again and again been triumphantly produced in Germany, and have been so utterly neglected here. In spite of more or less competent "lives," reminiscences, and newspaper articles, mystery still covers the story of many of them. "The Florentine Tragedy," for instance, is only a fragment reconstructed out of information supplied by Mr. Robert Ross, and also from a fuller version produced in Germany.

It has been stated during the last few days that this play, which the late Mr. Wilde read to Mr. Ross from the manuscript, was "lost" at the time when his bankruptcy was declared. It would be more accurate to say that it was stolen, and that theft seems to have taken place during the hurried sale and the complete confusion of the author's effects in his Tite-street house. Now, if it was indeed stolen, there is some hope that it may have been preserved, and that its possessor may offer it for a great price, now that the interest in it is so keen.

"The Duchess of Padua" is another of Mr. Wilde's plays which it is almost impossible to buy. One of his biographers has described the delight he took in the title and in the name of Padua. "Am I not duchess here in Padua?" was one of the phrases from it he was never tired of repeating. Of course, too, others of his celebrated witty books—"Intentions," and the poems and "Dorian Grey," as well as the charming fairy-tales in "The House of Pomegranates" and "The Happy Prince"—have long been out of print. The publisher who undertakes to reprint them all, with the brilliant essay on socialism and the other shorter volumes, would certainly, as the phrase goes, "make a good thing of it," though no doubt so "useful" an end to his work would have distressed the author. "All art is quite useless," was one of his favourite maxims.

"Salomé," of course, was written in French, and the English version is, quaintly enough, only a translation. It was played once or twice in Paris, and was to have been produced by Sarah Bernhardt just when the author's downfall came. The fact that the censor forbade his play in England annoyed Oscar Wilde so much that he pretended he was going to be naturalised as a Frenchman. He spoke French very nearly perfectly, and was always enthusiastically welcomed in Paris at several hospitable houses where his conversation was admired. He would talk while the rest of the dinner-table remained respectfully silent, making mild, pontifical gestures with his hands, and waving the scarab ring on his finger, which added to the slightly exotic air he liked to suggest by his voice and manner.

A lecture on Bernard Shaw was delivered yesterday at the Steinway Hall by Mr. J. C. Powys, who on the next two Thursdays will also lecture on Guy de Maupassant and Oscar Wilde. Mr. Powys is one of the youngest of our University Extension lecturers, and has a quite unusual gift of oratory. He recently made a tour through the United States, where he lectured on English literature to large audiences of young men, with whom he was remarkably successful. Mr. Powys has also published a volume of poems, which contains many lyrics worth remembering.

TRIBUNE.

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"Salome" will be performed at the Metropolitan Opera in New York with Miss Freinstdt in the title role, Van Rooy as John the Baptist, and Herr Busman as Herod. Miss Destinn and Herr Knoke have not obtained sufficient leave of absence, but Mr. Conried has engaged Geraldine Farrar, who will probably appear as Madame Butterfly. Among the leading singers are Lina Cavalieri and Fräulein Terina, who will sing as Isolde, La Tosca, Valentine, and Kundry, in the latter role alternating with Miss Freinstdt. Caruso will add to his repertoire the principal parts in "Fedora," "Fra Diavolo," and "I Puritani."

Musical Standard.

Mr. Henry Wood found time on his way to Norway, where he is spending his holiday, to witness one of the performances of "Salome" at Cologne.

Not only does Leipzig number among its inhabitants Professor Arthur Nikisch, conductor of the Gewandhaus Concerts and director of the Conservatorium, where his class for embryo conductors is, says the "Telegraph," in a particularly flourishing state, but it also has in Herr Hagel an operatic conductor who seems to be pushing his way into the very forefront with remarkable rapidity. Herr Hagel's performance of Strauss' "Salome" has been more than favourably compared with Herr Ernest von Schuch's in Dresden; he will direct the first performance of Miss Smyth's opera "Les Naufrageurs" in Leipzig next November.

Publishers' Circular.

A WARNING TO BOOKSELLERS.

DEAR SIR,—I am sure that it is not your wish that the PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR should be used to propagate frauds and deceive book-buyers.

May I, therefore, ask you to exercise particular caution in inserting advertisements for the sale or buying of Oscar Wilde's books, in which an enormous trade is done in pirated editions under false descriptions?

In your issue of April 14, for example, there are offered for sale the following books, all of which come under the above category:

'Children in Prison,' 1st edition, in pamphlet form, 1898. This is a reprint of a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* of May 1897.

'Phrases and Philosophies.' One of the countless pirated reprints from the 'Chameleon.'

'Woman of No Importance.' Pirated reprint.

'Wilde v. Whistler.' Pirated extracts from 'The Gentle Art of Making Friends.'

It is also quite false to describe any of the above as being 'limited' in number to 125 copies or 250 copies. The numbers are limited only by the demand. One bookseller has told me that he has sold hundreds of copies of a book of which the edition was stated to consist of 75 only.

May I ask you, also, not to insert advertisements of 'The Priest and the Acolyte' under Oscar Wilde's name? He was not the author of this story, the contents of which he described as 'perfect twaddle.' I have done my best for years past to refute this horrible libel, and to nail this lie to the counter. I have written to several booksellers stating the facts of the case, and letters to the same effect have been inserted in the *St. James's Gazette*, the *Sphere*, and other papers. I have also repudiated Wilde's authorship of this story in my 'Oscar Wilde: a Study,' and Mr. Sherard has done so even more emphatically in his recent book, 'Twenty Years in Paris.'

The flooding of the market with pirated reprints must have resulted in the loss of many hundreds of pounds to Wilde's estate—more than would have been sufficient to satisfy the claims of the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, and I feel sure that you do not wish the PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR to be used as a means of encouraging these frauds.

Messrs. Methuen are preparing for publication this year an authorised edition of Wilde's works, which I hope will have some effect in putting a stop to the ill-gotten gains of these unscrupulous publishers, but I fear it is too late to have much effect, and the pirates, having well filled their coffers, are now unloading their stock at 'cutting' prices.

I may add that, under the authority of Mr. Wilde's literary executor, I am editing some of the volumes for Messrs. Methuen, and also am preparing a bibliography to be issued with the uniform edition, and this will, I hope, satisfy you that I have some right to protest as I have—Yours, &c.

Oxford: April 21. STUART MASON.

People, 24 June

Famous Wits and Witticisms.

But that has nothing to do with wit and humour. These were the passages in my marked volumes that I had in my mind when I drifted into the question of the reverent, or otherwise, treatment of books. Sheridan had the reputation of preparing his witty sayings. On many occasions, however, he evinced a ready gift of repartee. When Lord Lauderdale declared that he should repeat a witty remark which Sheridan had just made, he said, "Pray don't, my lord, a joke in your mouth is no laughing matter." A certain Baron who had been thrown out of a second floor window for cheating at cards asked Foote what he should do about it. "Do!" exclaimed Foote, "why never play so high again as long as you live." That story of Lauderdale and Foote reminds one of Wilde and Whistler. "I should like to have said that," remarked Wilde of a sparkling epigram Whistler had originated. "Oh, you will," was Whistler's prompt rejoinder. "Macaulay not only overflew with learning," said Sydney Smith, "but he stood in the shops." Two Royal Dukes, who were on familiar, not to say jocular terms, with Sheridan, meeting him in Pall Mall, said "Sherry, we were just discussing whether you are a great fool or a great rogue; what is your opinion?" Sheridan, taking his

Star. 29 Sept. 1906

I like witty lampoons, but nowadays there is little wit in Grub Street. We all love each other. Our manners are mild. We dissemble our hate. Our fights are sham fights. Only the publishers and the "Times" Book Club can gird up their loins for the battle. We look on idly as they enter the arena. We do not join the fray. The gentle art of making enemies is lost. One can make nothing but friends. To-day, however, I am proud. I have made a delightful enemy. As I walked down Fleet-st. I met Tom Tosh. "Hullo!" he cried. "Have you seen the 'Academy'?" He thrust a paper into my hand. "They have gone for you. Why, they call you 'Howlglass.'" "Nonsense! You can't pull my leg." But he was not hoaxing me. There it was in cold print—"Howlglass." I rubbed my eyes. The "Academy," too! What are we coming to?

The article is three columns long. It purports to be a review of Mr. Swinburne's "critical essay" on Blake. Here is the second sentence: "Much has been discovered and more is likely to be discovered about Blake since 1866." But that is a trifle. The writer drops into verse:

Georgey Morgie, kiddin and sly,
Kissed the girls and made them cry;
What the girls came out to say,
George never heard for he ran away.

"Georgey Morgie" is Mr. George Moore. Here is another verse from a parody of Blake:

For MacColl is an intellectual thing,
And Hugh P. Lane keeps Dublin awake;
And Fry to New York has taken wing,
And Charles Holroyd has got the cake.

There are also puns such as "Edouard Manet and many manet others," "Oretonne" and "Gretins." Browning is "a brownie," and Mr. Gosse is "my darlin' Gosse," which is, I suppose, Irish. Something is "mosaicd with gold." Indeed, the whole article ought to be reproduced in the English edition of "Mœurs des Diurnales."

The gifted author of this bizarre article is Mr. Robert Ross. Who is Mr. Ross? The only thing I know about him is creditable. He was a staunch friend of Oscar Wilde, and Wilce bequeathed to him the MS. of "De Profundis." I respect Mr. Ross for his loyalty to his friend, and I am only sorry that Wilde did not leave him his wit as well as his work. In his preface to "De Profundis" Mr. Ross published a letter which he had received from Wilde. In it he said: "On the other side of the prison wall there are some poor black soot-besmirched trees, which are just breaking out into buds of an almost shrill green. I know quite well what they are going through. They are finding expression." I think Mr. Ross is like those poor black soot-besmirched trees. He is just breaking out into buds of an almost shrill green. I know quite well what he is going through. He is finding expression. But surely he can do better than—well, than "Howlglass." Let me whisper in his ear the words addressed by M. le Vicomte Sosthène de la Rochefoucauld to another debutant: "Vous avez une jolie plume, jeune homme: cultivez-la, cultivez-la."

PLAYS' STRANGE HISTORY.

"FLORENTINE TRAGEDY" LOST AND FOUND.

An interesting story attaches to the "Florentine Tragedy," a short play by the late Oscar Wilde, which is to be produced on Sunday and Monday next by the Literary Theatre Club. The manuscript disappeared in a mysterious manner shortly after it was completed, and it is only quite recently that the tragedy has been pieced together from the author's first rough draft by his literary executor, Mr. Robert Ross.

The history of the "Florentine Tragedy" was related by Mr. Ross to a representative of THE TRIBUNE on Saturday.

"The play was written," he said, "for Mr. George Alexander, but for certain reasons was not produced by him. In April, 1895, Mr. Wilde requested me to go to his house and take possession of all his unpublished manuscripts. He had been declared a bankrupt, and I reached the house just before the bailiffs entered. Of course, the author's letters and manuscripts would have been exempt from seizure, but I found that the 'Florentine Tragedy'—together with the manuscripts of two other unpublished plays and the enlarged version of 'The Portrait of Mr. W. H.,' upon which I knew he was engaged—had mysteriously disappeared. Someone had been there before me.

"The thief was never discovered, nor have we even seen the 'Florentine Tragedy,' the 'Mr. W. H.' story, or one of the other plays—'The Duchess of Padua'—since that time. Curiously enough, the manuscript of the third play, a tragedy somewhat on the lines of 'Salome,' was discovered by a friend of Mr. Wilde's in a second-hand bookshop in London in 1897. It was sent to the author in Paris, and was not heard of again.

136, Rye Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are invited to become a member of the Literary Theatre Club from which a circular was issued on March 26th.

The Literary Theatre Club exists to produce plays of all kinds, especially such as either prejudice or commercial considerations debar from the public stage.

It proposes to give at least four plays in each year, and has obtained permission to produce "Salome" by Oscar Wilde, "The Vision of Hell" from "Man and Superman" by Bernard Shaw, and "The Bacchae" translated by Gilbert Murray, from Euripides.

It is hoped that representations of OSCAR WILDE'S SALOME preceded by his FLORENTINE TRAGEDY will be given during the LAST WEEK OF MAY OR EARLY IN JUNE.

Definite announcement of each production will be made at least a fortnight in advance.

The entrance fee to the Club is half-a-crown. The ordinary annual subscription is one guinea. Members who have paid their entrance fee and ordinary annual subscription have a right to a seat at one performance of each production. Members can obtain additional seats at six shillings each.

For the present, seats will be allotted according to priority of application, but it is hoped that arrangements for balloting will soon be made.

Election rests with the committee. A proposer and

as the two men close with each other, and the younger one falls, mortally wounded. The ending is dramatic. The infuriated husband turns to his shrinking wife and exclaims "Now for the other!" The woman, in mingled remorse and fear, says, "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" And the husband rejoins, "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" As the curtain descends the couple, thus strangely reconciled, fall into each others' arms.

The character of outstanding importance, of course, is that of the old merchant. According to those who have studied the play, he is a strikingly effective figure, most cleverly and delightfully drawn. In the opinion of Mr. Moore the part is one that would have fitted Sir Henry Irving excellently well. The action of the drama occupies less than half an hour.

runs counter to the ruling taste of the day—yet nothing can alter the fact that it is and will remain a masterpiece of dramatic architecture. "Salome" is without a parallel in modern English literature, and not in English literature alone. What other dramatist has with equal mastery, and in the space of a single act, unrolled such a gigantic canvas? Presented a theme of such world-historic significance? Shown the decadence of an outworn religion, and the coming of another, gift for the conquest of the future? In comparison with this one act, what are the five acts of Herman Sudermann's "Johannes"? Sudermann sent down the bucket five times, and scarcely filled it once; whereas Wilde, in one dip, seemed to empty the well.

This new technique of the utmost concentration and condensation—a technique peculiar to himself—the poet also applied to a domestic theme, of the period of the Renaissance. This was also the period of one of his early works, "The Duchess of Padua"; but here he was still under the influence, partly of the Elizabethans, partly of Victor Hugo; while in "The Florentine Tragedy" he stands firmly on his own feet.

"THE FLORENTINE TRAGEDY."

Like "Salome," this play is in reality a catastrophe, a last act. A middle-aged merchant, Simone, comes home late at night from his business, and finds his wife in the company of a lover, the heir to the dukedom of Florence. At first he simulates extreme humility, but gradually works up to a seemingly friendly challenge to a bout of sword-play. By the light of a torch, held by the wanton wife, the combatants cross their swords; then they come to close quarters with drawn daggers; and finally the merchant strangles the prince. What will now happen? The wife has watched the fight as a doe watches a battle between two stags. She now, as though "dazed" by a miracle, opens her arms to the victor, and pays wondering worship to his strength. Here a Sudermann, a Brieux, or a Pinero would have made the outraged husband stab her with his already bloodstained poniard, or silently open the door and turn the wanton out into the street. Wilde, fortunately, was a better psychologist. His Simone, in the ecstasy of having won her afresh through bloodshed, presses her to his breast, and pays wondering worship to the beauty, which he seems now for the first time to discern, in the light of the dead man's desire for it.

This is entirely consistent; yet an audience is apt to be taken aback by the extreme rapidity with which it all happens, as well as by the echoing epigrams in which, at the close, the praise of strength and the praise of beauty are uttered. Yet does not "Salome," too, end in an epigram? And is the march of events more rapid than in the grandiose wooing-scene in which Richard III., by King Henry's bier, takes by storm the hand of the Lady Anne?

THE PERFORMANCE.
It was remarkable that the concluding passage, which, in Berlin alienated both the public and the critics, produced the strongest effect at the King's Hall, and aroused no objection whatever. Up to that point, on the other hand, the effect had been feeble enough. The opening scene, prefixed by an unnamed poet to the imposing fragment which is all we possess of Wilde's text, was rather conventionally handled. Even to a foreign ear the difference in the versification was very apparent. The dark and ominous atmosphere that ought to brood over the scene from the moment of Simone's entrance was entirely absent. Mr. George Ingleton, too, who played Simone, was deficient in demonic power. Simone ought to grow a head taller before our very eyes, as he puts off the chattering trader and puts on the avenger of his honour. In comparison to the quite boyish Prince, moreover, Mr. Ingleton's make-up was decidedly too old. Simone is a part which demands an actor of the first rank. Sir Henry Irving, in his best days, might have grappled with it successfully.

The most notable feature of the production of "Salome" was the costumes, designed by Mr. C. S. Ricketts—a marvellous harmony of blue and green and silver. Here praise must end. The stage was left ridiculously bare, and never for a moment produced the illusion of the terrace outside Herod's banquetting-hall. Not even the eastern out of which the Prophet rises was discoverable—Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. And the actors! Without being too exigent, I cannot but suggest that before attempting such a play they ought to have been sent by a special train to Berlin. Even then Miss Darrah would have been an impossible Salome. She lacked nearly everything required by this complex character.

The Dance of the Seven Veils was executed with all the propriety of a British governess. Mr. Robert Farquharson, whose Herod delighted us last year, has now elaborated it to the verge of caricature. He emphasizes far too much the neuropathic element, and revels in the repulsive symptoms of incipient softening of the brain.

I cannot think that either of these works has yet been given a fair chance in England. They are, however, things which will endure, being independent of place and time, of dominant prejudices and caprices of taste. W. A.

THEATRE CLUB.

AND "THE FLORENTINE TRAGEDY."

MAX MEYERFELD.

has been largely instrumental in Oscar Wilde's writings the reputation which they now many, both on and off the judgment of the performances by Theatre Club will therefore peculiar interest.]

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ion was not thereby satisfied, be something more than an British public, a dealer in wit networks. He longed for the laurel of the true dramatist, whose one care is the perfection of the Work of Art. Thus "Salome" came into being.

"SALOME."

One may think of this work what one pleases; one may reject it as "utterly vulgar," because the author treats all truth to nature under his heel; one may characterize it as a deplorable aberration, because it audaciously

A rather amateur performance of Oscar Wilde's "Salomé" given at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, has set people interested in the drama talking again of the strange fate of many of these plays, which have again and again been triumphantly produced in Germany, and have been so utterly neglected here. In spite of more or less competent "lives," reminiscences, and newspaper articles, mystery still covers the story of many of them. "The Florentine Tragedy," for instance, is only a fragment reconstructed out of information supplied by Mr. Robert Ross, and also from a fuller version produced in Germany.

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"The Duchess of Padua" is another of Mr. Wilde's plays which it is almost impossible to buy. One of his biographers has described the delight he took in the title and in the name of Padua. "Am I not duchess here in Padua?" was one of the phrases from it he was never tired of repeating. Of course, too, others of his celebrated witty books—"Intentions," and the poems and "Dorian Grey," as well as the charming fairy-tales in "The House of Pomegranates" and "The Happy Prince"—have long been out of print. The publisher who undertakes to reprint them all, with the brilliant essay on socialism and the other shorter volumes, would certainly, as the phrase goes, "make a good thing of it," though no doubt so "useful" an end to his work would have distressed the author. "All art is quite useless," was one of his favourite maxims.

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A lecture on Bernard Shaw was delivered yesterday at the Steinway Hall by Mr. J. C. Powys, who on the next two Thursdays will also lecture on Guy de Maupassant and Oscar Wilde. Mr. Powys is one of the youngest of our University Extension lecturers, and has a quite unusual gift of oratory. He recently made a tour through the United States, where he lectured on English literature to large audiences of young men, with whom he was remarkably successful. Mr. Powys has also published a volume of poems, which contains many lyrics worth remembering.

"Salomé" will be performed at the Metropolitan Opera in New York with Miss Freinstadt in the title rôle, Van Rooy as John the Baptist, and Herr Buman as Herod. Miss Destinn and Herr Knobe have not obtained sufficient leave of absence, but Mr. Comrie has engaged Geraldine Farrar, who will probably appear as Madame Butterfly. Among the leading singers are Lina Cavalieri and Fraulein Ternina, who will sing as Isolde, La Tosca, Valentine, and Kundry, in the latter rôle alternating with Miss Freinstadt. Carnio will add to his repertoire the principal parts in "Fedora," "Fra Diavolo," and "I Puritani."

Musical Standard.

MR. HENRY WOOD found time on his way to Norway, where he is spending his holiday, to witness one of the performances of "Salomé" at Cologne.

Nor only does Leipzig number among its inhabitants Professor Arthur Nikisch, conductor of the Gewandhaus Concerts and director of the Conservatorium, where his class for embryo conductors is, says the "Telegraph," in a particularly flourishing state, but it also has in Herr Hagel an operatic conductor who seems to be pushing his way into the very forefront with remarkable rapidity. Herr Hagel's performance of Strauss' "Salomé" has been more than favourably compared with Herr Ernest von Schuch's in Dresden; he will direct the first performance of Miss Smyth's opera "Les Naufrageurs" in Leipzig next November.

Publishers' Circular.

A WARNING TO BOOKSELLERS.
DEAR SIR,—I am sure that it is not your wish that the PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR should be used to propagate frauds and deceive book-buyers.

May I, therefore, ask you to exercise particular caution in inserting advertisements for the sale or buying of Oscar Wilde's books, in which an enormous trade is done in pirated editions under false descriptions?

In your issue of April 14, for example, there are offered for sale the following books, all of which come under the above category:

'Children in Prison,' 1st edition, in pamphlet form, 1898. This is a reprint of a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* of May 1897.

'Phrases and Philosophies.' One of the countless pirated reprints from the 'Chameleon.'

'Woman of No Importance.' Pirated reprint.

'Wilde v. Whistler.' Pirated extracts from 'The Gentle Art of Making Friends.'

It is also quite false to describe any of the above as being 'limited' in number to 125 copies or 250 copies. The numbers are limited only by the demand. One bookseller has told me that he has sold hundreds of copies of a book of which the edition was stated to consist of 75 only.

May I ask you, also, not to insert advertisements of 'The Priest and the Acolyte' under Oscar Wilde's name? He was not the author of this story, the contents of which he described as 'perfect twaddle.' I have done my best for years past to refute this horrible libel, and to nail this lie to the counter. I have written to several booksellers stating the facts of the case, letters to the same effect have been inserted in the *St James's Gazette*, the *Sphere*, and other papers. I have also repudiated the authorship of this story in my 'Oscar Wilde: a Study,' and Mr. Sherard has done so more emphatically in his recent book, 'Two Years in Paris.'

The flooding of the market with pirated reprints must have resulted in the loss of many hundreds of pounds to Wilde's estate more than would have been sufficient to satisfy the claims of the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy, and I feel sure that you do wish the PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR to be used as a means of encouraging these frauds.

Messrs. Methuen are preparing for publication this year an authorised edition of Wilde's works, which I hope will have effect in putting a stop to the ill-gotten gains of these unscrupulous publishers, but I it is too late to have much effect, and pirates, having well filled their coffers, now unloading their stock at 'cut prices.'

I may add that, under the authority of Mr. Wilde's literary executor, I am editing some of the volumes for Messrs. Methuen, and also am preparing a bibliography to be issued with the uniform edition, and this I hope, satisfy you that I have some right to protest as I have—Yours, &c.

Oxford: April 21. STUART MASON.

People, 2nd June

Famous Wits and Witticisms.

But that has nothing to do with wit and humour. These were the passages in my marked volumes that I had in my mind when I drifted into the question of the reverent, or otherwise, treatment of books. Sheridan had the reputation of preparing his witty sayings. On many occasions, however, he evinced a ready gift of repartee. When Lord Lauderdale declared that he should repeat a witty remark which Sheridan had just made, he said, "Pray don't, my lord, a joke in your mouth is no laughing matter." A certain Baron who had been thrown out of a second floor window for cheating at cards asked Foote what he should do about it. "Do!" exclaimed Foote, "why never play so high again as long as you live." That story of Lauderdale and Foote reminds one of Wilde and Whistler. "I should like to have said that," remarked Wilde of a sparkling epigram Whistler had originated. "Oh, you will," was Whistler's prompt rejoinder. "Macaulay not only overflowed with learning," said Sydney Smith, "but he stood in the shops." Two Royal Dukes, who were on familiar, not to say jocular terms, with Sheridan, meeting him in Pall Mall, said "Sherry, we were just discussing whether you are a great fool or a great rogue; what is your opinion?" Sheridan, taking his

Star. 29 Sept. 1906

I like witty lampoons, but nowadays there is little wit in Grub Street. We all love each other. Our manners are mild. We dissemble our hate. Our fights are sham fights. Only the publishers and the "Times" Book Club can find us their

PLAYS' STRANGE HISTORY.

"FLORENTINE TRAGEDY" LOST AND FOUND.

An interesting story attaches to the "Florentine Tragedy," a short play by the late Oscar Wilde, which is to be produced on Sunday and Monday next by the Literary Theatre Club. The manuscript disappeared in a mysterious manner shortly after it was completed, and it is only quite recently that the tragedy has been pieced together from the author's first rough draft by his literary executor, Mr. Robert Ross.

The history of the "Florentine Tragedy" was related by Mr. Ross to a representative of THE TRIBUNE on Saturday.

"The play was written," he said, "for Mr. George Alexander, but for certain reasons was not produced by him. In April, 1895, Mr. Wilde requested me to go to his house and take possession of all his unpublished manuscripts. He had been declared a bankrupt, and I reached the house just before the bailiffs entered. Of course, the author's letters and manuscripts would have been exempt from seizure, but I found that the 'Florentine Tragedy'—together with the manuscripts of two other unpublished plays and the enlarged version of 'The Portrait of Mr. W. H.,' upon which I knew he was engaged—had mysteriously disappeared. Someone had been there before me.

"The thief was never discovered, nor have we even seen the 'Florentine Tragedy,' the 'Mr. W. H.' story, or one of the other plays—'The Duchess of Padua'—since that time. Curiously enough, the manuscript of the third play, a tragedy somewhat on the lines of 'Salomé,' was discovered by a friend of Mr. Wilde's in a second-hand bookshop in London in 1897. It was sent to the author in Paris, and was not heard of again.

second can be arranged in cases of persons known to or approved by the Committee.

Members incur no pecuniary liability beyond their entrance fee and subscriptions. Amended copies of the Club Rules can be had on application.

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I desire to be elected a member of the Literary Theatre Club.

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Second

The character of outstanding importance, of course, is that of the old merchant. According to those who have studied the play, he is a strikingly effective figure, most cleverly and delightfully drawn. In the opinion of Mr. Moore the part is one that would have fitted Sir Henry Irving excellently well. The action of the drama occupies less than half an hour.

runs counter to the ruling taste of the day—yet nothing can alter the fact that it is and will remain a masterpiece of dramatic architecture. "Salomé" is without a parallel in modern English literature, and not in English literature alone. What other dramatist has with equal mastery, and in the space of a single act, unrolled such a gigantic canvas? Presented a theme of such world-historic significance? Shown the decadence of an outworn religion, and the coming of another, girl for the conquest of the future? In comparison with this one act, what are the five acts of Herman Sudermann's "Johannes"? Sudermann sent down the bucket five times, and scarcely filled it once; whereas Wilde, in one dip, seemed to empty the well.

This new technique of the utmost concentration and condensation—a technique peculiar to himself—the poet also applied to a domestic theme, of the period of the Renaissance. This was also the period of one of his early works, "The Duchess of Padua"; but here he was still under the influence, partly of the Elizabethans, partly of Victor Hugo; while in "The Florentine Tragedy" he stands firmly on his own feet.

"THE FLORENTINE TRAGEDY."

Like "Salomé," this play is in reality a catastrophe, a last act. A middle-aged merchant, Simone, comes home late at night from his business, and finds his wife in the company of a lover, the heir to the dukedom of Florence. At first he simulates extreme humility, but gradually works up to a seemingly friendly challenge to a bout of sword-play. By the light of a torch, held by the wanton wife, the combatants cross their swords; then they come to close quarters with drawn daggers; and finally the merchant strangles the prince. What will now happen? The wife has watched the fight as a doe watches a battle between two stags. She now, as though "dazed" by a miracle, opens her arms to the victor, and pays wondering worship to his strength. Here a Sudermann, a Brieux, or a Pinero would have made the outraged husband stab her with his already bloodstained poniard, or silently open the door and turn the wanton out into the street. Wilde, fortunately, was a better psychologist. His Simone, in the ecstasy of having won her afresh through bloodshed, presses her to his breast, and pays wondering worship to the beauty, which he seems now for the first time to discern, in the light of the dead man's desire for it.

This is entirely consistent; yet an audience is apt to be taken aback by the extreme rapidity with which it all happens, as well as by the echoing epigrams in which, at the close, the praise of strength and the praise of beauty are uttered. Yet does not "Salomé," too, end in an epigram? And is the march of events more rapid than in the grandiose wooing-scene in which Richard III., by King Henry's bier, takes by storm the hand of the Lady Anne?

THE PERFORMANCE.

It was remarkable that the concluding passage, which, in Berlin alienated both the public and the critics, produced the strongest effect at the King's Hall, and aroused no objection whatever. Up to that point, on the other hand, the effect had been feeble enough. The opening scene, prefixed by an un-named poet to the imposing fragment which is all we possess of Wilde's text, was rather conventionally handled. Even to a foreign ear the difference in the versification was very apparent. The dark and ominous atmosphere that ought to brood over the scene from the moment of Simone's entrance was entirely absent. Mr. George Ingleton, too, who played Simone, was deficient in demonic power. Simone ought to grow a head taller before our very eyes, as he puts off the chattering trader and puts on the avenger of his honour. In comparison to the quite boyish Prince, moreover, Mr. Ingleton's make-up was decidedly too old. Simone is a part which demands an actor of the first rank. Sir Henry Irving, in his best days, might have grappled with it successfully.

The most notable feature of the production of "Salomé" was the costumes, designed by Mr. C. S. Ricketts—a marvellous harmony of blue and green and silver. Here praise must end. The stage was left ridiculously bare, and never for a moment produced the illusion of the terrace outside Herod's banquetting-hall. Not even the eastern out of which the Prophet rises was discoverable—Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. And the actors! Without being too exigent, I cannot but suggest that before attempting such a play they ought to have been sent by a special train to Berlin. Even then Miss Darrah would have been an impossible Salomé. She lacked nearly everything required by this complex character. The Dance of the Seven Veils was executed with all the propriety of a British governess. Mr. Robert Farquharson, whose Herod delighted us last year, has now elaborated it to the verge of caricature. He emphasizes far too much the neuropathic element, and revels in the repulsive symptoms of incipient softening of the brain.

I cannot think that either of these works has yet been given a fair chance in England. They are, however, things which will endure, being independent of place and time, of dominant prejudices and caprices of taste.

W. A.

1906.

LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

AND "THE FLORENTINE TRAGEDY."

MAX MEYERFELD.

has been largely instrumental for Oscar Wilde's writings the reputation which they now command, both on and off the judgment of the performances by the Literary Theatre Club will therefore be a peculiar interest.]

in edition of "De Profundis" notions as instances of the splendour of colour and music, which he writes, "Salomé," "The Florentine Tragedy," and "La Sainte Courtisane." Two others were presented on by the Literary Theatre Club at the King's Hall, Covent Garden. This was an edition in English of "The edy." "Salomé," on the other year performed with fair success by the dramatic club.

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tion was not thereby satisfied. be something more than an British public, a dealer in wit fireworks. He longed for the laurel of the true dramatist, whose one care is the perfection of the Work of Art. Thus "Salomé" came into being.

"SALOME."

One may think of this work what one pleases; one may reject it as "utterly vulgar," because the author treats all truth to nature under his heel; one may characterize it as a deplorable aberration, because it audaciously

bismirched trees. He is just breaking out into buds of an almost shrill green. I know quite well what he is going through. He is finding expression. But surely he can do better than—well, than "Howlglass." Let me whisper in his ear the words addressed by M. le Vicomte Sotheby de la Rochefoucauld to another debutant: "Vous avez une jolie plume, jeune homme: cultivez-la, cultivez-la."

as the two men close with each other, and the younger one falls, mortally wounded. The ending is dramatic. The infuriated husband turns to his shrinking wife and exclaims "Now for the other!" The woman, in mingled remorse and fear, says, "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" and the husband rejoins, "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" As the curtain descends the couple, thus strangely reconciled, fall into each others' arms.

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Musical Standard.

11 June 1906

Mr. Henry Wood found time on his way to Norway, where he is spending his holiday, to witness one of the performances of "Salome" at Cologne.

Not only does Leipzig number among its inhabitants Professor Arthur Nikisch, conductor of the Gewandhaus Concerts and director of the Conservatorium, where his class for embryo conductors is, says the "Telegraph," in a particularly flourishing state, but it also has in Herr Hagel an operatic conductor who seems to be pushing his way into the very forefront with remarkable rapidity. Herr Hagel's performance of Strauss' "Salome" has been more than favourably compared with Herr Ernest von Schuch's in Dresden; he will direct the first performance of Miss Smyth's opera "Les Naufrageurs" in Leipzig next November.

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"The thief was never discovered, nor have we even seen the 'Florentine Tragedy,' the 'Mr. W. H.' story, or one of the other plays—'The Duchess of Padua'—since that time. Curiously enough, the manuscript of the third play, a tragedy somewhat on the lines of 'Salome,' was discovered by a friend of Mr. Wilde's in a second-hand bookshop in London in 1897. It was sent to the author in Paris, and was not heard of again. After his death in 1900 it could not be found. With regard to the 'Duchess of Padua,' the loss was not absolute, for this play, a five-act tragedy, had previously been performed in America, and I possessed the 'prompt' copy.

THE RECOVERY OF THE STORY.

"To return to the 'Florentine Tragedy.' I had heard portions of it read, and was acquainted with the incidents and language, but for a long time I gave it up as lost. Then, after Mr. Wilde's death, I had occasion to sort a mass of letters and papers which were handed to me by his solicitors. Among them I found loose sheets containing the draft of a play which I recognized as the 'Florentine Tragedy.' By piecing these together I was able to reconstruct a considerable portion of the play. The first five pages had gone, and there was another page missing, but some 400 lines of blank verse remained. Now the introductory scene of the single act of which the play consists has been re-written by Mr. Sturge Moore, and the 'Tragedy' will be presented to an English audience for the first time at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, next Sunday.

"On the same occasion the Literary Theatre Club will give a performance of Mr. Wilde's 'Salome,' which, as you know, cannot be given publicly in this country, owing to the Biblical derivation of the subject. But 'Salome' has been popular for years in Germany, and it has also been played in Sweden, Russia, Italy, and Holland."

It seems that the "Florentine Tragedy" has also been played with great success in Germany. It was translated by Dr. Max Meyerfeld, and was produced first at Leipzig, and afterwards at Hamburg and Berlin. According to Mr. Ross, the "Florentine Tragedy" promises to become almost as popular with German playgoers as "Salome" is now.

HUSBAND AND LOVER.

The "Florentine Tragedy," as already indicated, is a brief one-act drama. There are only three characters—an old Florentine merchant, his beautiful young wife, and her lover. The simple plot may be briefly indicated. The merchant, arriving suddenly at his home after a short absence, finds his wife and his rival in her affections together at supper. He makes a pretence at first of being profoundly courteous, and the ensuing conversation (as need scarcely be said) is pointed, epigrammatic and witty. Then the old man gradually leads up to what, it becomes obvious, had been his fixed purpose from the beginning. He draws the lover into a duel. This takes place in the presence of the wife, who, indeed, holds aloft a torch in order that the two swordsmen may fight the more easily. The contest waxes fiercer, and the swords are exchanged for daggers. The wife casts the torch to the ground as the two men close with each other, and the younger one falls, mortally wounded. The ending is dramatic. The infuriated husband turns to his shrinking wife and exclaims "Now for the other!" The woman, in mingled remorse and fear, says, "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" and the husband rejoins, "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" As the curtain descends the couple, thus strangely reconciled, fall into each others' arms.

The character of outstanding importance, of course, is that of the old merchant. According to those who have studied the play, he is a strikingly effective figure, most cleverly and delightfully drawn. In the opinion of Mr. Moore the part is one that would have fitted Sir Henry Irving excellently well. The action of the drama occupies less than half an hour.

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"THE FLORENTINE TRAGEDY."

Like "Salome," this play is in reality a catastrophe, a last act. A middle-aged merchant, Simone, comes home late at night from his business, and finds his wife in the company of a lover, the heir to the dukedom of Florence. At first he simulates extreme humility, but gradually works up to a seemingly friendly challenge to a bout of sword-play. By the light of a torch, held by the wanton wife, the combatants cross their swords; then they come to close quarters with drawn daggers; and finally the merchant strangles the prince. What will now happen? The wife has watched the fight as a doe watches a battle between two stags. She now, as though "dazed" by a miracle, opens her arms to the victor, and pays wondering worship to his strength. Here a Sudermann, a Brieux, or a Pinero would have made the outraged husband stab her with his already bloodstained poniard, or silently open the door and turn the wanton out into the street. Wilde, fortunately, was a better psychologist. His Simone, in the ecstasy of having won her afresh through bloodshed, presses her to his breast, and pays wondering worship to the beauty, which he seems now for the first time to discern, in the light of the dead man's desire for it.

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It was remarkable that the concluding passage, which, in Berlin alienated both the public and the critics, produced the strongest effect at the King's Hall, and aroused no objection whatever. Up to that point, on the other hand, the effect had been feeble enough. The opening scene, prefixed by an unnamed poet to the imposing fragment which is all we possess of Wilde's text, was rather conventionally handled. Even to a foreign ear the difference in the versification was very apparent. The dark and ominous atmosphere that ought to brood over the scene from the moment of Simone's entrance was entirely absent. Mr. George Ingleton, too, who played Simone, was deficient in demonic power. Simone ought to grow a head taller before our very eyes, as he puts off the chattering trader and puts on the avenger of his honour. In comparison to the quite boyish Prince, moreover, Mr. Ingleton's make-up was decidedly too old. Simone is a part which demands an actor of the first rank. Sir Henry Irving, in his best days, might have grappled with it successfully.

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"SALOME."

One may think of this work what one pleases; one may reject it as "utterly vulgar," because the author treats all truth to nature under his heel; one may characterize it as a deplorable aberration, because it audaciously

A rather amateur performance of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" given at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, has set people interested in the drama talking again of the strange fate of many of these plays, which have again and again been triumphantly produced in Germany, and have been so utterly neglected here. In spite of more or less competent "lives," reminiscences, and newspaper articles, mystery still covers the story of many of them. "The Florentine Tragedy," for instance, is only a fragment reconstructed out of information supplied by Mr. Robert Ross, and also from a fuller version produced in Germany.

* * *

It has been stated during the last few days that this play, which the late Mr. Wilde read to Mr. Floss from the manuscript, was "lost" at the time when his bankruptcy was declared. It would be more accurate to say that it was stolen, and the theft seems to have taken place during the hurried sale and the complete confusion of the author's

effects in his Tite-street house. Now, if it was indeed stolen, there is some hope that it may have been preserved, and that its possessor may offer it for a great price, now that the interest in it is so keen.

* * *

"The Duchess of Padua" is another of Mr. Wilde's plays which it is almost impossible to buy. One of his biographers has described the delight he took in the title and in the name of Padua. "Am I not duchess here in Padua?" was one of the phrases from it he was never tired of repeating. Of course, too, others of his celebrated witty books—"Intentions," and the poems and "Dorian Grey," as well as the charming fairy-tales in "The House of Pomegranates" and "The Happy Prince"—have long been out of print. The publisher who undertakes to reprint them all, with the brilliant essay on socialism and the other shorter volumes, would certainly, as the phrase goes, "make a good thing of it," though no doubt so "useful" an end to his work would have distressed the author. "All art is quite useless," was one of his favourite maxims.

* * *

"Salomé," of course, was written in French, and the English version is, quaintly enough, only a translation. It was played once or twice in Paris, and was to have been produced by Sarah Bernhardt just when the author's downfall came. The fact that the censor forbade his play in England annoyed Oscar Wilde so much that he pretended he was going to be naturalised as a Frenchman. He spoke French very nearly perfectly, and was always enthusiastically welcomed in Paris at several hospitable houses where his conversation was admired. He would talk while the rest of the dinner-table remained respectfully silent, making mild, pontifical gestures with his hands, and waving the scarab ring on his finger, which added to the slightly exotic quality of his voice and manner.

People, 24 June

Famous Wits and Witticisms.

But that has nothing to do with wit and humour. These were the passages in my marked volumes that I had in my mind when I drifted into the question of the reverent, or otherwise, treatment of books. Sheridan had the reputation of preparing his witty sayings. On many occasions, however, he evinced a ready gift of repartee. When Lord Lauderdale declared that he should repeat a witty remark which Sheridan had just made, he said, "Pray don't, my lord, a joke in your mouth is no laughing matter." A certain Baron who had been thrown out of a second floor window for cheating at cards asked Foote what he should do about it. "Do!" exclaimed Foote, "why never play so high again as long as you live." That story of Lauderdale and Foote reminds one of Wilde and Whistler. "I should like to have said that," remarked Wilde of a sparkling epigram Whistler had originated. "Oh, you will," was Whistler's prompt rejoinder. "Macaulay not only overflowed with learning," said Sydney Smith, "but he stood in the slops." Two Royal Dukes, who were on familiar, not to say jocular terms, with Sheridan, meeting him in Pall Mall, said "Sherry, we were just discussing whether you are a great fool or a great rogue; what is your opinion?" Sheridan, taking his

TRIBUNE,

15 June 1906

A lecture on Bernard Shaw was delivered yesterday at the Steinway Hall by Mr. J. C. Powys, who on the next two Thursdays will also lecture on Guy de Maupassant and Oscar Wilde. Mr. Powys is one of the youngest of our University Extension lecturers, and has a quite unusual gift of oratory. He recently made a tour through the United States, where he lectured on English literature to large audiences of young men, with whom he was remarkably successful. Mr. Powys has also published a volume of poems, which contain many lyrics worth remembering.

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"Salome" will be performed at the Metropolitan Opera in New York with Miss Freinstadt in the title rôle, Van Rooy as John the Baptist, and Herr Buman as Herod. Miss Destinn and Herr Knobe have not obtained sufficient leave of absence, but Mr. Conried has engaged Geraldine Farrar, who will probably appear as Madama Butterfly. Among the leading singers are Lina Cavalieri and Fräulein Ternina, who will sing as Isolde, La Tosca, Valentine, and Kundry, in the latter rôle alternating with Miss Freinstadt. Cannon will add to his repertoire the principal parts in "Fedora," "Fra Diavolo," and "I Puritani."

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Musical Standard.

14 July 1906

MR. HENRY WOOD found time on his way to Norway, where he is spending his holiday, to witness one of the performances of "Salome" at Cologne.

Not only does Leipzig number among its inhabitants Professor Arthur Nikisch, conductor of the Gewandhaus Concerts and director of the Conservatorium, where his class for embryo conductors is, says the "Telegraph," in a particularly flourishing state, but it also has in Herr Hagel an operatic conductor who seems to be pushing his way into the very forefront with remarkable rapidity. Herr Hagel's performance of Strauss' "Salome" has been more than favourably compared with Herr Ernest von Schuch's in Dresden; he will direct the first performance of Miss Smyth's opera "Les Naufrageurs" in Leipzig next November.

* *

I like witty lampoons, but nowadays there is little wit in Grub Street. We all love each other. Our manners are mild. We dissemble our hate. Our fights are sham fights. Only the publishers and the "Times" Book Club can gird up their loins for the battle. We look on idly as they enter the arena. We do not join the fray. The gentle art of making enemies is lost. One can make nothing but friends. To-day, however, I am proud. I have made a delightful enemy. As I walked down Fleet-st. I met Tom Tosh. "Hullo!" he cried. "Have you seen the 'Academy'?" He thrust a paper into my hand. "They have gone for you. Why, they call you 'Howlglass.'" "Nonsense! You can't pull my leg." But he was not hoaxing me. There it was in cold print. "Howlglass." I rubbed my eyes. The "Academy," too! What are we coming to?

* *

The article is three columns long. It purports to be a review of Mr. Swinburne's "critical essay" on Blake. Here is the second sentence: "Much has been discovered and more is likely to be discovered about Blake since 1866." But that is a trifle. The writer drops into verse:

Georgey Morgie, kiddin' and sly,
Kissed the girls and made them cry;
What the girls came out to say,
George never heard for he ran away.

"Georgey Morgie" is Mr. George Moore. Here is another verse from a parody of Blake:

For MacColl is an intellectual thing,
And Hugh P. Lane keeps Dublin awake;
And Fry to New York has taken wing,
And Charles Holroyd has got the cake.

There are also puns such as "Edouard Manet and many manet others", "Cretonne" and "Cretins." Browning is "a brownie," and Mr. Gosse is "mi darlin' Gosse," which is, I suppose, Irish. Something is "mosaiced with gold." Indeed, the whole article ought to be reproduced in the English edition of "Mœurs des Diurnales."

* *

The gifted author of this bizarre article is Mr. Robert Ross. Who is Mr. Ross? The only thing I know about him is creditable. He was a staunch friend of Oscar Wilde, and Wilce bequeathed to him the MS. of "De Profundis." I respect Mr. Ross for his loyalty to his friend, and I am only sorry that Wilde did not leave him his wit as well as his work. In his preface to "De Profundis" Mr. Ross published a letter which he had received from Wilde. In it he said: "On the other side of the prison wall there are some poor black soot-besmirched trees, which are just breaking out into buds of an almost shrill green. I know quite well what they are going through. They are finding expression." I think Mr. Ross is like those poor black soot-besmirched trees. He is just breaking out into buds of an almost shrill green. I know quite well what he is going through. He is finding expression. But surely he can do better than—well, than "Howlglass." Let me whisper in his ear the words addressed by M. le Vicomte Sosthène de la Rochefoucauld to another débutant: "Vous avez une jolie plume, jeune homme: couvrez-la, couvrez-la."

* *

136, Rye Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are invited to become a member of the Literary Theatre Club from which a circular was issued on March 26th.

The Literary Theatre Club exists to produce plays of all kinds, especially such as either prejudice or commercial considerations debar from the public stage.

It proposes to give at least four plays in each year, and has obtained permission to produce "Salome" by Oscar Wilde, "The Vision of Hell" from "Man and Superman" by Bernard Shaw, and "The Bacchae" translated by Gilbert Murray, from Euripides.

It is hoped that representations of OSCAR WILDE'S SALOME preceded by his FLORENTINE TRAGEDY will be given during the LAST WEEK OF MAY or EARLY IN JUNE.

Definite announcement of each production will be made at least a fortnight in advance.

The entrance fee to the Club is half-a-crown. The ordinary annual subscription is one guinea. Members who have paid their entrance fee and ordinary annual subscription have a right to a seat at one performance of each production. Members can obtain additional seats at six shillings each.

For the present, seats will be allotted according to priority of application, but it is hoped that arrangements for ballotting will soon be made.

Election rests with the committee. A proposer and

seconded can be arranged in cases of persons known to or approved by the Committee.

Members incur no pecuniary liability beyond their entrance fee and subscriptions. Amended copies of the Club Rules can be had on application.

Committee.

LAURENCE BINYON	W. A. PYE
GWENDOLEN BISHOP	C. S. RICKETTS
MURIEL CURREY	C. H. SHANNON
FLORENCE FARR	R. A. STREATFIELD
A. HUGH FISHER	R. C. TREVELYAN
SELWYN IMAGE	ETHEL WHEELER
T. STURGE MOORE	W. B. YEATS
JOHN POLLOCK	

Secretary.

Miss MURIEL CURREY.

Till April 23rd inst., 136, Rye Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne,
later, 88, Philbeach Gardens, Earl's Court, S.W.

Solicitors.

Messrs. HUNTERS & HAYNES.

9, New Square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.

4-6

To be filled up and returned to the Secretary.
I desire to be elected a member of the Literary Theatre Club.

Name

Profession

Address

Proposer

Seconder

PLAY'S STRANGE HISTORY.

"FLORENTINE TRAGEDY" LOST AND FOUND.

An interesting story attaches to the "Florentine Tragedy," a short play by the late Oscar Wilde, which is to be produced on Sunday and Monday next by the Literary Theatre Club. The manuscript disappeared in a mysterious manner shortly after it was completed, and it is only quite recently that the tragedy has been pieced together from the author's first rough draft by his literary executor, Mr. Robert Ross.

The history of the "Florentine Tragedy" was related by Mr. Ross to a representative of THE TRIBUNE on Saturday.

"The play was written," he said, "for Mr. George Alexander, but for certain reasons was not produced by him. In April, 1895, Mr. Wilde requested me to go to his house and take possession of all his unpublished manuscripts. He had been declared a bankrupt, and I reached the house just before the bailiffs entered. Of course, the author's letters and manuscripts would have been exempt from seizure, but I found that the 'Florentine Tragedy'—together with the manuscripts of two other unpublished plays and the enlarged version of 'The Portrait of Mr. W. H.,' upon which I knew he was engaged—had mysteriously disappeared. Someone had been there before me.

"The thief was never discovered, nor have we even seen the 'Florentine Tragedy,' the 'Mr. W. H.' story, or one of the other plays—'The Duchess of Padua'—since that time. Curiously enough, the manuscript of the third play, a tragedy somewhat on the lines of 'Salome,' was discovered by a friend of Mr. Wilde's in a second-hand bookshop in London in 1897. It was sent to the author in Paris, and was not heard of again. After his death in 1900 it could not be found. With regard to the 'Duchess of Padua,' the loss was not absolute, for this play, a five-act tragedy, had previously been performed in America, and I possessed the 'prompt' copy.

THE RECOVERY OF THE STORY.

"To return to the 'Florentine Tragedy.' I had heard portions of it read, and was acquainted with the incidents and language, but for a long time I gave it up as lost. Then, after Mr. Wilde's death, I had occasion to sort a mass of letters and papers which were handed to me by his solicitors. Among them I found loose sheets containing the draft of a play which I recognized as the 'Florentine Tragedy.' By piecing these together I was able to reconstruct a considerable portion of the play. The first five pages had gone, and there was another page missing, but some 400 lines of blank verse remained. Now the introductory scene of the single act of which the play consists has been re-written by Mr. Sturge Moore, and the 'Tragedy' will be presented to an English audience for the first time at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, next Sunday.

"On the same occasion the Literary Theatre Club will give a performance of Mr. Wilde's 'Salome,' which, as you know, cannot be given publicly in this country, owing to the Biblical derivation of the subject. But 'Salome' has been popular for years in Germany, and it has also been played in Sweden, Russia, Italy, and Holland."

It seems that the "Florentine Tragedy" has also been played with great success in Germany. It was translated by Dr. Max Meyerfeld, and was produced first at Leipzig, and afterwards at Hamburg and Berlin. According to Mr. Ross, the "Florentine Tragedy" promises to become almost as popular with German playgoers as "Salome" is now.

HUSBAND AND LOVER.

The "Florentine Tragedy," as already indicated, is a brief one-act drama. There are only three characters—an old Florentine merchant, his beautiful young wife, and her lover. The simple plot may be briefly indicated. The merchant, arriving suddenly at his home after a short absence, finds his wife and his rival in her affections together at supper. He makes a pretence at first of being profoundly courteous, and the ensuing conversation (as need scarcely be said) is pointed, epigrammatic and witty. Then the old man gradually leads up to what, it becomes obvious, had been his fixed purpose from the beginning. He draws the lover into a duel. This takes place in the presence of the wife, who, indeed, holds aloft a torch in order that the two swordsmen may fight the more easily. The contest waxes fiercer, and the swords are exchanged for daggers. The wife casts the torch to the ground as the two men close with each other, and the younger one falls, mortally wounded. The ending is dramatic. The infuriated husband turns to his shrinking wife and exclaims "Now for the other!" The woman, in mingled remorse and fear, says, "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" and the husband rejoins, "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" The curtain descends, the couple, thus strangely reconciled, fall into each others' arms.

The character of outstanding importance, of course, is that of the old merchant. According to those who have studied the play, he is a strikingly effective figure, most cleverly and delightfully drawn. In the opinion of Mr. Moore the part is one that would have fitted Sir Henry Irving excellently well. The action of the drama occupies less than half an hour.

12 June 1906.

LITERARY THEATRE

"SALOME" AND "THE FLORENTINE TRAGEDY."

BY DR. MAX MEYERFELD.

[Dr. Meyerfeld has been largely instrumental in securing for Oscar Wilde's extraordinary reputation which he enjoys in Germany, both on the stage. His judgment of the play of the Literary Theatre Club will be read with peculiar interest.]

In the German edition of "Deutsche Dichtung," Oscar Wilde mentions as instances of his did works, full of colour and music, really desired to write, "Salome," "The Florentine Tragedy," and "La Sainte Ophélie."

The last-named work appears to have been ably lost; the two others were produced on Sunday evening by the Literary Theatre at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, the first representation in English of "The Florentine Tragedy." "Salome," on the other hand, was last year performed with great success by another dramatic club.

These two plays, which their author has just insight, placed side by side, form a most fitting complement to his dramatic production. The author's sparkling society pieces lay in wait for his melodramatic action, though they are to-day sadly faded. Indeed, they have faded into the world with the wrinkles of age. Only the brilliant verbal play of these inconsiderable stones a certain value. The poet himself at last rid himself of these productions of "l'art pour l'argent," (quite unaffected by French influence) and left behind a delightful "Importance of Being Idle," one of the few farces which can really take place in world-literature.

But his ambition was not there. He wanted to be something more than an amuser of the British public, a deceiver of the eye. He longed for the laurels of the dramatist, whose one care is the work of the Work of Art. Thus "Salome" is being.

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These two plays, which their author, with just insight, placed side by side, form the summit of his dramatic production. The period of his sparkling society pieces lay behind him. With their melodramatic action, they appear to us to-day sadly faded. Indeed, they came into the world with the wrinkles of age upon them. Only the brilliant verbal setting gave these inconsiderable stones a certain market value. The poet himself at last ridiculed these productions of "l'art pour l'argent," in producing (quite unaffected by French influence) the delightful "Importance of Being Earnest"—one of the few farces which can really claim a place in world-literature.

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A LITERARY THEATRE CLUB has been formed for the production of Oscar Wilde's 'Salome' at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, on Sunday, June 10th, and Monday, June 18th.

WE are requested to state that persons desirous of attending the performance of Oscar Wilde's 'Florentine Tragedy' and 'Salome' at the Literary Theatre Club on the 10th and 18th inst. should communicate with the secretary, Miss Currey, 88, Philbeach Gardens, S.W.

Morning Leader

LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

TWO OSCAR WILDE TRAGEDIES STAGED WITH POOR SUCCESS.

On Sunday night, at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, the Literary Theatre Club presented "Florentine Tragedy" and "Salome," two one-act tragedies, of which it may be said that their main, if not sole, claim to consideration is the bearing of a name which, not so long ago, would have acted as a disqualification for production. Whatever their merit as literature, as stage plays they are distinctly disappointing.

"Florentine Tragedy" is a tale of a lady, a noble lover, a merchant husband, and a duel, in which the husband, although handicapped by weight of years, kills his rival. A "Florentine Tragedy" is all talk, and, to give opportunity for much of it, primitive stage devices have to be adopted. Mr. George Ingleton displayed a certain rough force as the husband, but there was nothing of distinction in the playing of the two other parts.

"Salome" has been forbidden by the censor, because it deals with the death of the prophet Jokanaan (John the Baptist). It is a study in erotomania, of the wild, physical passion of Salome for the prophet, combined with the blood lust. She and the other characters indulge in Maeterlinckian repetitions, and she never tires of saying that the prophet's body is the whitest object in the world, his hair the blackest, his lips the reddest, and that she will kiss his mouth. A little of this sort of thing goes a long way; and there is so much of it that it becomes nauseating. Indeed, a subtle, acid odor of corruption made the whole performance disagreeable; and the disagreeableness was not mitigated by any dramatic appeal to the emotions.

Mr. Robert Farquharson endowed Herod with the right cunning, malignity, and madness. It was a quite notable bit of character-acting. The rich, sensuous tones of Miss Darragh's voice made her Salome interesting; but there is little scope for acting. Another part depending chiefly on a fine voice was that of Jokanaan, whose lines were well declaimed by Mr. Lewis Casson.

OSCAR WILDE'S PLAYS.

Sunday theatricals by private producers are by no means uncommon in London. Last night I was present at the performance of two tragedies written by Oscar Wilde, and presented by the Literary Theatre Club in the King's Hall, Covent Garden. There was a crowded audience, mainly composed of litterateurs and theatrical people, and including numerous ladies. The first piece was a play unexpectedly brought to light by Oscar Wilde's literary executor, entitled "Florentine Tragedy," which was written for Mr. George Alexander, but never performed. Part of the play was missing when it was unearthed from amongst Wilde's papers, but it was rewritten by Mr. Sturge Moore. The piece briefly is concerned with the attempted intrigue of a gay young heir to the Ducal family with the beautiful but unappreciative wife of a gruff old merchant. Putting the youth off his guard by endeavouring to effect sales of his merchandise to him, the husband, on discovering his guilty motive, engages him in fight.

A STAGE DUEL.

An exciting encounter, first with swords, then with daggers, ends in the death of a young nobleman. The avenger is about to kill his wife also when a romantic finale interrupts the thread of the tragedy. His wife finds that her admiration for her husband's strength awakens in her for the first time a love for him she never felt before, and he, discovering for the first time also her beauty, reciprocates her attachment. The piece is a potent blend of tragedy and pathos, if melodramatic, and it is without those lighter touches which are associated with Oscar Wilde's comedies. It is cleverly played. The second piece produced was Oscar Wilde's "Salome." The piece, while powerfully written, is unavailing, and public opinion would be inclined to endorse the action of the Lord Chamberlain in prohibiting its public performance. Prior to last night, however, it has been performed in private.

"SALOME" REVIVED.

Tragedy of John the Baptist as a Stage Play.

As might, indeed, have been expected, something more than the accustomed Sunday evening audience crowded the National Sporting Club yesterday for a production of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" and "Florentine Tragedy."

It will be remembered that "Salome"—originally written in French for Bernhardt—was played a year or two ago at the Bijou Theatre, Baywater. It then proved—as it proved yesterday in the hands of the Literary Theatre Club—very clever and tedious. It shows us Salome as being in love with John the Baptist, and the whole thing is a parade of sensuous imagery—ably evolved, but not greatly original—most of it conveyed very dexterously from the Song of Solomon. There is an immense deal of the moon, and roses, and the feet of doves.

All this sounds very sweet for a time. After a while, however, it becomes fearfully monotonous, partly through sheer repetition, and partly because yesterday, as before, the little play was not acted, as it should be, frankly and passionately, but chanted solemnly, slowly, with the actors at a distance from each other, as though it were some religious mystery.

In the end Salome, after her dance before Herod, asks for John the Baptist's head as a revenge for having loved her, kisses his lips, and is instantly killed at Herod's order. The drama of the thing, like the language, is clever enough, but there is only five minutes' action in two hours' traffic, and one sigh for more.

One did so yesterday, especially, as Salome's dance—the one little bit of excitement one was hoping for—was for the most part carefully concealed by the crowd on the stage.

For the rest Miss Darragh made as good a Salome as anyone with an obviously unpoetic temperament and a slow and serious manner could do. She spoke her lines with splendid conviction. She would have made a magnificent priestess; but she did not for a moment suggest Salome.

Mr. Robert Farquharson's Herod was represented—as before—as a doddering imbecile, and was, it must be confessed, more worrying than either Oscar Wilde's or the real Herod would have been likely to prove. Mr. Lewis Casson's John the Baptist was, however, altogether admirable and dignified. The head proved quite a terribly realistic "property," and there is no possible denying the beauty of the production as such.

The little play that opened the evening—"A Florentine Tragedy"—was, like Salome, an exceedingly clever piece of rather humbugging romance.

A young Italian medieval noble is found with an old merchant's young wife. The old merchant, after long and glibly discomfited, challenges the young noble to fight, and kills him. The young wife, who had loved the young noble, turns to her husband with sudden affection. "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" says she. "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" says he. They embrace.

This little romantic touch is prefaced, as has been said, by a good deal of heavily jewelled and flowered speech—much of it rather spoiled by Mr. George Ingleton's persistent efforts as the old merchant to produce a big deep voice from some remote corner of his chest. Still, greatly acted the little play would be interesting.

Evening Standard

St. James's Gazette

TWO PLAYS BY WILDE.

A singularly weird audience appeared to derive neurotic and erotic pleasure from a performance of two plays by Oscar Wilde at the Hall of the National Sporting Club on Sunday evening. They were given by the so-called Literary Theatre.

The first piece, "A Florentine Tragedy," proved to be the original of a play produced a short time ago by Mr. George Alexander, called "Flower of the Rose." The original is far less artistic, and is mainly a revolting representation of the murder of a lover by a husband. As the latter Mr. George Ingleton's performance was little more than a caricature.

This was followed by the equally unsuitable "Salome"—a wordy piece of great rubbish written round a supposedly lascivious dance before Herod. Mr. Robert Farquharson, as on a previous occasion, gave a powerful piece of character acting as the vile Tetrarch, but the piece is a striking example of the author's utter lack of sense of the fitness of things. There seems no reason at all for the existence of the society if its aim be the performance of such thoroughly undesirable plays.

WILDE'S "SALOME."

Writing in reference to the critique of the performance of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" by the Literary Theatre Club, published in "The Daily Chronicle" on Monday, Mr. Robert Ross (Reform Club) states:—

Your critic is in error when he says that the play was written for Mme. Bernhardt. The author himself, in a letter to the "Times" of March 2, 1903, denied that often-repeated statement. From internal evidence (the exigent stage direction), and from correspondence in my possession, I do not think Wilde contemplated its production on the stage, when he composed the work, some seven or eight months before Mme. Bernhardt had heard of its existence. Moreover, whatever Wilde's faults as a dramatist may have been, he possessed too much sense of "theatre" to have contrived the long speech of Salome at the end of a play intended for presentation.

Whatever the opinion on Salome, I do not think even your critic will differ from me about the costumes and the marvellous colour-effects for which Mr. Charles Ricketts was responsible. Never has the play been dressed so superbly. You would have thought that where the text failed the textile fabrics would have inspired the actors. I look forward to the day when the Literary Theatre Club may find human material more on an artistic level with Mr. Ricketts' designs and Mr. Robert Farquharson's magnificent histrionic gifts.

ART AND ARTISTS.

The Younger Men.

Mr. Charles Ricketts is one of the most gifted and versatile of the young artists of to-day. As a designer and engraver of woodcuts and a maker of beautiful books his work is already well known and warmly appreciated. His designs for jewelry have appealed to a much narrower public, but the costumes and scenery he invented for Mr. Sturge Moore's play of "Aphrodite against Artemis," produced recently by the Literary Theatre Club, scored a great success, and the decorations he is to provide for the same society's next productions, Oscar Wilde's "Salome" and "Florentine Tragedy," are looked forward to with the greatest interest. Not more than a couple of months ago we had occasion to notice an exhibition of Mr. Ricketts' bronzes at the Carfax Gallery, and now Mr. Van Wisselingh has opened at the Dutch Gallery the largest collection of this artist's oil paintings which has yet been brought together.

TWO OSCAR WILDE PLAYS.

The literary reputation of the late Oscar Wilde seems likely to suffer at the hands of his enthusiastic but misguided worshippers. It is just about a year since a poor performance of "Salome" was given by a private society at the Bijou Theatre, Baywater. On Sunday evening last at King's Hall, Covent Garden, this performance was repeated by the "Literary Theatre Club"—apparently the original society under another name. At the same time there was also given, for the first time in this country, Wilde's "Florentine Tragedy."

These pieces, if they are to be rendered tolerable, should be played with masterly skill. They are neither well written nor well constructed. The "Florentine Tragedy," in itself, is a melodramatic sketch that, boiled down, would be popular in one of the cheaper music-halls. Larded over with sticky adjectives and greasy similes, it proves very tiresome. An old merchant finds a young prince making love to his wife. He picks a quarrel with him and kills him. Then the wife discovers that her husband is "strong" and he discovers that his wife is beautiful. Curtain.

Mr. George Ingleton, though unnecessarily pompous, did fairly well as the merchant, but Miss Gwendolen Bishop made nothing of the wife save a puling creature in an art gown.

Of "Salome" we spoke fully at the time of its original production. Mr. Robert Farquharson repeats, with exaggerations, his singularly unpleasant, emasculated Herod. Mr. Lewis Casson was dignified as Jokanaan, but Miss Darragh's Salome was even more colourless than the Salome of Baywater. Neither voice nor gesture conveyed the least idea of emotion, and the dance, the success of the Continental performance became a very gentle Sandow exercise.

OSCAR WILDE AND THE LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

IT is not often worth while harking back to a single performance a fortnight old; but this is not the case with the Literary Theatre Club's production of *Salome*. If men like Mr. Ricketts and Mr. Sturge Moore had the setting and management of more plays in their hands, romantic and poetic pieces might prove often, instead of seldom, sources of astonishment and delight—and of pride too when occasion arose to vaunt the merits of our National Theatre. It was my eye, to be candid, that was most delighted by the performance of *Salome*. I could not have believed that the pleasure of eye could have enforced so strongly the merits and disguised so agreeably the weakness of any drama. But if the eyes are delighted we are patient, though a situation lags; and we are thrilled the more when the words approach the pitch of our expectant wonder. The long blue folds of the tent, with a background curtain scattered with silver stars, vague and symbolic like a Japanese picture of night, served better than any costly scenery as a setting for the elaborate figures of Herod and his court in their fantastically gorgeous, primitively splendid dresses, which appealed after the manner of barbaric magnificence at once to the most complex and elementary aesthetic instincts. There was more real splendour in the dress of Salome, or the embroidered scarlet of Herod's robe, or in the motionless figure of the Nubian executioner, than in all the stupendous properties of a performance at His Majesty's. The old theory of scenic presentment was to aim at broad, general effects. This has been supplemented by the practice of crowding the stage with every conceivable property of the most realistic and costly description; but anyone who saw the Japanese players when they were over here five years ago, or this performance of *Salome*, must feel that a few well-chosen details go further to create the scene in the mind of the spectator than all the usual resources of lavish London management. Moreover, the atmosphere created by the suggestion of a few details, beautiful in themselves, harmonises more subtly with that which the words create as the play proceeds. Elaborate scenery, however splendid, is and must remain a portentous matter of fact; a scene which is suggested takes significance from all that happens; it is formed itself out of the stuff of the imagination. Therefore it is the only setting for a poetic play.

It was a pity that the part of the page of Herodias was not played by a boy. Only tender years could have made tolerable the limp and wistful sentiment of this timorous part. Oscar Wilde's sentiment is of the cloying kind. Happily, in this play it is overpowered by

denser wafts of aromatic Eastern passion blown from the spice gardens and vineyards of "The Song of Songs"; but this sentiment is perceptible in the lament of the page over his friend, who lies killed by his own hand. "He was my brother and nearer to me than a brother. I gave him a little box full of perfumes and a ring of agate that he wore always on his hand. In the evening we used to walk by the river among the almond trees, and he would tell me of the things of his country. He spoke ever very low." The last words in this context are sickly weak, and (this is a warning to all rapacious borrowers) they are not improved by the audience expecting instinctively, "an excellent thing in woman" to follow. When such a speech is spoken by a man almost as robust as the friend he deplores, the inherent feebleness of the sentiment is exposed. This was the one mistake in the casting of a performance which was so admirable that it made a mediocre play into a good one—I fear I shall fail in accounting for this feat of alchemy; but before attempting to do so, I must point out where, in my opinion, lies the dross, which the actors so wonderfully gilded.

Some readers will suppose that I am attempting a critical paradox when I deny that Oscar Wilde was "an artist." He was the prophet of art for art's sake; he wrote a great deal about the artistic temperament; he figures to many as the incarnation of all the drawbacks to that temperament; he loved certain forms of beauty passionately; he aimed at being "a lord of language"—to use a phrase he borrowed from Tennyson; he lived for thrills and impressions; he was a great wit and a marvellous converser; he had some poetic power; he had that quality of detachment which made him often, as he says so admirably of Hamlet, the spectator of his own tragedy instead of the hero of his own story; he had a great deal of moral courage and some revolutionary pride. If, then, he had all these gifts, so many of the sensibilities of the artist, so much of his not unusual self-consciousness, and in addition always considered himself to be an artist and "to stand in a symbolic relation to his age," why deny him the title? Because he lacked the one quality which all artists possess, however much they vary in temperament or aptitude; he had no creative imagination.

None can deny that in his serious work he was essentially imitative, any more than they can deny the originality of his personality which found expression in his talk. His borrowing and copying would not stamp him as no artist; Molière's plea holds good for all; it is the manner of his borrowing that betrays him. It shows he had no sure sense of what beauties are transferable, of whether they would or would not blend with other appropriations. That is to say, he had no sense of his own work, or any other, as a whole; and it is this sense which, granted imagination and an excellent faculty, distinguishes the creative artist, whose work may or may not be something entirely new.

Oscar Wilde simply picked up anything that attracted him by its shine and glitter (for such his instinct was admirable), and like a jackdaw carried it off to his nest. As his depredations were frequent, and as they were embedded in a personal style of peculiar, sumptuously simple quality, in which only a very limited number of emotions and impressions could be congruously expressed, this defect in creative power is continually forced upon the reader's notice.

Now *Salome* is the nearest approach to being a complete whole among his works, and its defects, in spite of its brilliancy, are precisely of this nature. In it two inconsistent atmospheres are mixed together; and a form of expression essentially appropriate to solitary imaginings is used as a method of dramatic dialogue; with the result that the language, in spite of being passionate, strikes the listener as weak and artificial. The play is a mixture of Flaubert's *Herodias* and Maeterlinck; and the dialogue, when it is not in either of these keys, is composed of speeches in the style of the Song of Songs, from

Spahr.

7 July 1906

which all the most splendid phrases are taken. Oscar Wilde has not felt that the passion of the Song of Songs is a mood of ecstatic meditation, of absence, and that in the presence of the object of adoration the passion and the poetry to keep their strength must alter their expression. The result is that with *Salome* and *John the Baptist* before your eyes you are astonished that such abandonment and exaltation of language should leave you so cold, and since the expression and rhythm is often masterly, you are half persuaded for the moment that all literature must be a fake.

The atmosphere of Flaubert and that which Maeterlinck creates by his method are absolutely incongruous; the one depends upon a glaring definiteness of detail and significance, the other upon a suggestion that nothing really is what it seems. Flaubert drew poetry from his subject by depicting the appalling matter-of-factness of barbaric emotion and splendour. The spirit of brutal negation glares like a parching desert sun over all life, no incident throws a shadow in which the understanding can take refuge; the very superstitions of men are facts which rouse no wonder or speculation. In this light forms and colours strike on the sight; they have no rivals for the imagination in the shape of associations or emotions, and the passions as bare natural forces have in action a kind of tigerish beauty. To throw, over a scene so conceived, the moonshine of Maeterlinck is to destroy both. How, then, was the play saved? By Mr. Robert Farquharson reading into the part of Herod the character of a nerve-shaken Heliogabalus, by his breaking the long descriptive speeches of jewels and treasures into sentences, which, as he uttered them, carried a psychological interest, not in the words themselves; by Miss Darragh looking lovely and mysterious as Salome, and by the beauty of every detail of the scenery and costumes.

It is significant from the point of view of this criticism of Oscar Wilde that he was always saying the object of the artist was to express his own individuality. That is a critic's theory, not an artist's; the critic is always looking for personality; but the artist is most conscious of a desire to express his idea, whatever it may happen to be.

The artist's personality is a possible subject-matter for someone else. What he himself cares for is the conception, which he strives to embody in his work. Oscar Wilde did not feel that. He was willing to grind down the passions to pigments, to elaborate beautiful impressions and to polish his words, but I doubt whether the constant motive which sustains the artist was his. When he would have confessed himself completely, an artistic impulse prevented his writing a confession, which by its simplicity and consistency should achieve, like Rousseau's, or like Bunyan's "Grace Abounding," a kind of completeness; but that mere impulse was not strong enough to enable him to sustain in imagination a state of emotion which flagged and vacillated in reality.

DESMOND MACCARTHY.

PERSONS AND POLITICS.

By H. W. MASSINGHAM.

LONDON, THURSDAY.

THE full difficulties of the Government's plan of approaching the politico-religious squabble which we dignify by calling it the problem of education have been revealed in the last week's debates on the measure. It sets up a normal kind of religious teaching. But this impels it to make all sorts of exceptions in favour of the abnormalities, whose champions resent the idea of being treated as abnormal at all. So it has continually to depart from logic. The facilities for special religious instruction must be real. Yet the local authorities must be free. Tests for teachers must go, and are specifically

private subscriptions will have to find a sum equivalent to about £2 per child. Is this a task which so poor a community as the Roman Catholics can afford to doubt it, and therefore we have a prospect of a standard of educational efficiency for one class of children than for another. We recur to the evils of the system as it existed before 1902, and no reformer can see such a reversion with pleasure.

Meanwhile, one serious breach of amity has occurred on the part of the Irish members. The Government, in their regard for individual freedom, have been compelled to insert Clause 6, and it is a great pity that when the judgment of the House was sought upon it the machinery of regular party obligation had to be relaxed. But both the manner and the matter of the Irish intervention were without excuse. The Irishmen's general political plea to Liberals is to be left to the management of their affairs. And on this point their action is to interfere in a matter which does not concern them. They are Irish members and Catholics. Clause 6 touches almost exclusively English and Protestant matters, which Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon declared to be outside the scope of their intervention in the bill. Yet they joined the Tories *en masse* in a proposal to force English parents to send their children to a Protestant form of State instruction, and had the assurance, though the mouth of Mr. William Redmond, to tell the House that the action of the Government—though there had been no action—assimilated English practice to that of "Godless" continental countries. This is simple usurpation, and though Mr. Redmond's speech was not generally approved on his side, it gave a cachet of extreme clericalism to the Irish Party which it does not deserve, but must prejudice it not a little in the eyes of English Radicalism. Feeling ran very strong on this point, and it is no kindness to the Irish cause to be silent on such an error of feeling and tactics.

I don't think the Liberal Party will be in a great hurry to take up the plea addressed to them for a new measure of interference in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. Is it seriously proposed that we are to take from Convocation, *i.e.*, mainly from the clerical power, a new Ornaments Rubric, a new doctrinal decision of great importance, and an entirely

Women Tribune 16 June 1906

"SALOME" AT LA SCALA.

On June 10th and 18th, Two Tragedies by Oscar Wilde were given before members of the Literary Theatre Club and guests.

The Censor in this instance is perhaps, or certainly, not to be censured on account of his veto, for many, even of the enlightened, blame the play, not altogether understanding it, possibly. The Court of Herod is under the spell of John, of the voice crying in the wilderness. He is kept imprisoned close to the terrace where the tetrarch and his women come for the cool night air. His prophetic denunciations mingle with their talk and fetter them in a superstitious awe. Salome, the daughter of Herodias, but not of Herod, beautiful as a viper, comes from the banquet where her lover Narraboth has been watching her from without, drunk with her beauty, and hears again the terrible voice. She commands her lover to have the Baptist brought forth, contrary to orders, that she may see him. Narraboth protests, and is sure evil will come of it, but gives way. When John comes, majestic though wan, Salome is seized with a lustful passion. Her lover stabs himself and falls between the prophet and the woman, who, stumbling on her lover, pours forth a rhapsody of longing to the prophet. It is terrible. It is an awful presentment of the warping of every noble emotion in a woman to the one end of self gratification. And yet she evokes pity even in the horror of it. So cramped is her woman's nature, so imprisoned, so poisoned by the awfulness of her surroundings, that the only way she can express her perception of a noble being is by her desire to possess that being wholly, and yet the climax lies in the least fleshly symbol of fleshly contact. She would touch his ivory body, his raven locks, but her highest desire is to kiss him on the lips, for which purpose, as he still denies her, she demands his severed head from the reluctant tetrarch after a wonderful dance.

Unless the personages and the plot were of historical importance it would hardly be possible to give to the play the high poetic form which justifies the rendering of a situation so terrible and so repulsive.

Miss Darragh's acting is very fine, and she is well supported. The stage management is distinctly good. Salome was the first piece of the present English school which attracted attention in Berlin, where it has been followed by plays of Bernard Shaw and others.

C. J. H.

Referee, 17 June 1906

When "Salome" by the late Oscar Wilde, was brought out last year at the Bijou Theatre, Baywater, by the New Stage Society, I described it as a grotesque mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous with a good deal of the disgusting thrown in, and I wondered how it was that its representation, which was in open defiance of the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, was allowed. A morning paper characterised the production as "a putrid pandering to sensuality"; but authority took no notice, and last Sunday evening there was a reproduction of "Salome" at the King's Hall, otherwise the National Sporting Club, in Covent Garden. They cannot be very healthy-minded people who sit and listen to stuff of this sort. Those who take part in it do not trouble much about its healthiness, but it seems pitiful that the efforts of the producers should be encouraged by Press publicity. Ignored or sternly repressed, they might turn their attention to cleaner business.

Pall Mall Gazette, 19 June 1906

"SALOME" AT THE LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

That sturdy bantling, the Literary Theatre Club, decided to sup on horrors yesterday. As *hors d'œuvre* they gave "The Florentine Tragedy," that fine third act of what was no doubt meant to be a far larger play, in which the home-coming merchant surprises and finally kills his wife's gallant. In the game of cat and mouse, it is the cat which generally has the *beau rôle*, and Mr. Ingleton, by his masterly rendering of the merchant, practically monopolised the eye and ear of the house. His youthful victim reminded one too much, even in the love passages, of the inexperienced "undergrad." The *pièce de résistance*, "Salome," was exquisitely staged—a triumph in harmony with blue as the predominant tone. Only an artist like Mr. Ricketts could have given us such a perfect setting. Salome herself looked almost too modern, yet she held the audience throughout, even in the most realistic passages, the passion getting the better of the physical horror. The dance was not a whirl of glory as Flaubert pictures it, but its solemn sedateness was eminently subtle, suggestive, and serpentine. Salome was not dancing off the head of the apostle, she was rather half-reluctantly picturing the priestess voluptuousness he had flaunted. Herod was an æsthetic decadent of the Nero type, strangely devoid of all kingly dignity, but often grotesquely effective. Herodias looked magnificent, and was best in the hour of her triumph. The elocution of the whole company was remarkable in a hall whose acoustic properties are far from perfect. The minor parts were well filled, except that a certain incongruity was at times produced owing to some of the actors speaking like poets, and others like policemen. C. B.

Speaker,

SALOME.

14 July 1906

SIR,—May I be allowed to join issue with your critic over his very remarkable criticism of the production of *Salome* by the Literary Theatre Club. To the distinguished artist Mr. Charles Ricketts no one will grudge the praise of Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, because it was only an echo of what everyone said or thought at the performance. And the admirers of the late Mr. Oscar Wilde owe to Mr. Ricketts and Mr. Sturge Moore a debt which can only be repaid by putting the club on a sound financial basis, in order that we may have future opportunities of witnessing the realisation of a superb colour sense applied to the wonderful and original dramatic inventions of Mr. Sturge Moore, who, I think, without exaggeration, is one of our greatest living poets, though he will not be recognised as such until he is dead or tottering to eternity with Mr. Charles Ricketts.

Gratitude, however, to the only begetters of this performance should not blind us to the shameful stage management and the utter incompetence of the actors, whose glaring deficiencies were only emphasised by the magnificent histrionic powers of Mr. Robert Farquharson and the exquisite costumes they were privileged to wear. To cover up incompetence by attacking the play and making parrot-like observations about Mr. Oscar Wilde is a very poor compliment to Mr. Ricketts and Mr. Sturge Moore. To suggest that the play was "saved" or indeed wanted saving appears to me an insolent Hibernianism. That *Salome* is a cento of Flaubert, Maeterlinck, the Bible, John Bright, and Ibsen has been said a thousand times, but we do not cease to admire the architecture of a Roman Palace because it is a cento of bricks from the Colosseum. *Salome* may be immoral or disgusting or dull and unoriginal, but you cannot say that a drama which forms part of the European repertoire has been "saved" by a number of understudies and supers and amateurs chartered from the London theatres. *Salome* has been played more often in Germany than any other play by an English dramatist, not excepting any of Shakespeare's. When first produced in Berlin it ran for 200 consecutive nights, which I am told was a record even for a German play. In Munich, where it is superbly acted, and in every large town in Germany it is played intermittently for fifty nights at a time. With tawdry dresses and with acting nearly as bad as that which your critic admires so much, it is played in Italy, Holland, and Russia, to mention only three countries where I have seen it performed myself. Although there are plenty of French plays about John the Baptist, and a very fine drama by Sudermann, Dr. Strauss chose Wilde's version for the motive of his opera. I would remind your critic (though he cannot, I think, have ever heard the opera, or seen any of the continental productions) that Dr. Strauss has not tinkered the text of *Salome* for his score in the manner of musicians; he uses the actual words in Hedwig Lachman's translation. But as English critics could not say that the music had "saved" a play which had become a stock work of the continental stage they said that the music killed it or swamped it; of the truth of this I am not musician enough to judge. It seems highly probable. Miss Darragh certainly killed it with her acting. But to ask how the play was saved is like asking why the Irish have a brogue or why the Atlantic separates us from America. These are pleasant or unpleasant facts hardly worth discussing.

With your critic's general animadversions on Oscar Wilde as a writer I have no concern or interest. He holds them in common with many common people, in Ireland especially; but he indulges in one piece of literary moonlighting in his anxiety to mutilate the dead and flatter the living when he criticises *De Profundis* for its lack of consistency and completeness, in an ethical sense. I have explained very often in print if I did not make it very clear in the preface to that work, that the published portion only contains a third of the original work, and that I was unable, even if I had been willing, to issue it in its entirety. I can hardly dare to hope that even as a whole it would have satisfied Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, but I would not have Mr. Oscar Wilde censured for my discretions.—Yours, etc.,

ROBERT ROSS.

Athenæum,

26 May
1906

A LITERARY THEATRE CLUB has been formed for the production of Oscar Wilde's 'Salomé' at the Kings Hall, Covent Garden, on Sunday, June 10th, and Monday, June 18th.

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9 June.

We are requested to state that persons desirous of attending the performance of Oscar Wilde's 'Florentine Tragedy' and 'Salome' at the Literary Theatre Club on the 10th and 18th inst. should communicate with the Secretary, Miss Currey, 88, Philbeach Gardens, S.W.

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Morning Leader

12 June

LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

TWO OSCAR WILDE TRAGEDIES STAGED WITH POOR SUCCESS.

On Sunday night, at the King's Hall, Covent Garden, the Literary Theatre Club presented "Florentine Tragedy" and "Salome," two one-act tragedies, of which it may be said that their main, if not sole, claim to consideration is the bearing of a name which, not so long ago, would have acted as a disqualification for production. Whatever their merit as literature, as stage plays they are distinctly disappointing.

"Florentine Tragedy" is a tale of a lady, a noble lover, a merchant husband, and a duel, in which the husband, although handicapped by weight of years, kills his rival. A "Florentine Tragedy" is all talk, and, to give opportunity for much of it, primitive stage devices have to be adopted. Mr. George Ingleton displayed a certain rough force as the husband, but there was nothing of distinction in the playing of the two other parts.

"Salome" has been forbidden by the censor, because it deals with the death of the prophet Jokanaan (John the Baptist). It is a study in erotomania, of the wild, physical passion of Salome for the prophet, combined with the blood lust. She and the other characters indulge in Mæterlinckian repetitions, and she never tires of saying that the prophet's body is the whitest object in the world, his hair the blackest, his lips the reddest, and that she will kiss his mouth. A little of this sort of thing goes a long way; and there is so much of it that it becomes nauseating. Indeed, a subtle, acrid odor of corruption made the whole performance disagreeable; and the disagreeableness was not mitigated by any dramatic appeal to the emotions.

Mr. Robert Farquharson endowed Herod with the right cunning, malignity, and madness. It was a quite notable bit of character-acting. The rich, sensuous tones of Miss Darragh's voice made her Salome interesting: but there is little scope for acting. Another part depending chiefly on a fine voice was that of Jokanaan, whose lines were well declaimed by Mr. Lewis Casson.

"June

"SALOME" REVIVED.

Tragedy of John the Baptist as a Stage Play.

As might, indeed, have been expected, something more than the accustomed Sunday evening audience crowded the National Sporting Club yesterday for a production of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" and "Florentine Tragedy."

It will be remembered that "Salome"—originally written in French for Bernhardt—was played a year or two ago at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater. It then proved—as it proved yesterday in the hands of the Literary Theatre Club—very clever and tedious. It shows us Salome as being in love with John the Baptist, and the whole thing is a parade of sensuous imagery—ably evolved, but not greatly original—most of it conveyed very dexterously from the Song of Solomon. There is an immense deal of the moon, and roses, and the feet of doves.

All this sounds very sweet for a time. After a while, however, it becomes fearfully monotonous, partly through sheer repetition, and partly because yesterday, as before, the little play was not acted, as it should be, frankly and passionately, but chanted solemnly, slowly, with the actors at a distance from each other, as though it were some religious mystery.

In the end Salome, after her dance before Herod, asks for John the Baptist's head as a revenge for baffled love, kisses its lips, and is instantly killed at Herod's order. The drama of the thing, like the language, is clever enough, but there is only five minutes' action in two hours' traffic, and one sighs for more.

One did so yesterday especially, as Salome's dance—the one little bit of excitement one was hoping for—was for the most part carefully concealed by the crowd on the stage.

For the rest Miss Dareagh made as good a Salome as anyone with an obviously unoriental temperament and a slow and serious manner could do. She spoke her lines with splendid conviction. She would have made a magnificent priestess; but she did not for a moment suggest Salome.

Mr. Robert Farquarson's Herod was represented—as before—as a doddering imbecile, and was, it must be confessed, more wearying than either Oscar Wilde's or the real Herod would have been likely to prove. Mr. Lewis Casson's John the Baptist was, however, altogether admirable and dignified. The head proved quite a terribly realistic "property," and there is no possible denying the beauty of the production as such.

The little play that opened the evening—"A Florentine Tragedy"—was, like Salome, an exceedingly clever piece of rather humbugging romance.

A young Italian mediæval noble is found with an old merchant's young wife. The old merchant, after long and guileful discourse, challenges the young noble to fight, and kills him. The young wife, who had loved the young noble, turns to her husband with sudden affection. "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" says she. "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" says he. They embrace.

This little romantic touch is prefaced, as has been said, by a good deal of heavily-jewelled and flowered speech—much of it rather spoiled by Mr. George Ingleton's persistent efforts as the old merchant to produce a big deep voice from some remote corner of his chest. Still, greatly acted the little play would be interesting.

127ms.

WILDE'S "SALOME."

Writing in reference to the critique of the performance of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" by the Literary Theatre Club, published in "The Daily Chronicle" on Monday, Mr. Robert Ross (Reform Club) states:—

Your critic is in error when he says that the play was written for Mme. Bernhardt. The author himself, in a letter to the "Times" of March 2, 1903, denied that often-repeated statement. From internal evidence (the exiguous stage direction), and from correspondence in my possession, I do not think Wilde contemplated its production on the stage, when he composed the work, some seven or eight months before Mme. Bernhardt had heard of its existence. Moreover, whatever Wilde's faults as a dramatist may have been, he possessed too much sense of "theatre" to have contrived the long speech of Salome at the end of a play intended for presentation.

Whatever the opinion on Salome, I do not think even your critic will differ from me about the costumes and the marvellous colour-effects for which Mr. Charles Ricketts was responsible. Never has the play been dressed so superbly. You would have thought that where the text failed the textile fabrics would have inspired the actors. I look forward to the day when the Literary Theatre Club may find human material more on an artistic level with Mr. Ricketts' designs and Mr. Robert Farquharson's magnificent histrionic gifts.

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ART AND ARTISTS.

The Younger Men.

Mr. Charles Ricketts is one of the most gifted and versatile of the young artists of to-day. As a designer and engraver of woodcuts and a maker of beautiful books his work is already well known and warmly appreciated. His designs for jewelry have appealed to a much narrower public, but the costumes and scenery he invented for Mr. Sturge Moore's play of "Aphrodite against Artemis," produced recently by the Literary Theatre Club, scored a great success, and the decorations he is to provide for the same society's next productions, Oscar Wilde's "Salome" and "Florentine Tragedy," are looked forward to with the greatest interest. Not more than a couple of months ago we had occasion to notice an exhibition of Mr. Ricketts's bronzes at the Carfax Gallery, and now Mr. Van Wisselingh has opened at the Dutch Gallery the largest collection of this artist's oil paintings. 2049-50311547

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Ingl. Ind. Independent. 11 June

OSCAR WILDE'S PLAYS.

Sunday theatricals by private producers are by no means uncommon in London. Last night I was present at the performance of two tragedies written by Oscar Wilde, and presented by the Literary Theatre Club in the King's Hall, Covent Garden. There was a crowded audience, mainly composed of litterateurs and theatrical people, and including numerous ladies. The first piece was a play unexpectedly brought to light by Oscar Wilde's literary executor, entitled "Florentine Tragedy," which was written for Mr. George Alexander, but never performed. Part of the play was missing when it was unearthed from amongst Wilde's papers, but it was rewritten by Mr. Sturge Moore. The piece briefly is concerned with the attempted intrigue of a gay young heir to the Ducal family with the beautiful but unappreciative wife of a gruff old merchant. Putting the youth off his guard by endeavouring to effect sales of his merchandise to him, the husband, on discovering his guilty motive, engages him in fight.

A STAGE DUEL.

An exciting encounter, first with swords, then with daggers, ends in the death of a young nobleman. The avenger is about to kill his wife also when a romantic finale interrupts the thread of the tragedy. His wife finds that her admiration for her husband's strength awakens in her for the first time a love for him she never felt before, and he, discovering for the first time also her beauty, reciprocates her attachment. The piece is a potent blend of tragedy and pathos, if melodramatic, and it is without those lighter touches which are associated with Oscar Wilde's comedies. It is cleverly played. The second piece produced was Oscar Wilde's "Salome." The piece, while powerfully written, is unconvincing, and public opinion would be inclined to endorse the action of the Lord Chamberlain in prohibiting it. It was last night, however, it has been performed in private.

Evening Standard ¹² St. James's Gazette. *Inc*

TWO PLAYS BY WILDE.

A singularly weird audience appeared to derive neurotic and erotic pleasure from a performance of two plays by Oscar Wilde at the Hall of the National Sporting Club on Sunday evening. They were given by the so-called Literary Theatre.

The first piece, "A Florentine Tragedy," proved to be the original of a play produced a short time ago by Mr. George Alexander, called "Flower o' the Rose." The original is far less artistic, and is mainly a revolting representation of the murder of a lover by a husband. As the latter Mr. George Ingleton's performance was little more than a caricature.

This was followed by the equally unsuitable "Salome"—a wordy piece of great rubbish written round a supposedly lascivious dance before Herod. Mr. Robert Farquharson, as on a previous occasion, gave a powerful piece of character acting as the vile Tetrarch, but the piece is a striking example of the author's utter lack of sense of the fitness of things. There seems no reason at all for the existence of the society if its aim be the performance of such thorough

TWO OSCAR WILDE PLAYS.

The literary reputation of the late Oscar Wilde seems likely to suffer at the hands of his enthusiastic but misguided worshippers. It is just about a year since a poor performance of "Salome" was given by a private society at the Bijou Theatre, Bayswater. On Sunday evening last at King's Hall, Covent Garden, this performance was repeated by the "Literary Theatre Club"—apparently the original society under another name. At the same time there was also given, for the first time in this country, Wilde's "Florentine Tragedy."

These pieces, if they are to be rendered tolerable, should be played with masterly skill. They are neither well written nor well constructed. The "Florentine Tragedy," in itself, is a melodramatic sketch that, boiled down, would be popular in one of the cheaper music-halls. Larded over with sticky adjectives and greasy similes, it proves very tiresome. An old merchant finds a young princeling making love to his wife. He picks a quarrel with him and kills him. Then the wife discovers that her husband is "strong," and he discovers that his wife is beautiful. Curtain.

Mr. George Ingleton, though unnecessarily pompous, did fairly well as the merchant, but Miss Gwendolen Bishop made nothing of the wife save a puling creature in an art gown.

Of "Salome" we spoke fully at the time of its original production. Mr. Robert Farquharson repeats, with exaggerations, his singularly unpleasant, emasculated Herod. Mr. Lewis Casson was dignified as Iokanaan, but Miss Darragh's Salome was even more colourless than the Salome of Bayswater. Neither voice nor gesture conveyed the least idea of emotion, and the dance, the success of the Continental performance, was a mere shadow and window exercise.