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Oscar Wilde Scrapbook

Vol. 3

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 æsthetic 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 spake 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 wonderful 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

Speaker.
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 vaccillated 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 equiv
to about £2 per child. Is this a task which so p
community as the Roman Catholics can afford
doubt it, and therefore we have a prospect of a l
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.

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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

Womens 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, Bayswater, 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 reproved, they might turn their attention to cleaner business.

* * *

Speaker, 14 July 1906

SALOME.

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.

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 priceless voluptuousness he had flaunted. Herod was an æsthetic décadent 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.

Literary World

August 1906

Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. (Lane. 2s. 6d. net.)

In Germany, performed with the music Richard Strauss has written for it, this play has produced a profound impression. Readers of this English version will find it a vivid, imaginative, powerful drama, beautiful with a morbid kind of beauty. The strange passion of the young girl Salomé for the prophet, 'Jokanaan,' is the key to the tragedy, as the poet conceives it. 'I will kiss thy lips,' she reiterates; but the prophet treats her with stern, repellent coldness. Then the picture of Herod's restless unhappiness, of Herodias' unhappiness, of the king's wandering fancy for Salomé, is set skilfully before us. With difficulty Salomé is persuaded to dance, and when it is over she makes her undreamt-of demand by way of reward. The high literary gifts of the writer find full scope in the gorgeous passage in which Herod offers all sorts of substitutes—only to be refused. At last the head of Jokanaan is brought to the obdurate girl, and she fulfils her word—she kisses his lips! Herod's fear, and his departure with the final command, 'Kill that woman!' make the dramatic closing scene.

Evening Standard St. James's Gazette.

18 June 1906

"Salome." By Oscar Wilde. Lane. 2s. 6d. net.
[Originally written in French, and here translated into English. Both in dialogue and imagination it reminds one occasionally of Maeterlinck. But it is not a very moving composition.]

Bystander.

13 June

"Salome"

For many years Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy, *Salome*, has been out of print. Mr. John Lane announces a new edition in a cheap form, which will be published next week. This play has been translated into every European language, including Czech, and at the present time is constantly acted in Germany, besides providing inspiration to Dr. Strauss.

Daily Chronicle.

6 June

—Mr. John Lane is publishing a new edition, in a cheap form, of Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy, "Salome," which has been out of print. This play has been translated into every European language, including Czech.

Truth,

6 June

A new edition in a cheap form of Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy "Salome" is announced by Mr. John Lane. The play, which has been out of print here for many years past, has been translated into every European language, and at the present time it is constantly acted in Germany.

Star.

16 June 1906

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

JAMES DOUGLAS.

Scotsman.

18 June.

SALOME. A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. 2s. 6d. net. London: John Lane.

The first thing that strikes one about this book is its cover, a clever design which has obviously derived its inspiration from the work of Aubrey Beardsley. The piece itself is interesting for two extrinsic considerations; firstly, because it has been made the book of an opera by the most distinguished among modern composers, and, secondly, because the subject suggests a comparison between this piece and Mr Stephen Philipps's "Herod." It is a powerful little tragedy made out of the story of that daughter of King Herod's who danced off John the Baptist's head, written with the utmost possible modernity of manner, in a dialogue full of shuddersome suggestions and nervous iterations in the manner of Mr Maurice Maeterlinck. Its refined, decadent, and always rather far-fetched art, reaching after a complex and self-conscious simplicity, is, for the rest, characteristic of its author.

Glasgow Evening News,

SALOME. A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. London: Lane. 2s 6d. The controversies regarding this extraordinary piece are fresh in the public mind. It is a piece barred by the Censor in this country, but it has been staged privately in London. The Salome is the Salome of Scripture.

Sheffield Independent 23 April 1906

Oscar Wilde is to be heard, through the medium of Richard Strauss, at the Town Theatre at Graz on the 16th, 18th, and 20th of next month, when the one-act musical drama, "Salome," will be performed under the personal direction of the composer. There will be much more of Strauss than of Wilde, as the orchestra will be strengthened by the addition of ninety instrumentalists. As this will be the first representation in Austria, the directors of the theatre, wishing to give foreign music-lovers the opportunity of hearing this much-discussed work, have decided to reserve a number of seats.

Women's Tribune 22 June

"SALOME." A Tragedy in one Act, by Oscar Wilde (John Lane, 2s 6d.) This translation retains, perhaps intentionally, the flavour of translated French rather than of English, but it is very delicately and faithfully translated. The Beardsley illustrations are omitted, except for the design on the cover.

Bristol Times and Mirror,

12 Aug. 1905

STRICTLY LIMITED.

The day of freak publications is not yet gone, I am sorry to say. A writer in "The Sphere" calls attention to the publication of a volume of poetry for children published at 18s., the bait being that only 175 copies have been printed. "These fantastic limited editions at prohibitive prices are beyond me," is the comment. And I say "Hear, hear." What is the use of such a publication? If the reading world can only have 175 copies of such a book, cannot the reading world manage to get on without any at all? I can understand a limited demand for a book, say a local topographical work, a record of some provincial society, or a family history. In such cases it would be unwise to print many copies, and, of course, if only a few are produced, the price per copy must be high. But a book in which the author appeals to mankind at large ought to be brought within the reach of mankind at large if it be deemed worth publishing at all. Of course, I know that the idea often is to supply to rich collectors luxurious copies of works, which in cheap editions are accessible to everybody. But that does not appear to be the case with this particular collection of poems for children. Apparently it is for 175 people only, and each must have 18s. to spend on the work. An author who publishes under such conditions must feel, I suppose, that he is writing for a very select circle indeed. Let him not, however, flatter himself. People who buy editions de luxe rarely read them: don't open them, but store them carefully away in the hope that a few years hence they will see a report of a copy being sold by auction at 150 per cent. beyond published price.

SOME APPRECIATIONS.

And sometimes that comes to pass—sometimes. When Oscar Wilde's "De Profundis" was published this year there was a small special edition, which sold out privately, and the other day I saw a copy priced in a second-hand bookseller's catalogue at a good advance. I believe that for a first edition of the ordinary issue one may get a little more than the crown it cost. There is a case of immediate appreciation. Just now everything that the unfortunate man wrote, and everything that was written about him, appears to be in keen demand.

Glasgow Herald,

25 June

POETRY, VERSE, DRAMA.

"Salomé." A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. (London: John Lane.)

According to the Scripture narrative it was at her mother's suggestion that Salomé asked for the head of John the Baptist as a reward for her dancing. Here the prophet, who figures as Jokanaan, falls a victim to the vengeance of Salomé herself, whose passion he has despised. There are some powerful touches in the play, but on the whole its effect is unpleasant. Neither is the style attractive. The short sentences which the various characters are made to jerk out give their speeches a ridiculous resemblance to an Ollendorf exercise. Here is an instance. It is Herod who speaks:—"Ah! look at the moon! She has become red. She has become red as blood. Ah! the prophet prophesied truly. He prophesied that the moon would become red as blood. Did he not prophesy it? All of you heard him. And now the moon has become red as blood. Do ye not see it?" That Herod should speak in this disjointed way, under the influence of the wine he has drunk, might be excusable. But the style is common to all, and the same scrappy iteration is as characteristic of the utterances of the page as it is of those of the King.

"SALOME."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE STAR."

9 June

Sir,—In referring to the above play by Oscar Wilde, your trenchant reviewer, Mr. James Douglas, falls into what appears to be a common error, for I note the same in "Chambers's Encyclopædia," i.e., that Wilde merely translated the play.

The original edition of "Salome" states that the play was translated into English by Lord Alfred Douglas, being written in French by Wilde.—Yours, etc.,

P. T. ROSS.

Dornton-rd., Balham, S.W.,
16 June.

*** Our critic did not fall into this error. He described the work as a "translation from the French original." As the name of the translator was not given on the title-page of the translation, he assumed that it was "not by the author," and this assumption appears to be correct.

5 June

For many years Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy "Salome" has been out of print. Mr. John Lane announces a new edition in a cheap form. This play has been translated into every European language, including Czech, and at the present time is constantly acted in Germany, besides providing inspiration to Dr. Strauss.

TRIBUNE,

16 June

POETRY AND BELLES-LETTRES.

"Salome." A Tragedy in one act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. John Lane. pp. 65. 2s. 6d. net.

This poetical tragedy was written a dozen years ago, but a licence to perform it in this country was refused by the Censor. Its leading theme is the supposed love of Salome, daughter of Herodias, for John the Baptist. It was acted for the first time in English last Sunday for the Literary Theatre Club.

Westmorland Post. 19 June 1906

E LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

AFTERWARDS

How often, dearest, have we trod
The ways of this green earth together,
Taking them for the ways of God
Which change not with the time and weather;
But change comes not to us alone:
The high woods fade with sadder meaning,
Pathetic grows the vivid tone
Of spring's quick uplands heavenward leaning.

Since I, companionless, have fared
Where hill-crest lured, or white road beckon'd,
The ampler prospect, now unshared,
Gave pause for which I had not reckon'd:
Earth's verdurous disc in heaven's embrace—
The calm survey of faëry distance
Responsive to an absent face,
On dual pathos made insistence.

No more the siren brook detains,
With meadowy lilt, my feet to linger:
Through memory-haunted paths and lanes
I follow memory's ghostly finger,
Nor halt where pathless downs divide
The dales of dusk from sunset heather.
God's morrow, maybe, side by side
Again, we'll pace the ways together.

EASTWOOD KIDSON.

MR. BENSON'S PATER

IN no other country has mediocrity such a chance as in England. The second-rate writer, the second-rate painter meet with an almost universal and immediate recognition, and when good mediocrities die, if they do not go straight to heaven (from a country where the existence of Purgatory is denied by Act of Parliament), at least they run a very fair chance of burial in Westminster Abbey. De mortuis nil nisi *bonus*, in the shape of royalties, is the real test by which we estimate the authors who have just passed away. A few of our great writers—Ruskin and Tennyson for example—have enjoyed the applause accorded to senility by a people usually timid of brilliancy and strength, when it is contemporary, because the ruins of mental faculties touch our imagination, owing perhaps to that tenderness for antiquity which has preserved for us the remains of Tintern Abbey. Seldom, however, does a great writer live to find himself in the prime of his literary existence a component part of English literature. Yet there are happy exceptions, and not the least of these was Walter Pater.

His inclusion in the English Men of Letters series, so soon after his death, has somewhat dazzled the reviewers. Mr. Benson has been complimented on a daring, which, if grudgingly endorsed, is treated as just the sort of innovation you would expect from the brother of the author of "Dodo." "To a small soul the age which has borne it can appear only an age of small souls," says Mr. Swinburne, and the presence of Pater, which rose so strangely beside our waters, seemed to many of his contemporaries only the last sob of a literature which they sincerely believed had come to an end with Lord Macaulay.

It was a fortunate chance by which Mr. A. C. Benson, one of our more discerning critics, himself master of no mean style, should have been chosen as commentator of Pater. Among the Plutarchcracy of the present day a not very pretty habit prevails of holding a sort of inquest on deceased writers—a reaction against misplaced eulogy—tearing them and their works to pieces and leaving nothing for reviewers or posterity to dissipate. From the author of the "Upton Letters" we expect sympathy and critical acumen, and it is needless to say we are never disappointed. The book itself is not merely about a literary man: it is a work of literature itself. So it is charming to disagree with Mr. Benson sometimes and a triumph to find him tripping. You experience the pleasure of the University Extension Lecturer pointing out the mistakes in Shakespeare's geography, the joy of the schoolboy when the master has made a false quantity. In marking the modern discoveries which have shattered, not the value of Pater's criticism, but the authenticity of pictures round which he wove his aureoles of prose, Mr. Benson says: "In the essay on Botticelli he is on firmer ground." But among the first masterpieces winged by the sportsmen of the new criticism was the Hamilton Palace Assumption of the Virgin (now proved to be by *Botticini*) to which Pater makes one of his elusive and delightful allusions; while "The School of Giorgione," which Mr. Benson thinks a little *passé* in the light of modern research, is now in the movement. The latest bulletins of Giorgione, Pater would have been delighted to hear, are highly satisfactory. Pictures once torn from the altars of authenticity are being reinstated under the acolytage of Mr. Herbert Cook. A curious and perhaps wilful error, too, has escaped Mr. Benson's notice. Referring to the tomb of Cardinal Jacopo at San Miniato, Pater says, "insignis formâ fui—his epitaph dares to say." The inscription reads *fuit*. But perhaps the *t* was added by the Italian Government out of deference to the English residents in Florence and the word read *fui* in 1871. *Troja fuit* might be written all over Florence.

Then some of the architecture at Vezelay "typical of Cluniac sculpture" is pure Viollet-le-Duc, I am assured by a competent authority. A more serious error, for it is an adjective not a fact, occurs in "Apollo in Picardy"—"*rebellious* masses of black hair." This is the only instance in the *parfait prosateur*, as Bourge tcalled him, of a *cliché* worthy of Rita. Then it is possible to differ from Mr. Benson in his criticism of the "Imaginary Portraits" (the four fair ovals in one volume), surely Pater's most exquisite achievement after the "Renaissance." "Gaston" is the failure Pater thought it was, and "Emerald Uthwart" is frankly very silly, though Mr. Benson has a curious tenderness for it. One sentence he abandons as absolute folly. The grave psychological error in the story occurs where the surgeon expresses compunction at making the autopsy on Uthwart because of his perfect anatomy. Surely this would have been a source of technical pleasure and interest to a surgeon, much as a butterfly collector is pleased when he has murdered an unusually fine species of lepidoptera. Speaking myself as a vivisector of some experience, I can confidently affirm that a well-bred golden colley is far more interesting to operate upon than a mongrel sheep dog. Nor can I comprehend Mr. Benson's blame of Denys l'Auxerrois as too extravagant and even unwholesome, when the last quality, so obvious in Uthwart, he seems to condone.

Again, "Marius the Epicurean" is a failure by Pater's own high standard: you would have imagined it seemed so to Mr. Benson. Dulness is by no means its least fault. In scheme it is not unlike "John Inglesant"; but how lifeless are the characters compared with those of Shorthouse! Both books deal with philosophic ideas and sensations; the incidents are merely illustrative, and there is hardly a pretence of sequence. In the historical panorama which moves behind Inglesant, there are at least "tactile" values, and seventeenth-century England is conjured up in a wonderful way, how accurately I do not know. In "Marius" the background is merely a backcloth for mental *poses plastiques*. You wonder, not how still the performers are, but why they do not move at all. Marcus Aurelius, the delightful Lucian, even Flavian, and the rest, are busts from the Capitoline and Naples museums. Their bodies are make-believe, or straw from the loft at White Nights. Cornelius, Mr. Benson sorrowfully admits, is a Christian prig, but Marius is only a pagan chip from the same block. John

Literary World August 1906

Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. (Lane. 2s. 6d. net.)

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Evening Standard St. James's Gazette. 18 June 1906

"Salomé." By Oscar Wilde. Lane. 2s. 6d. net.

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On the occasion of Pater's lecture on Prosper Merimée, his friends gathered round the platform to congratulate him; he expressed a hope that the audience were able to hear what he said. "We overheard you," said Mr. Oscar Wilde. "Ah, you have a phrase for everything," replied the lecturer, whom the author of *Lady Windermere's Fan* declared with pathetic inaccuracy was the only contemporary who had ever influenced him. How admirable both of the criticisms! Pater is an aside in literature, and that is why he was sometimes overlooked, and may be so again in ages to come. Though he is the greatest master of style the century produced, he can never be regarded as part of the structure of English prose. He is rather one of the ornaments, which often last long after the structure has perished. His place will be shifted, as fashions change; like some exquisite piece of eighteenth-century furniture perchance he may be forgotten in the attics of literature awhile, only to be rediscovered. And as Fuseli said of Blake: "He will be damned good to steal from." If he uses words as though they were pigments and sentences like vestments at the Mass, it is not only the ritualistic cadence of his harmonies which makes his words imperishable, but the ideas which they symbolise as well. Pater thinks beautifully always; about things which some people do not think altogether beautiful, perhaps, and sometimes he thinks aloud. We overhear him and feel almost the shame of the eavesdropper.

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ROBERT ROSS.

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A FAVOURITE EPITHET OF WORDSWORTH'S

"WORDSWORTH," observed the late Mr. R. H. Hutton in an aphoristic sentence, "drew uncommon delights from very common things." But, more than this, the very word *common* had a charm for him similar to that which an adjective of such sumptuous import as *rich* would possess for a nature like that of Keats. In "The Prelude" and "The Recluse" alone the word occurs some twenty-five times as an adjective, and its cognate verb and noun forms —*commune, communion, community* and *commonalty*—are not unfrequent. It is to be found repeatedly in his shorter poems, upon which much of his fame depends.

Only in "The Excursion" is it rarely used, where less than half a dozen instances of it are found.

The word *common* is suggestive to many people of a slightly depreciatory sense, which, undoubtedly, it is often intended to convey; but a glance at a good dictionary reveals a term of real etymological interest, expressing many different shades of meaning. Thus, *e.g.*, the Latin origin of the word *cum* and *munis* = *serving* (others) *together* (with oneself) and its opposite *proprius* = what is one's own, can both be illustrated from Wordsworth's poetry:

> If the wind do but stir for his proper delight . . .
> The common life our Nature breeds.

It is not difficult to see why Wordsworth should have employed the epithet *common* so frequently in "The Prelude." In the building up of the Poet's mind and moral nature, which is the main subject of that poem, the sense of a *community* bore a large part.

There was, first, the dim and undefined sense of a community with Nature, felt in boyhood and more intensely realised in youth and opening manhood; there was the outward embodiment of a primitive *community* in the simple and manly lives led by the Cumbrian dalesmen; and, last, there was the sense of a wider and deeper *community*, embracing whole classes of individual men and nations, of which the initial stages of the French Revolution gave a hope. As regards the shorter poems generally, it may be said that those pieces in which the word occurs lend a special weight of meaning to Wordsworth's expressed view of the true functions of a poet:

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> Some random truths he can impart;
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The comparison of a large number of passages in which the word occurs shows that it is applied to the mental and moral qualities and attributes of man, and to the various objects summed up in the line:

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Though frequently used in the sense of *ordinary*, as, *e.g.*,

> This is no common waste, no common gloom,

the context will be found to give it a lustre and a suggestion of hidden meaning that exclude any idea of depreciation, as in the passage from "Hart Leap Well" from which the above is quoted, where poet and untutored shepherd, meeting together on a lone hillside, are united in soul by a gush of sympathy for the wrongs and sufferings of the mute animal kingdom.

This heightening effect of a context is better exhibited in the beautiful lyric, "To a Highland Girl," in which the line:

> Though but of common neighbourhood

daughter of Herodias, to join the Dance. It was acted for the first time in English last Sunday for the Literary Theatre Club.

heart. At length, after he has taken his fill of pretence, he challenges the lover to fight. The lover, worsted, begs for mercy, and is allowed to go on begging before Simone, with more than necessary violence, despatches him. The wife shrinks against the wall. She sees in her husband's eyes that she, too, is doomed. And now comes the ending for sake of which, I take it, the play was written—the germ of psychological paradox from which the story developed itself backwards. The wife falls to her knees, and, with real love in her voice, cries "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" The husband pauses, stares at her, lets drop his dagger, saying "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" There is, of course, no great paradox in the first of these two speeches. (One remembers, for instance, Becky Sharp's sudden admiration for Rawdon Crawley after the ejection of Lord Steyne.) But the second speech is certainly a daring invention. Is the paradox a sound one? I think so. It is not unnatural that the merchant, having won his bride with money, should not have appreciated her at her full human value until he had won her by more primitive, more human means. Her contempt for him, moreover, would have prejudiced him against her. The light of admiration for him in her eyes, besides making her actually more beautiful, would have quickened his perception of her beauty. And then there was the fact that she had inspired a passion in the nobleman. This, too, would have quickened the merchant's perception. My sole objection to the paradox is concerned with the placing of it. No play—no work of art whatsoever—ought to finish on a top note. We ought never to be left gasping, at the fall of the curtain. The paradox that I have examined ought to have been led up to, so that its meaning would have been plain when the curtain fell. It ought to have been a summing-up, not a challenge. Mr. Wilde's sure artistic sense here failed him, for once.

Obviously, the part of Simone is a fine part for an actor. I should like to have seen it played by Sir Henry Irving. I know of no one else who could have given fully the sardonic essence of it. Mr. George Ingleton, however, who played it the other night, is a very capable actor; and his performance seemed really distinguished in the glare of incapacity shed by the young lady and gentleman who played the two other parts.

When "Salomé" was produced last year at the Bijou Theatre, I reflected that only the finest acting and the most tactful stage-management could reconcile us to the physical horror of the play. Reading the play, one has no more than the right tragic thrill. Seeing the play—seeing Salomé kiss in triumph the severed head of the prophet—one is thrilled with mere physical disgust, unless the scene be arranged with great compunction, and unless the acting of Salomé shall have been on a lofty tragic plane. Neither of these requisites was supplied at the Bijou Theatre. At the King's Hall, Miss Darragh supplied one of them. She is not the ideal Salomé; for she looks rather modern, rather occidental. But, besides having a beautiful voice, and speaking the words with a keen sense for their cadence, she is a genuine tragedian, and thus was able to live in the part, and, living there, to purge somewhat our physical disgust through spiritual terror. She was, as nearly as need be, the veritable daughter of Herodias. Miss Florence Farr was not, alas, the veritable mother of Salomé. She was very much too pleasant. She seemed to be trying to make Herodias "sympathetic", and was quite out of the key of the tragedy. Mr. Robert Farquharson re-appeared as Herod; and I was more than ever struck by the fineness of his performance. His delivery of the three long decorative speeches is a marvel in the art of elocution. Other English actors may know how valuable an effect can be got from sometimes talking quickly; but I have never found them taking advantage of their knowledge. Perhaps they have not the necessary skill. Mr. Farquharson can, without slurring a syllable, speak English as rapidly as Mme. Sarah Bernhardt can speak French; and the effect in his case is even greater than in hers, because none of his compatriots has attempted to compete with him. Apart from its technique, his performance is memorable for the rare imaginative power with which he realises the grotesque and terrible figure of Herod.

As the scenery and the dresses were designed by Mr. Charles Ricketts, it need not be said they were beautiful. They were also, however, dramatically appropriate—just enough conventionalised to be in harmony with the peculiar character of the play. The stage-management was faulty only in the final scene; and that, alas, is the scene where perfection is most needed. Not even the quality of Miss Darragh's acting could wholly purge our physical disgust. It is obvious that Salomé ought to be in the far background, and in deepest shadow, while she holds in her hands the head of the prophet. This would not merely militate against physical disgust. It would aid illusion. When we distinctly see the head, we are conscious of its unreality, however realistically it be made. And our consciousness of its unreality does not make it one whit the less unpleasant.

MAX BEERBOHM.

Sunday Sun, 29 april 1906

WILDE IN GERMANY.

Oscar Wilde's play, "The Importance of Being Earnest," was produced at the Dresden Royal Theatre, this week, under the title of "Ernst," and was a great success. When are we to see a Wilde comedy in London again? After "His House in Order" ends up at the St. James's—if it ever does?

Pall Mall Gazette, 26 may 1906

When are we to hear Richard Strauss's "Salome" in England? The absurd scandal which was created by those fussy people who are always on the scent for something disagreeable in anything which is new in opera managed to suppress its earliest performances. But, as Galileo said, "Eppur si muove." There is nothing that can really suppress a work of art, and the result is that "Salome" has probably had more success than would otherwise have attended its appearance if it had not been for the scandalous puritanism of those who desired its extinction. At Vienna, the work was refused, but it has now been performed for the first time in Austria, at Gratz. The success was immediately assured of this particular presentment of the work. The Vienna correspondent of a contemporary writes that Strauss appeared at least twenty times before the curtain, in response to the applause of the audience. A tremendous greeting also met him when he appeared at the conductor's desk. Many musicians of noted fame, including such a well-known writer as Puccini, were present on the occasion, and the whole performance seems to have been splendidly realised, while all the actors and actresses taking part in the work were greeted with every possible sign of appreciation. It only shows that the geniuses of the world are bound in the end to win their way, despite all the prejudices, all the disfavour, all the opposition of those narrow cliques which think that, because they belong to an earlier period of art, art, therefore, should come to a standstill when they themselves have finished practically with art. It is so absurd to think that new things and new ideas can never be produced upon the face of the earth, that history, which, despite the old dictum, never repeats itself, should, at all events, show that every development in novelty, when set before the world by a real genius, is bound to take its place in the long line of those who have suffered and worked and died for art, and who, despite all opposition, will continue so to do, in defiance of the fear or the favour of man.

Musical Standard. 26 may 1906

RICHARD STRAUSS' "Salome" was performed for the first time in Austria, at Gratz, on May 16, the Vienna censor having refused to admit it into the Imperial Opera. It is stated that Puccini and other well-known composers were present at the performance. The Vienna correspondent of the "Telegraph" says: When Strauss appeared at the conductor's desk he was greeted with a storm of applause. After the frantic revelry at the conclusion of the work, which as regards instrumental strength of expression is without an equal, thundering cheers arose, which lasted fully a quarter of an hour. Richard Strauss appeared with the principal singers at least twenty times in response to the cries of the audience. The stage was literally carpeted with flowers. Among the singers Jenny Korb took the first place as Salome, a part demanding such physical and musical effort that Isolde may be considered an easy rôle in comparison. The high and powerful soprano tones of Fräulein Korb were exactly suited to the Salome music, and the artist's musical knowledge carried her safely through the difficulties of intonation. Fräulein Korb performed the demoniacal dance of the seven veils herself. She delighted her audience by the sheer force of her musical expression and her fascinating acting. Herr Günther-Braun's performance as Herod was entirely satisfactory, as the music suited his voice. Fräulein Anderson appeared as Herodias, and Herr Jessen as Jochanaan. The orchestra brilliantly fulfilled all expectations.

Literary World August 1906

Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French

Evening Standard St. James's Gazette. 18 June 1906

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Bury & Norwich Post. 19 June 1906

THE LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

This Club, which held its inaugural meeting a few months ago, has grown in numbers and importance, and at its second gathering on Sunday evening week at King's Hall, Covent Garden, most of the well-known literary people of the day were present. The plays chosen had no doubt attracted many. Oscar Wilde's "Salome," and his "Florentine Tragedy," are a sufficient guarantee for an interesting evening. The "Florentine Tragedy" reminds us in many particulars of Browning's "Statue and the Bust," though the dramatic anti-climax is not in that poem, but the characters are the same. The story of Salome, daughter of Herodias, who danced before Herod, is well known to all. It is treated in a simple, dignified manner, and nothing can surpass the beauty of the work. It is like Maeterlincte at his best, the lines containing true music, which it is impossible to forget. Such well-written prose is as a haunting tune. The plays were so well selected that we wish we could say the same of the players. In the first piece Miss Gwendolen Bishop was certainly charming as the young Florentine wife, but the other two characters were not in the picture. It is difficult to get out of this work-a-day world back to the manners and feelings of the first century; still, if a drama of that period is attempted it must be tried. None of the actors in "Salome" had thought of this. Unfortunately it was most marked in Miss Darragh's "Salome," and the constant use of one tone of voice made her long speech monotonous. Miss Florence Farr's Herodias was an excellent study, and lent dignity to the whole. Mr. Lewis Casson, whose fine voice and elocution are always pleasant to hear, played Iokanaan with a proper spirit of solemnity. We may be mistaken in the right reading of "Herod," but we certainly do not think that it ought to be played as a low comedian, which was the manner Mr. Farquharson adopted; it was a thoroughly well carried out sketch of a comedy character throughout the play. Mr. Farquharson is to be congratulated on a wonderfully clever piece of acting, but we venture to think not quite as the author intended. The stage management was an improvement on their first show, but it still needs a little more care. The costumes were designed by Mr. C. S. Ricketts, and executed by Miss G. Bishop. The Literary Theatre Club is to be congratulated on its progress, and we feel sure it will do better still; it supplies a long-felt want for literary dramatic work.

W.F.B.

Clarion 22 June 1906

THE CHILDHOOD OF PLAGIARISM.

Some Literary Revelations.

THE subject of plagiarism has always had a peculiar interest for newspaper readers. Hardly a week "flies over our heads" but what we are called upon to deprecate some real or supposed case of theft by persons of genius. If Mr. Blank, the eminent novelist, has not filched the finest epigram in his latest work from Oscar Wilde or Mr. Tupper, then Theophilus Daub, R.A., has borrowed the theme of his new allegorical painting from a magnificent fresco in a ruined church which somebody once happened upon in Sicily. As to the dramatists—well, we all know what *they* are! It is a matter of public notoriety (for instance) that Mr. Algernon Ashton has recently been moved by a sense of duty to disclose the painful fact that G. B. Shaw—none less—has not scrupled, in his thirst for sparkles, to rifle the literary treasure-house of the former gentleman. The fact of the matter appears to be that this is a sad world; and men of letters and the arts, the saddest persons in it. And when our morning sheets are weak in the matter of more important "thrills," we can read of the wickednesses of writers and painters with just so much gusto as that which we should devote to the performances of any other thieves.

almost fought with one another for the privilege of carrying our clubs. Unfortunately these caddies "had the Gaelic", and while they had evident difficulty in understanding us, we experienced an equal difficulty in understanding them. Their English vocabulary was so limited that whenever we asked the direction of the next hole the only answer we could get was, "Over yon by the white hoose", which, as all the houses visible were white, was not much guidance. But the Brora links are the realisation of the golfer's dream. Encircling the links on three sides an amphitheatre of purple hills; in front a long undulating stretch of emerald turf, interrupted by yawning sand-bunkers; on the fourth side the blue-grey glittering sea. The Brora bunkers are glorious and immense: they open their capacious bosoms lovingly, inviting the tiny white globe to drop in. They are of every size and shape: they cannot be sneaked round, for they are everywhere: they must be blindly driven at, in the hope of getting over. The long run-up with the cleek will avail you nothing here; the brassie and the mashie must be used with courage. This makes Brora one of the most sporting and exciting courses imaginable. Against some of the Brora bunkers we must object that they are full of large stones from the shore. How the stones got there we do not know: but they might easily and ought to be removed. The course is long, but the turf is so good and the air so light that one does not feel fatigue. The Station hotel is small, (probably not more than twenty or thirty rooms), but we ate a lunch there that would have done credit to the Savoy. We have only one piece of advice to give the jaded golfer from the South—take a feu from the Duke of Sutherland, and build a bungalow at Brora.

"A FLORENTINE TRAGEDY" AND "SALOMÉ".

LAST Sunday, at the King's Hall, the Literary Theatre Club performed these two plays of Mr. Oscar Wilde. Neither of them is a cheerful play. So neither could have a chance of success in England. For that minority which is capable of taking the drama seriously as an art, and does not object to receiving tragic emotion now and then, these two plays have an extrinsic power of depression. They indicate anew to us how much was lost to dramatic art in the downfall and death of the great artist who composed them.

"A Florentine Tragedy" (produced for the first time) is akin to "Salomé" as being an essay in the art of suspense. In "Salomé" the end is foreknown; and the main horror comes of the deliberate slowness with which the action is conducted to that end. Often the dramatic movement is deliberately arrested to make way for merely decorative passages, such as Salomé's metaphors about the eyes, the hair, the lips of Iokanaan, or Herod's descriptions of the jewels and the peacocks and the various other things that Salomé might take instead of the one thing that she demands. Merely decorative in themselves, these passages are relatively dramatic in that they give us time to realise more intensely the horror of what is in store. In "A Florentine Tragedy" we know there must be at least one death before the curtain falls; and the elaborate decorations interposed do not make us forget it: they do but give us time to become uncomfortable. Nor are they, as in "Salomé", a mere artistic device of the author. They come from the nature of the chief character devised. Simone, the Florentine merchant, is a man of grim humour; and so, when he surprises his wife in the company of a young noble-man, he does not instantly draw his sword. He is furious; but his fury he will be able to express later. Meanwhile he can have some fun. He can fool the couple to the top of their bent, then suddenly drop a hint that will make them start, then again soothe them into security till he choose to frighten them again. His vengeance will be all the sweeter, all the more terrible, for such dalliance. He plays on his young wife's contempt for him, cringing to the stranger, descanting unctuously on this or that ware that he would sell. His desire is not merely to humiliate her. If she does not love the stranger yet, she shall by force of contrast be made to love him. His death shall be a dagger through her own

Literary World, August 1906

Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. (Lane. 2s. 6d. net.)

In Germany, performed with the music Richard Strauss has written for it, this play has produced a profound impression. Readers of this English version will find it a vivid, imaginative, powerful drama, beautiful with a morbid kind of beauty. The strange passion of the young girl Salomé for the prophet, 'Jokanaan,' is the key to the tragedy, as the poet conceives it. 'I will kiss thy lips,' she reiterates; but the prophet treats her with stern, repellent coldness. Then the picture of Herod's restless unhappiness, of Herodias' unhappiness, of the king's wandering fancy for Salomé, is set skilfully before us. With difficulty Salomé is persuaded to dance, and when it is over she makes her undreamt-of demand by way of reward. The high literary gifts of the writer find full scope in the gorgeous passage in which Herod offers all sorts of substitutes—only to be refused. At last the head of Jokanaan is brought to the obdurate girl, and she fulfils her word—she kisses his lips! Herod's fear, and his departure with the final command, 'Kill that woman!' make the dramatic closing scene.

Evening Standard
St. James's Gazette.

18 June 1906

"Salome." By Oscar Wilde. Lane. 2s. 6d. net.

[Originally written in French, and here translated into English. Both in dialogue and imagination it reminds one occasionally of Maeterlinck. But it is not a very moving composition.]

Bystander. 13 June

"Salome"

For many years Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy, *Salome*, has been out of print. Mr. John Lane announces a new edition in a cheap form, which will be published next week. This play has been translated into every European language, including Czech, and at the present time is constantly acted in Germany, besides providing inspiration to Dr. Strauss.

A new

Daily Chronicle.

6 June

—Mr. John Lane is publishing a new edition, in a cheap form, of Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy, "Salome," which has been out of print. This play has been translated into every European language, including Czech.

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Truth,

6 June

A new edition in a cheap form of Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy "Salome" is announced by Mr. John Lane. The play, which has been out of print here for many years past, has been translated into every European language, and at the present time it is constantly acted in Germany.

Star. 16 June 1906

* * *

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

JAMES DOUGLAS.

Scotsman.

18 June.

SALOME. A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. 2s. 6d. net. London: John Lane.

The first thing that strikes one about this book is its cover, a clever design which has obviously derived its inspiration from the work of Aubrey Beardsley. The piece itself is interesting for two extrinsic considerations; firstly, because it has been made the book of an opera by the most distinguished among modern composers, and, secondly, because the subject suggests a comparison between this piece and Mr Stephen Philipps's "Herod." It is a powerful little tragedy made out of the story of that daughter of King Herod's who danced off John the Baptist's head, written with the utmost possible modernity of manner, in a dialogue full of shuddersome suggestions and nervous iterations in the manner of Mr Maurice Maeterlinck. Its refined, decadent, and always rather far-fetched art, reaching after a complex and self-conscious simplicity, is, for the rest, characteristic of its author.

Women's Tribune 22 June

"SALOME." A Tragedy in one Act, by Oscar Wilde (John Lane, 2s 6d.) This translation retains, perhaps intentionally, the flavour of translated French rather than of English, but it is very delicately and faithfully translated. The Beardsley illustrations are omitted, except for the design on the cover.

Glasgow Evening News,

SALOME. A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. London: Lane. 2s 6d. The controversies regarding this extraordinary piece are fresh in the public mind. It is a piece banned by the Censor in this country, but it has been staged privately in London. The Salome is the Salome of Scripture.

Sheffield Independent 23 April 1906

Oscar Wilde is to be heard, through the medium of Richard Strauss, at the Town Theatre at Graz on the 16th, 18th, and 20th of next month, when the one-act musical drama, "Salome," will be performed under the personal direction of the composer. There will be much more of Strauss than of Wilde, as the orchestra will be strengthened by the addition of ninety instrumentalists. As this will be the first representation in Austria, the directors of the theatre, wishing to give [illegible] music-lovers the opportunity of hearing this much-discussed work, have decided to reserve a number of seats.

'9 June

"SALOME."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE STAR."

Sir,—In referring to the above play by Oscar Wilde, your trenchant reviewer, Mr. James Douglas, falls into what appears to be a common error, for I note the same in "Chambers's Encyclopædia," i.e., that Wilde merely translated the play.

The original edition of "Salome" states that the play was translated into English by Lord Alfred Douglas, being written in French by Wilde.—Yours, etc.,

P. T. Ross.

Dornton-rd., Balham, S.W.,
16 June.

*** Our critic did not fall into this error. He described the work as a "translation from the French original." As the name of the translator was not given on the title-page of the translation, he assumed that it was "not by the au[illegible] appears to be correct.

Glasgow Herald, 25 June

POETRY, VERSE, DRAMA.

"Salomé." A Tragedy in One Act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. (London: John Lane.)

According to the Scripture narrative it was at her mother's suggestion that Salomé asked for the head of John the Baptist as a reward for her dancing. Here the prophet, who figures as Jokanaan, falls a victim to the vengeance of Salomé herself, whose passion he has despised. There are some powerful touches in the play, but on the whole its effect is unpleasant. Neither is the style attractive. The short sentences which the various characters are made to jerk out give their speeches a ridiculous resemblance to an Ollendorf exercise. Here is an instance. It is Herod who speaks:—"Ah! look at the moon! She has become red. She has become red as blood. Ah! the prophet prophesied truly. He prophesied that the moon would become red as blood. Did he not prophesy it? All of you heard him. And now the moon has become red as blood. Do ye not see it?" That Herod should speak in this disjointed way, under the influence of the wine he has drunk, might be excusable. But the style is common to all, and the same scrappy iteration is as characteristic of the utterances of the page as it is of those of the King.

Bristol Times and Mirror,

12 Aug. 1905

STRICTLY LIMITED.

The day of freak publications is not yet gone, I am sorry to say. A writer in "The Sphere" calls attention to the publication of a volume of poetry for children published at 18s., the bait being that only 175 copies have been printed. "These fantastic limited editions at prohibitive prices are beyond me," is the comment. And I say "Hear, hear." What is the use of such a publication? If the reading world can only have 175 copies of such a book, cannot the reading world manage to get on without any at all? I can understand a limited demand for a book, say a local topographical work, a record of some provincial society, or a family history. In such cases it would be unwise to print many copies, and, of course, if only a few are produced, the price per copy must be high. But a book in which the author appeals to mankind at large ought to be brought within the reach of mankind at large if it be deemed worth publishing at all. Of course, I know that the idea often is to supply to rich collectors luxurious copies of works, which in cheap editions are accessible to everybody. But that does not appear to be the case with this particular collection of poems for children. Apparently it is for 175 people only, and each must have 18s. to spend on the work. An author who publishes under such conditions must feel, I suppose, that he is writing for a very select circle indeed. Let him not, however, flatter himself. People who buy editions de luxe rarely read them; don't open them, but store them carefully away in the hope that a few years hence they will see a report of a copy being sold by auction at 150 per cent. beyond published price.

SOME APPRECIATIONS.

And sometimes that comes to pass—sometimes. When Oscar Wilde's "De Profundis" was published this year there was a small special edition, which sold out privately, and the other day I saw a copy priced in a second-hand bookseller's catalogue at a good advance. I believe that for a first edition of the ordinary issue one may get a little more than the crown it cost. There is a case of immediate appreciation. Just now everything that the unfortunate man wrote, and everything that was written about him, appears to be in keen demand.

5 June

For many years Oscar Wilde's one-act tragedy "Salome" has been out of print. Mr. John Lane announces a new edition in a cheap form. This play has been translated into every European language, including Czech, [illegible] constantly acted in Germany, besides providing inspiration to Dr. Strauss.

TRIBUNE, 16 June

POETRY AND BELLES-LETTRES.

"Salome." A Tragedy in one act. Translated from the French of Oscar Wilde. John Lane. pp. 65. 2s. 6d. net.

This poetical tragedy was written a dozen years ago, but a licence to perform it in this country was refused by the Censor. Its leading theme is the supposed love of Salome, daughter of Herodias, for John the Baptist. It was acted for the first time in English last Sunday for the Literary Theatre Club.

AFTERWARDS

How often, dearest, have we trod
The ways of this green earth together,
Taking them for the ways of God
Which change not with the time and weather;
But change comes not to us alone:
The high woods fade with sadder meaning,
Pathetic grows the vivid tone
Of spring's quick uplands heavenward leaning.

Since I, companionless, have fared
Where hill-crest lured, or white road beckon'd,
The ampler prospect, now unshared,
Gave pause for which I had not reckon'd:
Earth's verdurous disc in heaven's embrace—
The calm survey of faëry distance
Responsive to an absent face,
On dual pathos made insistence.

No more the siren brook detains,
With meadowy lilt, my feet to linger:
Through memory-haunted paths and lanes
I follow memory's ghostly finger,
Nor halt where pathless downs divide
The dales of dusk from sunset heather.
God's morrow, maybe, side by side
Again, we'll pace the ways together.

Eastwood Kidson.

MR. BENSON'S PATER

In no other country has mediocrity such a chance as in England. The second-rate writer, the second-rate painter meet with an almost universal and immediate recognition, and when good mediocrities die, if they do not go straight to heaven (from a country where the existence of Purgatory is denied by Act of Parliament), at least they run a very fair chance of burial in Westminster Abbey. De mortuis nil nisi *bonus*, in the shape of royalties, is the real test by which we estimate the authors who have just passed away. A few of our great writers—Ruskin and Tennyson for example—have enjoyed the applause accorded to senility by a people usually timid of brilliancy and strength, when it is contemporary, because the ruins of mental faculties touch our imagination, owing perhaps to that tenderness for antiquity which has preserved for us the remains of Tintern Abbey. Seldom, however, does a great writer live to find himself in the prime of his literary existence a component part of English literature. Yet there are happy exceptions, and not the least of these was Walter Pater.

His inclusion in the English Men of Letters series, so soon after his death, has somewhat dazzled the reviewers. Mr. Benson has been complimented on a daring, which, if grudgingly endorsed, is treated as just the sort of innovation you would expect from the brother of the author of "Dodo." "To a small soul the age which has borne it can appear only an age of small souls," says Mr. Swinburne, and the presence of Pater, which rose so strangely beside our waters, seemed to many of his contemporaries only the last sob of a literature which they sincerely believed had come to an end with Lord Macaulay.

It was a fortunate chance by which Mr. A. C. Benson, one of our more discerning critics, himself master of no mean style, should have been chosen as commentator of Pater. Among the Plutarchcracy of the present day a not very pretty habit prevails of holding a sort of inquest on deceased writers—a reaction against misplaced eulogy—tearing them and their works to pieces and leaving nothing for reviewers or posterity to dissipate. From the author of the "Upton Letters" we expect sympathy and critical acumen, and it is needless to say we are never disappointed. The book itself is not merely about a literary man: it is a work of literature itself. So it is charming to disagree with Mr. Benson sometimes and a triumph to find him tripping. You experience the pleasure of the University Extension Lecturer pointing out the mistakes in Shakespeare's geography, the joy of the schoolboy when the master has made a false quantity. In marking the modern discoveries which have shattered, not the value of Pater's criticism, but the authenticity of pictures round which he wove his aureoles of prose, Mr. Benson says: "In the essay on Botticelli he is on firmer ground." But among the first masterpieces winged by the sportsmen of the new criticism was the Hamilton Palace Assumption of the Virgin (now proved to be by *Botticini*) to which Pater makes one of his elusive and delightful allusions; while "The School of Giorgione," which Mr. Benson thinks a little *passé* in the light of modern research, is now in the movement. The latest bulletins of Giorgione, Pater would have been delighted to hear, are highly satisfactory. Pictures once torn from the altars of authenticity are being reinstated under the acolytage of Mr. Herbert Cook. A curious and perhaps wilful error, too, has escaped Mr. Benson's notice. Referring to the tomb of Cardinal Jacopo at San Miniato, Pater says, "insignis formâ fui—his epitaph dares to say." The inscription reads *fuit*. But perhaps the *t* was added by the Italian Government out of deference to the English residents in Florence and the word read *fui* in 1871. *Troja fuit* might be written all over Florence.

Then some of the architecture at Vezelay "typical of Cluniac sculpture" is pure Viollet-le-Duc, I am assured by a competent authority. A more serious error, for it is an adjective not a fact, occurs in "Apollo in Picardy"—"*rebellious* masses of black hair." This is the only instance in the *parfait prosateur*, as Bourge tcalled him, of a *cliché* worthy of Rita. Then it is possible to differ from Mr. Benson in his criticism of the "Imaginary Portraits" (the four fair ovals in one volume), surely Pater's most exquisite achievement after the "Renaissance." "Gaston" is the failure Pater thought it was, and "Emerald Uthwart" is frankly very silly, though Mr. Benson has a curious tenderness for it. One sentence he abandons as absolute folly. The grave psychological error in the story occurs where the surgeon expresses compunction at making the autopsy on Uthwart because of his perfect anatomy. Surely this would have been a source of technical pleasure and interest to a surgeon, much as a butterfly collector is pleased when he has murdered an unusually fine species of lepidoptera. Speaking myself as a vivisector of some experience, I can confidently affirm that a well-bred golden colley is far more interesting to operate upon than a mongrel sheep dog. Nor can I comprehend Mr. Benson's blame of Denys l'Auxerrois as too extravagant and even unwholesome, when the last quality, so obvious in Uthwart, he seems to condone.

Again, "Marius the Epicurean" is a failure by Pater's own high standard: you would have imagined it seemed so to Mr. Benson. Dulness is by no means its least fault. In scheme it is not unlike "John Inglesant"; but how lifeless are the characters compared with those of Shorthouse! Both books deal with philosophic ideas and sensations; the incidents are merely illustrative, and there is hardly a pretence of sequence. In the historical panorama which moves behind Inglesant, there are at least "tactile" values, and seventeenth-century England is conjured up in a wonderful way, how accurately I do not know. In "Marius" the background is merely a backcloth for mental *poses plastiques*. You wonder, not how still the performers are, but why they do not move at all. Marcus Aurelius, the delightful Lucian, even Flavian, and the rest, are busts from the Capitoline and Naples museums. Their bodies are make-believe, or straw from the loft at White Nights. Cornelius, Mr. Benson sorrowfully admits, is a Christian prig, but Marius is only a pagan chip from the same block. John

Inglesant is a prig too; but there is blood in his veins, and you get, at all events, a Vandyke, not a plaster cast. The magnificent passages of prose which vest this image make it resemble the *ex voto* madonnas of continental churches—a shrine in literature but not a lighthouse.

I sometimes wonder what Pater would have become had he been a Cambridge man, and if the more strenuous University might have *forced* him into greater sympathy with modernity; or if he had been born in America, as he nearly was, and Harvard was to have acted as the benign stepmother of his days. Such speculations are not beyond all conjecture, as Sir Thomas Browne said. I think he would have been exactly the same. Oxford, I always maintain, is a condition not a place, and Pater is taken rightly as a type of all that is best in the gracious city, whispering for us the last enchantment of the middle age, far more even than its towers, at which Matthew Arnold, intellectually always in Cambridge, mocked in very reverence.

On the occasion of Pater's lecture on Prosper Merimée, his friends gathered round the platform to congratulate him; he expressed a hope that the audience were able to hear what he said. "We overheard you," said Mr. Oscar Wilde. "Ah, you have a phrase for everything," replied the lecturer, whom the author of *Lady Windermere's Fan* declared with pathetic inaccuracy was the only contemporary who had ever influenced him. How admirable both of the criticisms! Pater is an aside in literature, and that is why he was sometimes overlooked, and may be so again in ages to come. Though he is the greatest master of style the century produced, he can never be regarded as part of the structure of English prose. He is rather one of the ornaments, which often last long after the structure has perished. His place will be shifted, as fashions change; like some exquisite piece of eighteenth-century furniture perchance he may be forgotten in the attics of literature awhile, only to be rediscovered. And as Fuseli said of Blake: "He will be damned good to steal from." If he uses words as though they were pigments and sentences like vestments at the Mass, it is not only the ritualistic cadence of his harmonies which makes his works imperishable, but the ideas which they symbolise as well. Pater thinks beautifully always; about things which some people do not think altogether beautiful, perhaps, and sometimes he thinks aloud. We overhear him and feel almost the shame of the eavesdropper.

Mr. Benson has approached Walter Pater, the man, with almost sacerdotal deference. He suggests ingeniously where you can find the self-revelation in "Gaston" and "The Child in the House." This is far more illuminating than the recollections of personal friends whose memoirs are modelled on those of Captain Sumph. Mr. Humphry Ward remembers Pater only once being angry. It was in the Common room. It was with X, an elderly man! The subject of the difference was modern lectures. "Relations between them were afterwards strained." Mr. Arthur Symons remembers that he intended to bring out a new volume of "Imaginary Portraits." Fancy that! And Mr. Ainslie, that Raymond of Toulouse, has another possible subject. Really, when friends begin to tell stories of that kind, I begin to suspect they are trying to conceal something. Perhaps we have no right to know everything or anything about the amazing personalities of literature. But Henleys and Purcells lurk and leak out even at Oxford, and that is not the way to silence them. Just when the aureole is ready to be fitted on, some horrid graduate (Litteræ *in*humaniores) inks the statue. Anticipating something of the kind, Mr. Benson is careful to insist on the divergence between Rossetti and Pater, and on page 86 says something which is ludicrously untrue. If self-revelation can be traced in "Gaston," it can be found elsewhere. There are sentences in "Hippolytus veiled," the "Age of the Athletic Prizemen" and "Apollo in Picardy" which not only explode Mr. Benson's statement, but where the objections he urges against Denys l'Auxerrois might well be substantiated. They are passages where Pater thinks aloud. Rossetti wore the heart on the sleeve, no doubt, Pater up the sleeve; but it slips down occasionally in spite of the alb which drapes the hieratic writer not always discreetly.

ROBERT ROSS.

A LITERARY CAUSERIE

A FAVOURITE EPITHET OF WORDSWORTH'S

"WORDSWORTH," observed the late Mr. R. H. Hutton in an aphoristic sentence, "drew uncommon delights from very common things." But, more than this, the very word *common* had a charm for him similar to that which an adjective of such sumptuous import as *rich* would possess for a nature like that of Keats. In "The Prelude" and "The Recluse" alone the word occurs some twenty-five times as an adjective, and its cognate verb and noun forms —*commune*, *communion*, *community* and *commonalty*—are not unfrequent. It is to be found repeatedly in his shorter poems, upon which much of his fame depends.

Only in "The Excursion" is it rarely used, where less than half a dozen instances of it are found.

The word *common* is suggestive to many people of a slightly depreciatory sense, which, undoubtedly, it is often intended to convey; but a glance at a good dictionary reveals a term of real etymological interest, expressing many different shades of meaning. Thus, *e.g.*, the Latin origin of the word *cum* and *munis* = *serving* (others) *together* (with oneself) and its opposite *proprius* = what is one's own, can both be illustrated from Wordsworth's poetry:

> If the wind do but stir for his proper delight . . .
> The common life our Nature breeds.

It is not difficult to see why Wordsworth should have employed the epithet *common* so frequently in "The Prelude." In the building up of the Poet's mind and moral nature, which is the main subject of that poem, the sense of a *community* bore a large part.

There was, first, the dim and undefined sense of a community with Nature, felt in boyhood and more intensely realised in youth and opening manhood; there was the outward embodiment of a primitive *community* in the simple and manly lives led by the Cumbrian dalesmen; and, last, there was the sense of a wider and deeper *community*, embracing whole classes of individual men and nations, of which the initial stages of the French Revolution gave a hope. As regards the shorter poems generally, it may be said that those pieces in which the word occurs lend a special weight of meaning to Wordsworth's expressed view of the true functions of a poet:

> In common things that round us lie
> Some random truths he can impart;
> The harvest of a quiet eye
> That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

The comparison of a large number of passages in which the word occurs shows that it is applied to the mental and moral qualities and attributes of man, and to the various objects summed up in the line:

> The outward shows of sky and earth

Though frequently used in the sense of *ordinary*, as, *e.g.*,

> This is no common waste, no common gloom,

the context will be found to give it a lustre and a suggestion of hidden meaning that exclude any idea of depreciation, as in the passage from "Hart Leap Well" from which the above is quoted, where poet and untutored shepherd, meeting together on a lone hillside, are united in soul by a gush of sympathy for the wrongs and sufferings of the mute animal kingdom.

This heightening effect of a context is better exhibited in the beautiful lyric, "To a Highland Girl," in which the line:

> Though but of common neighbourhood

Bury & Norwich Post. 19 June 1906

THE LITERARY THEATRE CLUB.

This Club, which held its inaugural meeting a few months ago, has grown in numbers and importance, and at its second gathering on Sunday evening week at King's Hall, Covent Garden, most of the well-known literary people of the day were present. The plays chosen had no doubt attracted many. Oscar Wilde's "Salome," and his "Florentine Tragedy," are a sufficient guarantee for an interesting evening. The "Florentine Tragedy" reminds us in many particulars of Browning's "Statue and the Bust," though the dramatic anti-climax is not in that poem, but the characters are the same. The story of Salome, daughter of Herodias, who danced before Herod, is well known to all. It is treated in a simple, dignified manner, and nothing can surpass the beauty of the work. It is like Maeterlincte at his best, the lines containing true music, which it is impossible to forget. Such well-written prose is as a haunting tune. The plays were so well selected that we wish we could say the same of the players. In the first piece Miss Gwendolen Bishop was certainly charming as the young Florentine wife, but the other two characters were not in the picture. It is difficult to get out of this work-a-day world back to the manners and feelings of the first century; still, if a drama of that period is attempted it must be tried. None of the actors in "Salome" had thought of this. Unfortunately it was most marked in Miss Darragh's "Salome," and the constant use of one tone of voice made her long speech monotonous. Miss Florence Farr's Herodias was an excellent study, and lent dignity to the whole. Mr. Lewis Casson, whose fine voice and elocution are always pleasant to hear, played Iokanaan with a proper spirit of solemnity. We may be mistaken in the right reading of "Herod," but we certainly do not think that it ought to be played as a low comedian, which was the manner Mr. Farquharson adopted; it was a thoroughly well carried out sketch of a comedy character throughout the play. Mr. Farquharson is to be congratulated on a wonderfully clever piece of acting, but we venture to think not quite as the author intended. The stage management was an improvement on their first show, but it still needs a little more care. The costumes were designed by Mr. C. S. Ricketts, and executed by Miss G. Bishop. The Literary Theatre Club is to be congratulated on its progress, and we feel [illegible] better still; it supplies a long-felt want for literary dramatic work.

W.F.B.

Clarion 22 June 1906

THE CHILDHOOD OF PLAGIARISM.

Some Literary Revelations.

THE subject of plagiarism has always had a peculiar interest for newspaper readers. Hardly a week "flies over our heads" but what we are called upon to deprecate some real or supposed case of theft by persons of genius. If Mr. Blank, the eminent novelist, has not filched the finest epigram in his latest work from Oscar Wilde or Mr. Tupper, then Theophilus Daub, R.A., has borrowed the theme of his new allegorical painting from a magnificent fresco in a ruined church which somebody once happened upon in Sicily. As to the dramatists—well, we all know what *they* are! It is a matter of public notoriety (for instance) that Mr. Algernon Ashton has recently been moved by a sense of duty to disclose the painful fact that G. B. Shaw—none less— has not scrupled, in his thirst for sparkles, to rifle the literary treasure-house of the former gentleman. The fact of the matter appears to be that this is a sad world; and men of letters and the arts, the saddest persons in it. And when our morning sheets are weak in the matter of more important "thrills," we can read of the wickednesses of writers and painters with just so much gusto as that which we should [illegible] the performances of any other thieves.

almost fought with one another for the privilege of carrying our clubs. Unfortunately these caddies "had the Gaelic", and while they had evident difficulty in understanding us, we experienced an equal difficulty in understanding them. Their English vocabulary was so limited that whenever we asked the direction of the next hole the only answer we could get was, "Over yon by the white hoose", which, as all the houses visible were white, was not much guidance. But the Brora links are the realisation of the golfer's dream. Encircling the links on three sides an amphitheatre of purple hills; in front a long undulating stretch of emerald turf, interrupted by yawning sand-bunkers; on the fourth side the blue-grey glittering sea. The Brora bunkers are glorious and immense: they open their capacious bosoms lovingly, inviting the tiny white globe to drop in. They are of every size and shape: they cannot be sneaked round, for they are everywhere: they must be blindly driven at, in the hope of getting over. The long run-up with the cleek will avail you nothing here; the brassie and the mashie must be used with courage. This makes Brora one of the most sporting and exciting courses imaginable. Against some of the Brora bunkers we must object that they are full of large stones from the shore. How the stones got there we do not know: but they might easily and ought to be removed. The course is long, but the turf is so good and the air so light that one does not feel fatigue. The Station hotel is small, (probably not more than twenty or thirty rooms), but we ate a lunch there that would have done credit to the Savoy. We have only one piece of advice to give the jaded golfer from the South—take a feu from the Duke of Sutherland, and build a bungalow at Brora.

"A FLORENTINE TRAGEDY" AND "SALOMÉ".

LAST Sunday, at the King's Hall, the Literary Theatre Club performed these two plays of Mr. Oscar Wilde. Neither of them is a cheerful play. So neither could have a chance of success in England. For that minority which is capable of taking the drama seriously as an art, and does not object to receiving tragic emotion now and then, these two plays have an extrinsic power of depression. They indicate anew to us how much was lost to dramatic art in the downfall and death of the great artist who composed them.

"A Florentine Tragedy" (produced for the first time) is akin to "Salomé" as being an essay in the art of suspense. In "Salomé" the end is foreknown; and the main horror comes of the deliberate slowness with which the action is conducted to that end. Often the dramatic movement is deliberately arrested to make way for merely decorative passages, such as Salomé's metaphors about the eyes, the hair, the lips of Iokanaan, or Herod's descriptions of the jewels and the peacocks and the various other things that Salomé might take instead of the one thing that she demands. Merely decorative in themselves, these passages are relatively dramatic in that they give us time to realise more intensely the horror of what is in store. In "A Florentine Tragedy" we know there must be at least one death before the curtain falls; and the elaborate decorations interposed do not make us forget it: they do but give us time to become uncomfortable. Nor are they, as in "Salomé", a mere artistic device of the author. They come from the nature of the chief character devised. Simone, the Florentine merchant, is a man of grim humour; and so, when he surprises his wife in the company of a young nobleman, he does not instantly draw his sword. He is furious; but his fury he will be able to express later. Meanwhile he can have some fun. He can fool the couple to the top of their bent, then suddenly drop a hint that will make them start, then again soothe them into security till he choose to frighten them again. His vengeance will be all the sweeter, all the more terrible, for such dalliance. He plays on his young wife's contempt for him, cringing to the stranger, descanting unctuously on this or that ware that he would sell. His desire is not merely [illegible] does not love the stranger yet, she shall by force of contrast be made to love him. His death shall be a dagger through her own

heart. At length, after he has taken his fill of pretence, he challenges the lover to fight. The lover, worsted, begs for mercy, and is allowed to go on begging before Simone, with more than necessary violence, despatches him. The wife shrinks against the wall. She sees in her husband's eyes that she, too, is doomed. And now comes the ending for sake of which, I take it, the play was written—the germ of psychological paradox from which the story developed itself backwards. The wife falls to her knees, and, with real love in her voice, cries "Why did you not tell me you were so strong?" The husband pauses, stares at her, lets drop his dagger, saying "Why did you not tell me you were so beautiful?" There is, of course, no great paradox in the first of these two speeches. (One remembers, for instance, Becky Sharp's sudden admiration for Rawdon Crawley after the ejection of Lord Steyne.) But the second speech is certainly a daring invention. Is the paradox a sound one? I think so. It is not unnatural that the merchant, having won his bride with money, should not have appreciated her at her full human value until he had won her by more primitive, more human means. Her contempt for him, moreover, would have prejudiced him against her. The light of admiration for him in her eyes, besides making her actually more beautiful, would have quickened his perception of her beauty. And then there was the fact that she had inspired a passion in the nobleman. This, too, would have quickened the merchant's perception. My sole objection to the paradox is concerned with the placing of it. No play—no work of art whatsoever—ought to finish on a top note. We ought never to be left gasping, at the fall of the curtain. The paradox that I have examined ought to have been led up to, so that its meaning would have been plain when the curtain fell. It ought to have been a summing-up, not a challenge. Mr. Wilde's sure artistic sense here failed him, for once.

Obviously, the part of Simone is a fine part for an actor. I should like to have seen it played by Sir Henry Irving. I know of no one else who could have given fully the sardonic essence of it. Mr. George Ingleton, however, who played it the other night, is a very capable actor; and his performance seemed really distinguished in the glare of incapacity shed by the young lady and gentleman who played the two other parts.

When "Salomé" was produced last year at the Bijou Theatre, I reflected that only the finest acting and the most tactful stage-management could reconcile us to the physical horror of the play. Reading the play, one has no more than the right tragic thrill. Seeing the play—seeing Salomé kiss in triumph the severed head of the prophet—one is thrilled with mere physical disgust, unless the scene be arranged with great compunction, and unless the acting of Salomé shall have been on a lofty tragic plane. Neither of these requisites was supplied at the Bijou Theatre. At the King's Hall, Miss Darragh supplied one of them. She is not the ideal Salomé; for she looks rather modern, rather occidental. But, besides having a beautiful voice, and speaking the words with a keen sense for their cadence, she is a genuine tragedian, and thus was able to live in the part, and, living there, to purge somewhat our physical disgust through spiritual terror. She was, as nearly as need be, the veritable daughter of Herodias. Miss Florence Farr was not, alas, the veritable mother of Salomé. She was very much too pleasant. She seemed to be trying to make Herodias "sympathetic", and was quite out of the key of the tragedy. Mr. Robert Farquharson re-appeared as Herod; and I was more than ever struck by the fineness of his performance. His delivery of the three long decorative speeches is a marvel in the art of elocution. Other English actors may know how valuable an effect can be got from sometimes talking quickly; but I have never found them taking advantage of their knowledge. Perhaps they have not the necessary skill. Mr. Farquharson can, without slurring a syllable, speak English as rapidly as Mme. Sarah Bernhardt can speak French; and the effect in his case is even greater than in hers, because none of his compatriots has attempted to compete with him. Apart from its technique, his performance is memorable for the rare imaginative power with which he realises the grotesque and terrible figure of Herod.

As the scenery and the dresses were designed by Mr. Charles Ricketts, it need not be said they were beautiful. They were also, however, dramatically appropriate—just enough conventionalised to be in harmony with the peculiar character of the play. The stage-management was faulty only in the final scene; and that, alas, is the scene where perfection is most needed. Not even the quality of Miss Darragh's acting could wholly purge our physical disgust. It is obvious that Salomé ought to be in the far background, and in deepest shadow, while she holds in her hands the head of the prophet. This would not merely militate against physical disgust. It would aid illusion. When we distinctly see the head, we are conscious of its unreality, however realistically it be made. And our consciousness of its unreality does not make it one whit the less unpleasant.

MAX BEERBOHM.

Sunday Sun, 29 april 1906

WILDE IN GERMANY.

Oscar Wilde's play, "The Importance of Being Earn produced at the Dresden Royal Theatre, this week, under of "Ernst," and was a great success. When are we to se comedy in London again? After "His House in Order" e the St. James's—if it ever does?

Pall Mall Gazette, 26 may 190

When are we to hear Richard Strauss's "Salome" in En absurd scandal which was created by those fussy people who a the scent for something disagreeable in anything which is managed to suppress its earliest performances. But, as Galileo si muove." There is nothing that can really suppress a wor the result is that "Salome" has probably had more success otherwise have attended its appearance if it had not been for t puritanism of those who desired its extinction. At Vienna, refused, but it has now been performed for the first time Gratz. The success was immediately assured of this partic ment of the work. The Vienna correspondent of a contem that Strauss appeared at least twenty times before the curtain, the applause of the audience. A tremendous greeting also he appeared at the conductor's desk. Many musicians of n cluding such a well-known writer as Puccini, were present o and the whole performance seems to have been splendidly all the actors and actresses taking part in the work were gree possible sign of appreciation. It only shows that the geniuse are bound in the end to win their way, despite all the pre disfavour, all the opposition of those narrow cliques whi because they belong to an earlier period of art, therefor to a standstill when they themselves have finished practi It is so absurd to think that new things and new ideas ca duced upon the face of the earth, that history, which, despite never repeats itself, should, at all events, show that every novelty, when set before the world by a real genius, is bo place in the long line of those who have suffered and work art, and who, despite all opposition, will continue so to do, in fe or the favour of man.

Musical Standard. 26 ma

RICHARD STRAUSS' "Salome" was performed for the firs Austria, at Gratz, on May 16, the Vienna censor having admit it into the Imperial Opera. It is stated that P other well-known composers were present at the performa Vienna correspondent of the "Telegraph" says: Wh appeared at the conductor's desk he was greeted with a applause. After the frantic revelry at the conclusion of which as regards instrumental strength of expression is equal, thundering cheers arose, which lasted fully a qua hour. Richard Strauss appeared with the principal sing twenty times in response to the cries of the audience. was literally carpeted with flowers. Among the singers took the first place as Salome, a part demanding such p musical effort that Isolde may be considered an easy parison. The high and powerful soprano tones of Frä were exactly suited to the Salome music, and the artis knowledge carried her safely through the difficulties of Fräulein Korb performed the demoniacal dance of the herself. She delighted her audience by the sheer force cal expression and her fascinating acting. Herr Günt performance as Herod was entirely satisfactory, as the his voice. Fräulein Anderson appeared as Herodias Jessen as Jochanaan. The orchestra brilliantly fulfilled tions.

Sunday Sun, 29 april '956

WILDE IN GERMANY.

Oscar Wilde's play, "The Importance of Being Earnest," was produced at the Dresden Royal Theatre, this week, under the title of "Ernst," and was a great success. When are we to see a Wilde comedy in London again? After "His House in Order" ends up at the St. James's—if it ever does?

Pall Mall Gazette, 26 May 1906

When are we to hear Richard Strauss's "Salome" in England? The absurd scandal which was created by those fussy people who are always on the scent for something disagreeable in anything which is new in opera managed to suppress its earliest performances. But, as Galileo said, "Eppur si muove." There is nothing that can really suppress a work of art, and the result is that "Salome" has probably had more success than would otherwise have attended its appearance if it had not been for the scandalous puritanism of those who desired its extinction. At Vienna, the work was refused, but it has now been performed for the first time in Austria, at Gratz. The success was immediately assured of this particular presentment of the work. The Vienna correspondent of a contemporary writes that Strauss appeared at least twenty times before the curtain, in response to the applause of the audience. A tremendous greeting also met him when he appeared at the conductor's desk. Many musicians of noted fame, including such a well-known writer as Puccini, were present on the occasion, and the whole performance seems to have been splendidly realised, while all the actors and actresses taking part in the work were greeted with every possible sign of appreciation. It only shows that the geniuses of the world are bound in the end to win their way, despite all the prejudices, all the disfavour, all the opposition of those narrow cliques which think that, because they belong to an earlier period of art, art, therefore, should come to a standstill when they themselves have finished practically with art. It is so absurd to think that new things and new ideas can never be produced upon the face of the earth, that history, which, despite the old dictum, never repeats itself, should, at all events, show that every development in novelty, when set before the world by a real genius, is bound to take its place in the long line of those who have suffered and worked and died for art, and who, despite all opposition, will continue so to do, in defiance of the fear or the favour of man.

Musical Standard.

26 May 1906

RICHARD STRAUSS' "Salome" was performed for the first time in Austria, at Gratz, on May 16, the Vienna censor having refused to admit it into the Imperial Opera. It is stated that Puccini and other well-known composers were present at the performance. The Vienna correspondent of the "Telegraph" says: When Strauss appeared at the conductor's desk he was greeted with a storm of applause. After the frantic revelry at the conclusion of the work, which as regards instrumental strength of expression is without an equal, thundering cheers arose, which lasted fully a quarter of an hour. Richard Strauss appeared with the principal singers at least twenty times in response to the cries of the audience. The stage was literally carpeted with flowers. Among the singers Jenny Korb took the first place as Salome, a part demanding such physical and musical effort that Isolde may be considered an easy rôle in comparison. The high and powerful soprano tones of Fräulein Korb were exactly suited to the Salome music, and the artist's musical knowledge carried her safely through the difficulties of intonation. Fräulein Korb performed the demoniacal dance of the seven veils herself. She delighted her audience by the sheer force of her musical expression and her fascinating acting. Herr Günther-Braun's performance as Herod was entirely satisfactory, as the music suited his voice. Fräulein Anderson appeared as Herodias, and Herr Jessen as Jochanaan. The orchestra brilliantly fulfilled all expectations.

Punch 3 January 1906

Having lived for twenty years in Paris, performing the duties of correspondent for an American Journal, Mr. SHERARD has compiled his recollections. As his duties brought him into intimate connection with most of the personages who helped to make history in France in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the book has especial value. Amongst the later comers on the stage who were known of the chronicler was OSCAR WILDE. Of the closing scenes in the tragedy of his life a simple touching narrative is to be found in the pages of *Twenty Years in Paris* (HUTCHINSON).

Truth Literary Supplement 31 Dec. 1905

LITERARY LIFE IN PARIS.

"Twenty Years in Paris. Being some recollections of a Literary Life." By Robert H. Sherard. Illustrated with portraits, etc. (Hutchinson and Co. 16s. net.)

Mr. Sherard's "Twenty Years in Paris" is a book of the most varied, vivid and delightful recollections. We open sublimely with Victor Hugo, who made the memorable threat that after death he would track the Almighty to the furthest recesses of the heavens and cry, "Maintenant, Seigneur, expliquons-nous." Yet Mr. Sherard was most struck with the Master's modesty! "It often struck me that perhaps the finest trait in Victor Hugo's character was that in the midst of the great and universal adulation with which in his extreme old age he lived surrounded, his natural simplicity and external modesty never deserted him." When, *e.g.*, Mr. Sherard would in parting have paid the aged poet the homage of kissing his hand, Hugo drew his hastily away and said, "That is done to kings only." Then, gripping his guest's hand firmly, he added, "Voilà comment cela se fait entre hommes." Nevertheless, Victor Hugo's exemplary modesty did not prevent his telegraphing to every king who had a subject under sentence of death to demand his instant reprieve, nor his amazement at Queen Victoria's leaving unanswered such a peremptory demand for the respite of a Jersey murderer. Perhaps the most interesting chapter of this fascinating book is that describing De Lesseps in his fall—the most interesting and also the most appallingly pathetic. Is there anything more pathetic than the sight of a great man who survives himself, whose body but holds together the wrecks and ruins of his mind, and whose life, like the light in a Roman vault, shines only to show the miserable decay of mortality? For the shock of the Panama business unhinged De Lesseps' mind, and Mr. Sherard found him imbecile! "He has the fixed idea that the Queen of England will come and make all things right. He often rises in his chair, and asks if Queen Victoria has arrived, and when any visitor comes he thinks it is she at last." Mr. Sherard's haunting picture of the broken old man is, however, relieved by his description of the adoration of wife, children and servants with which he is surrounded. Hardly less profoundly pathetic is Mr. Sherard's terrible picture of the last days and of the last resting-place of Oscar Wilde. Here is a thrilling incident which happened in Mr. Sherard's presence to Daudet, that will give an idea of the vivid and varied interest of these reminiscences:—

On another occasion while I was writing my notes in Daudet's company the valet brought in a card. It was that of a well-known Paris author. Daudet told the valet to admit him. While the two men were talking I went on with my notes. They conversed in whispers. Daudet was sitting at his desk facing me, the visitor was bending over the table speaking into his ear. After a while, glancing up, I saw a strange expression on Daudet's face, which, as I watched it, grew more and more marked. At last he caught my eye. I understood his meaning, and I got up and rang the bell. The valet entered, and he and I then walked up to the table and stood close by the visitor. Daudet said, "Well, my dear ——, that is agreed upon. But it can't be done to-day, because, as you see, I have a visitor. To-morrow we will talk it over once more." The man did not seem satisfied, but, after a short hesitation, he took his leave. When he had gone Daudet said, "You have witnessed an unusual thing. Poor —— went mad before your eyes. He was quite sane when he entered the room, and was telling me something quite rational. After a while he began to talk nonsense, and in the end suggested that we should both kill ourselves *hic et nunc*, in order, as far as I could make out, to enter upon immediate immortality. I am glad you were in the room; for when men get taken that way there is no saying what they may do."

Newcastle Chronicle 24 Jan. 1906.

TWENTY YEARS IN PARIS.

"Twenty Years in Paris." By Robert H. Sherard. Hutchinson and Co., 16s.

Mr. Sherard's acquaintance with Paris is extensive and peculiar, and in this volume of reminiscences he tells us of many things seen and heard and done in the "gay" city—which in some of its aspects is perhaps the most tragic in the world. For almost all of the twenty years in which he has been in Paris Mr. Sherard has owed the bulk of his income to journalism, and very largely to American journalism. Now whatever may be the merits or demerits of the American newspaper it is always original, and so our author in fulfilling some of the tasks imposed upon him by imperative cables from the other side found himself in strange places and amongst strange people. It has been his duty to interview the builder of the Eiffel Tower on the summit of the edifice, and to follow American millionaires and see how much money they spent in two hours, and what they spent it on. He has been at the Bullier with a royalty, whom he met casually in a cafe, and he has been intimate with the literary giants of a generation. He visited Victor Hugo when the master was holding court, and dined with Ferdinand de Lesseps—of whom he has words only of gratitude and kindness to say—in prosperity and in adversity; he knew Zola intimately, was with Daudet the afternoon before he died, and he interviewed Bernhardt concerning the famous cat story. These, indeed, are only a few of the incidents of a very crowded life, but they are all dealt with most charmingly, for Mr. Sherard is a most vivid raconteur, and his pages in light vein are entirely entertaining. There is, of course, a dark side to the book, for Mr. Sherard saw, both in the course of his professional work and his personal connections, much of that tragedy which is nowhere in the world so abundant as amidst the superficial gaiety of Paris. There was the tragedy of de Lesseps, for instance, one of the great tragedies of last century; and there was that too, of Oscar Wilde. And the writer's outspoken friendship for the unfortunate author of "Dorian Gray" brought him much obloquy, and a great deal of pecuniary loss. There was the pitiful end of the brilliant Ernest Dowson, and there was the miserable death of Verlaine, preyed upon by two of the human vampires in which Lutetia abounds and buried with a kleptomaniac mountebank for chief mourner. Of such is the sombre side of life in Paris, especially amongst those whose genius is tempered by a little madness; and it is small wonder that an observant and faithful chronicler like Mr. Sherard leaves with us a feeling of melancholy when his book is laid aside. Not, however, that there is not comedy, and even riotous farce in his pages. We read of the amused wonder of Edison at the honours showered upon him in Paris, and of his inherent democracy, nowhere better displayed than in the story of the Kaiser and the phonograph. Mr. Sherard tells us that Edison had promised the Emperor a phonograph—that was in the days, of course, before they became an international affliction—and as the phonograph was rather long in arriving the German Ambassador was asked to remind him of the gift. "Ah yes!" said the inventor, I believe I did promise that young man a machine." Mr. Sherard knew Whistler well, and heard one of the best of that caustic person's "bons mots," which concerned the bore who, meeting him in a cafe, said "Well, Whistler, how are you getting on?" "I'm getting off," was the artist's reply, as he gulped down his drink and departed. Though Mr. Sherard served American masters he is quite frank in his dislike of the more yellow of American journalistic methods—and he takes a justifiable pride in the fact that he protested against, and refused to participate in them. He refused, for instance, to enquire into the rumour that Blaine was living a double life in Paris, and to perform other kinds of the dirty work—the phrase is plain and justified—which disgraces the American press; but he was nevertheless as enterprising and painstaking as any of his colleagues, and is to be credited with more than one big "scoop," one of which consisted in being first to announce the rout of Boulangerism at the polls. Mr. Sherard, in short, was a capital journalist, and as he has proved often enough, a capable writer of more lasting work; and in this very entertaining volume we have solid proof of his ability in both spheres, for he tells his story with all the brightness of good journalism, and all the grace of a captivating style.

T.P.'s Weekly. 12 Jan. 1906.

Effervescent wit.

Tennyson's dictum: "It isn't what we say, but how we say it, that matters; only the fools don't know it," or as Cowper puts it:

"Manner is all in all; whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wit,"

is as true of some sorts of wit as it is of poetry. The wittiest of Irish judges said to me not so long since of his own sallies, which always "set the table in a roar," "I don't know how it is, but all my jokes when repeated or printed seem flat as ditch-water!" Effervesced soda-water, too, is the only adequate description of the jokes of another Irish Judge, the late Lord Morris, when repeated or printed. Where is the point, again, of these two jokes which I find quoted with appreciation by Mr. Sherard in his "Twenty Years in Paris": "I hope you are very well," said Oscar Wilde to Lord Beaconsfield on meeting him at some "At Home." "Is anyone ever very well, Mr. Wilde?" was the brilliant rejoinder of the Premier. Would Oscar Wilde, himself the wittiest of men, have thought this brilliant, if anyone else had said it, or if it had been said by any one else in a less significant way? Or would Mr. Sherard have thought the following retort of Whistler's brilliant if it had been uttered by any other man or in any other way than by "the Master" in his own magisterial manner. "What do you think of so-and-so, Mr. Whistler?" "Think? I never think." Where here is the wit? It must have lain elusive in the manner, since it has certainly evaporated in transit. When Thackeray, however, replied to the question, "What do you think of Tupper over here?" put to him by an American, "We don't think of Tupper," he sent his joke across Great Britain and the Atlantic, to say nothing of the centuries, in perfect safety.

Wit lost in transit.

Not so long since a friend told me a story of which he, no more than I, could see the point when told! "I thought it was funny, for everyone laughed at it," he said apologetically. He had probably dropped a stitch which unravelled and tangled the whole web, just as Goldsmith mislaid the point of the joke *re* a dish of sere and yellow peas: "These peas ought to be sent to Hammersmith." "To Hammersmith?" "Yes, that's the way to Turnham Green." Whereof the point was lost in Goldsmith's version, "That's the way to *make 'em green.*" The best of these chestnuts, however—for I apologetically admit that it is a chestnut—is that of the rencontre between the Oxford student with a mere shred of a gown hanging from his shoulders and the Proctor. "That's a very short gown you've on, sir," severely remarked the Proctor. "Short? It will be long before I get another." The Proctor was so tickled by the retort that he not only overlooked its flippancy, but repeated it appreciatively to a Don he met soon after in this way: "I met Raikes just now with a scandalously short gown, and when I took him to task for it do you know what the fellow said? He said, 'It would be a long time before he got another.' I don't know when I heard anything so smart," added the Proctor, shaking with laughter. "Smart?" rejoined the perplexed Don, "Smart? 'It would be a long time before he got another.' I can't for my life see the joke." "And I can't now," replied the bewildered Proctor. "But somehow it seemed funny when he said it."

Review of Reviews, January 1906

TWENTY YEARS OF PARIS.

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"DAILY CHRONICLE"
SEPT. 27, 1905.

Mr. Robert Sherard writes his memories of "Twenty Years in Paris," in a volume which Messrs. Hutchinson are soon to publish. Among the celebrities of whom he has personal memories are Victor Hugo, Ferdinand de Lesseps, General Boulanger, Baron Haussmann, Jules Verne, Renan and Zola. Apart from the personalia the book contains a running commentary, with anecdotes, on recent French history.

The Outlook, January 6. 1906

A PARISIAN INTERVIEWER.

WENTY YEARS IN PARIS. By Robert H. Sherard. London: Hutchinson. 16s. net.

AN illusory feeling of respectability might steal over most any English reader of the greater part of Mr. Sherard's rious chapters. So many of the people described by him so desperately bad. For twenty years, he gives us to derstand, he has lived in the heart of France. He can us of persons so blameless as Taine and so robust as go, so regular as Haussmann and so grandiose as de sseps; but he has far more to say of the great crowd of es and victims of the artistic temperament who inevily captured his interest as an Englishman, as they inevily inspire the ordinary French citizen with loathing and trust, and among whom he lived. A few chapters, ttered about the book, deal with his relations, mainly se of a journalist, with the responsible and the sane. cellent in their way these chapters are; but Mr. Sherard ot really at home in them, and, as we get on to Bibi-la-ée and Verlaine and Rollinat and Ernest Dowson, the es seem fluttered by an exhalation of relief.

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t is related that one day Aurélien Scholl, then quite a youth, dining at Dumas' table. Dumas, who always prided himself his cooking, announced a marvellous sauce, and having helped oll to some, asked with the expectant vanity of the artist, Tell, what do you think of my sauce?" "Est-ce de Maquet?" d Scholl innocently.

At times Mr. Sherard is frankly autobiographic. "It was at this Hôtel Voltaire," he says once in a parenthesis, "that one night I roused Henry Harland from his sleep to ask him to serve me as second in a duel which had been forced upon me." When writing of Dowson, who died under his roof, and of Wilde, with whom he had at one time a close and honourable friendship, he makes no pretence of a detached attitude. Speaking of some of those who have written upon Ernest Dowson in the character of friends of that miserable person, he demands whether "the sacred name of friend appertains to him also who, when a man of genius has died abandoned and forlorn, and the rare mourners are returning from his humble obsequies, emerges from the penumbra of the lych-gate, notebook in hand, to gather such details about his agony and death as shall point a homily on the pitfalls of the artistic life." (This is a fair sample of the mimetic dropping into "prave 'orts" to which reference has already been made.) The story of his connection with Dowson in the last days, as given here, is to the credit of his heart: the poet's other friends, it would appear, had cut the wreck adrift. The picture he gives of Dowson and his unsavoury life is a revolting one; his apology for the man, on the score of some undefined but "tragic and appalling" catastrophe in his life, may touch the reason, but will never deceive the instincts. All that he writes here of Wilde is supplementary to an earlier volume on the subject; but it abounds in things that will need to be considered in any future study of that melancholy career. After these few glances at the copious material of Mr. Sherard's book, let us leave the rest to the public.

X Christian. Jan. 18. 1906

Art for Art's Sake. In a biography recently published there is an amazing revelation of the spirit which is not infrequently found amongst people who cultivate art for art's sake. The subject of this biography was a man who once set the fashion for the *beau monde*, but whose end was tragic in the extreme. His friend and biographer excuses his crime as an aberration, but he sheds this light on the artistic spirit of the man:—

Ugliness (he used to say) I consider a kind of malady, and illness and suffering always inspire me with repulsion. . . [The man in pain] fills me with nothing but aversion. He is tedious. He is a bore. I cannot look at him. I must get away from him.

It had been kinder to have written no biography at all than to make bare, before all the world, a spirit like this. It is by no means uncommon, however. The luxurious refinement of manners and the cultivation of the æsthetic *for their own sake*, must lead to what is hardly distinguishable from inhumanity. How great the contrast between such a spirit and the magnificent spirit which animates nurses, and the unknown multitude of people who, for Christ's sake, seek out and help the suffering and the miserable. What a world ours would be if it were overrun with "artists" of the type above referred to!

Art and Soul. In contrast to this sad biography, with its glorification of art for art's sake, a remarkable book has just been published by the celebrated singer, Mr. D. Ffrangcon Davies, in which he urges, with wonderful force, the cultivation of *soul* in all true artists. It is rare to hear an artist speaking so plainly, but there can be no doubt as to the truth of his words. High art is no safeguard against low morals. Speaking of "art for art's sake," Mr. Davies says:—

If the history of art and religion teach anything, it is that æstheticism, pure and simple, leads to gehenna and gaol, not to heaven and liberty. A purely æsthetic cult lands men into frank, degenerate paganism.

The whole spiritual system, spirit, mind, sense, soul, together with the whole muscular system from feet to head, will be in the wise man's singing, and the whole man will be in the tone.

This is a worthy conception of an artist's work. If it prevailed, artists would become a great blessing to men, instead of, as they have too often been, the reverse.

Yorkshire Weekly Post. 13 Jan. 1906.

"TWENTY YEARS IN PARIS."

It is a topsy-turvey world! From Hyde Park oratory to the fashion in high-class playwriting gives Mr. Shaw a unique position. It seems almost the rule of the road to fame that you must begin by being scoffed at. Then, of course, comes the question, "What is Fame, and what is notoriety?" The prohibition of Mr. Shaw's play, "Mrs. Warren's Profession," and the arrest of the managers and actors who produced and played it in New York, do not in every eye dim the dramatist's, the daring dramatist's, reputation. And this brings me reluctantly to the late Oscar Wilde. One day when the lunacy of that strange genius is accepted as condoning offences which happily few people understand, his work will at least hold the attention of the student of literature and of character, and his tragic end become a subject for pity. I am drawn to mention him because I have received from a friendly publisher (Hutchinson) a very interesting volume, "Twenty Years in Paris," by Robert H. Sherrard, who being well acquainted with Wilde has something to say about his last days that makes a striking chapter in the history of the world's literary life. Most of us have read Wilde's remarkable little book "De Profundis," overflowing with a sense of pity for others that redeems to a great extent whatever Wilde may have written deserving of condemnation. I confess I am unaware of any such writings, but I have not read two of his novels. It needed his death to give life to his last work.

"THE AWAKENING OF PITY."

Mr. Sherrard reproduces in the record of an interview which M. André Gide had with Wilde at Berneval directly after his release, a notable paragraph which deals with the awakening of that pity which is so beautifully expressed in "De Profundis." "The Russian writers are extraordinary," said Wilde. "What makes their books so great is the pity which they put into them. Formerly I was very fond of 'Madame Bovary'; but Flaubert would have no pity in his book, and that is why it seems small and narrow; pity is the side of a work which is open, and by which it appears unbounded. Do you know, it was pity which prevented me from killing myself? Oh! during the first six months I was terribly unhappy—so unhappy that I wished to kill myself; but what kept me back from doing so was looking at the others, seeing that they were as unhappy as I was, and feeling pity for them. Oh, dear! pity is an admirable thing! And I did not know what pity was" (Gide remarks, "He was speaking in a low tone of voice, and without excitement.") "Have you ever grasped what an admirable thing pity is? As for me, I thank God on my knees every night—yes, on my knees I thank God every night for having taught me to know it. For I went into prison with a heart of stone, thinking of my pleasure only; but now my heart is altogether broken, pity has entered into it; I have now come to understand that pity is the greatest and most beautiful thing in the world." Mr. Sherrard is well worth reading, and might easily make a welcome break in the exacting work of electioneering.

Punch 3 January 1906

Having lived for twenty years in Paris, performing the duties of correspondent for an American Journal, Mr. SHERARD has compiled his recollections. As his duties brought him into intimate connection with most of the personages who helped to make history in France in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the book has especial value. Amongst the later comers on the stage who were known of the chronicler was OSCAR WILDE. Of the closing scenes in the tragedy of his life a simple touching narrative is to be found in the pages of *Twenty Years in Paris* (HUTCHINSON).

Truth Literary Supplement 31 Dec. 1905

LITERARY LIFE IN PARIS.

"Twenty Years in Paris. Being some recollections of a Literary Life." By Robert H. Sherard. Illustrated with portraits, etc. (Hutchinson and Co. 16s. net.)

Mr. Sherard's "Twenty Years in Paris" is a book of the most varied, vivid and delightful recollections. We open sublimely with Victor Hugo, who made the memorable threat that after death he would track the Almighty to the furthest recesses of the heavens and cry, "Maintenant, Seigneur, expliquons-nous." Yet Mr. Sherard was most struck with the Master's modesty! "It often struck me that perhaps the finest trait in Victor Hugo's character was that in the midst of the great and universal adulation with which in his extreme old age he lived surrounded, his natural simplicity and external modesty never deserted him." When, *e.g.*, Mr. Sherard would in parting have paid the aged poet the homage of kissing his hand, Hugo drew his hastily away and said, "That is done to kings only." Then, gripping his guest's hand firmly, he added, "Voilà comment cela se fait entre hommes." Nevertheless, Victor Hugo's exemplary modesty did not prevent his telegraphing to every king who had a subject under sentence of death to demand his instant reprieve, nor his amazement at Queen Victoria's leaving unanswered such a peremptory demand for the respite of a Jersey murderer. Perhaps the most interesting chapter of this fascinating book is that describing De Lesseps in his fall—the most interesting and also the most appallingly pathetic. Is there anything more pathetic than the sight of a great man who survives himself, whose body but holds together the wrecks and ruins of his mind, and whose life, like the light in a Roman vault, shines only to show the miserable decay of mortality? For the shock of the Panama business unhinged De Lesseps' mind, and Mr. Sherard found him imbecile! "He has the fixed idea that the Queen of England will come and make all things right. He often rises in his chair, and asks if Queen Victoria has arrived, and when any visitor comes he thinks it is she at last." Mr. Sherard's haunting picture of the broken old man is, however, relieved by his description of the adoration of wife, children and servants with which he is surrounded. Hardly less profoundly pathetic is Mr. Sherard's terrible picture of the last days and of the last resting-place of Oscar Wilde. Here is a thrilling incident which happened in Mr. Sherard's presence to Daudet, that will give an idea of the vivid and varied interest of these reminiscences:—

On another occasion while I was writing my notes in Daudet's company the valet brought in a card. It was that of a well-known Paris author. Daudet told the valet to admit him. While the two men were talking I went on with my notes. They conversed in whispers. Daudet was sitting at his desk facing me, the visitor was bending over the table speaking into his ear. After a while, glancing up, I saw a strange expression on Daudet's face, which, as I watched it, grew more and more marked. At last he caught my eye. I understood his meaning, and I got up and rang the bell. The valet entered, and he and I then walked up to the table and stood close by the visitor. Daudet said, "Well, my dear ——, that is agreed upon. But it can't be done to-day, because, as you see, I have a visitor. To-morrow we will talk it over once more." The man did not seem satisfied, but, after a short hesitation, he took his leave. When he had gone Daudet said, "You have witnessed an unusual thing. Poor —— went mad before your eyes. He was quite sane when he entered the room, and was telling me something quite rational. After a while he began to talk nonsense, and in the end suggested that we should both kill ourselves *hic et nunc*, in order, as far as I could make out, to enter upon immediate immortality. I am glad you were in the room; for when men get taken that way there is no saying what they may do."

Newcastle Chronicle 27 Jan. 1906.

TWENTY YEARS IN PARIS.

"Twenty Years in Paris." By Robert H. Sherard. Hutchinson and Co., 16s.

Mr. Sherard's acquaintance with Paris is extensive and peculiar, and in this volume of reminiscences he tells us of many things seen and heard and done in the "gay" city—which in some of its aspects is perhaps the most tragic in the world. For almost all of the twenty years in which he has been in Paris Mr. Sherard has owed the bulk of his income to journalism, and very largely to American journalism. Now whatever may be the merits or demerits of the American newspaper it is always original, and so our author in fulfilling some of the tasks imposed upon him by imperative cables from the other side found himself in strange places and amongst strange people. It has been his duty to interview the builder of the Eiffel Tower on the summit of the edifice, and to follow American millionaires and see how much money they spent in two hours, and what they spent it on. He has been at the Bullier with a royalty, whom he met casually in a cafe, and he has been intimate with the literary giants of a generation. He visited Victor Hugo when the master was holding court, and dined with Ferdinand de Lesseps—of whom he has words only of gratitude and kindness to say—in prosperity and in adversity; he knew Zola intimately, was with Daudet the afternoon before he died, and he interviewed Bernhardt concerning the famous cat story. These, indeed, are only a few of the incidents of a very crowded life, but they are all dealt with most charmingly, for Mr. Sherard is a most vivid raconteur, and his pages in the lighter vein are entirely entertaining. There is, of course, a dark side to the book, for Mr. Sherard saw, both in the course of his professional work and his personal connections, much of that tragedy which is nowhere in the world so abundant as amidst the superficial gaiety of Paris. There was the tragedy of de Lesseps, for instance, one of the great tragedies of last century; and there was that too, of Oscar Wilde. And the writer's outspoken friendship for the unfortunate author of "Dorian Gray" brought him much obloquy and a great deal of pecuniary loss. There was the pitiful end of the brilliant Ernest Dowson, and there was the miserable death of Verlaine, preyed upon by two of the human vampires in which Lutetia abounds and buried with a kleptomaniac mountebank for chief mourner. Of such is the sombre side of life in Paris, especially amongst those whose genius is tempered by a little madness; and it is small wonder that an observant and faithful chronicler like Mr. Sherard leaves with us a feeling of melancholy when his book is laid aside. Not, however, that there is not comedy, and even riotous farce in his pages. We read of the amused wonder of Edison at the honours showered upon him in Paris, and of his inherent democracy, nowhere better displayed than in the story of the Kaiser and the phonograph. Mr. Sherard tells us that Edison had promised the Emperor a phonograph—that was in the days, of course, before they became an international affliction—and as the phonograph was rather long in arriving the German Ambassador was asked to remind him of the gift. "Ah yes!" said the inventor, "I believe I did promise that young man a machine." Mr. Sherard knew Whistler well, and heard one of the best of that caustic person's "bons mots," which concerned the bore who, meeting him in a cafe, said "Well, Whistler, how are you getting on?" "I'm getting off," was the artist's reply, as he gulped down his drink and departed. Though Mr. Sherard served American masters he is quite frank in his dislike of the more yellow of American journalistic methods—and he takes a justifiable pride in the fact that he protested against, and refused to participate in them. He refused, for instance, to enquire into the rumour that Blaine was living a double life in Paris, and to perform other kinds of the dirty work—the phrase is plain and justified—which disgraces the American press; but he was nevertheless as enterprising and painstaking as any of his colleagues, and is to be credited with more than one big "scoop," one of which consisted in being first to announce the rout of Boulangerism at the polls. Mr. Sherard, in short, was a capital journalist, and as he has proved often enough, a capable writer of more lasting work; and in this very entertaining volume we have solid proof of his ability in both spheres, for he tells his story with all the brightness of good journalism, and all the grace of a captivating style.

T.P's Weekly. 12 Jan. 1906.

Effervescent wit.

Tennyson's dictum: "It isn't what say, but how we say it, that matter only the fools don't know it," or Cowper puts it:

"Manner is all in all; whate'er is writ,
The substitute for genius, sense, and wi

is as true of some sorts of wit as is of poetry. The wittiest of Iri judges said to me not so long sin of his own sallies, which alwa "set the table in a roar," "I do know how it is, but all my jok when repeated or printed seem flat ditch-water!" Effervesced soda-wate too, is the only adequate description the jokes of another Irish Judge, t late Lord Morris, when repeated printed. Where is the point, again, these two jokes which I find quot with appreciation by Mr. Sherard in h "Twenty Years in Paris": "I ho you are very well," said Oscar Wilde Lord Beaconsfield on meeting him some "At Home." "Is anyone ever ve well, Mr. Wilde?" was the brilliant r joinder of the Premier. Would Osc Wilde, himself the wittiest of men, hav thought this brilliant, if anyone else ha said it, or if it had been said by an one else in a less significant way? C would Mr. Sherard have thought the fo lowing retort of Whistler's brilliant it had been uttered by any other man o in any other way than by "the Master in his own magisterial manner. "Wha do you think of so-and-so, Mr Whistler?" "Think? I never think. Where here is the wit? It must hav lain elusive in the manner, since it ha certainly evaporated in transit. Whe Thackeray, however, replied to th question, "What do you think o Tupper over here?" put to him by a American, "We don't think of Tupper," he sent his joke across Great Britai and the Atlantic, to say nothing of th centuries, in perfect safety.

Wit lost in transit.

Not so long since a friend told me a story of which he, no more than I, coul see the point when told! "I thought i was funny, for everyone laughed at it," he said apologetically. He had pro bably dropped a stitch which un ravelled and tangled the whole web, just as Goldsmith mislaid the point of the joke *re* a dish of sere and yellow peas: "These peas ought to be sent to Hammersmith." "To Hammersmith? "Yes, that's the way to Turnham Green." Whereof the point was lost in Goldsmith's version, "That's the way to *make 'em green.*" The best of these chestnuts, however—for I apologetically admit that it is a chestnut—is that of the rencontre between the Oxford student with a mere shred of a gown hanging from his shoulders and the Proctor. "That's a very short gown you've on, sir," severely remarked the Proctor. "Short? It will be long before I get another." The Proctor was so tickled by the retort that he not only overlooked its flippancy, but repeated it appreciatively to a Don he met soon after in this way: "I met Raikes just now with a scandalously short gown, and when I took him to task for it do you know what the fellow said? He said, 'It would be a long time before he got another.' I don't know when I heard anything so smart," added the Proctor, shaking with laughter. "Smart?" rejoined the perplexed Don, "Smart? 'It would be a long time before he got another.' I can't for my life see the joke." "And I can't now," replied the bewildered Proctor. "But somehow it seemed funny when he said it."

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In spite of himself, however, this formidable interviewer has stocked his mind with many interesting recollections of the statesmen, the men of science, and the more classical of the authors into whose circle it often fell to him to break. He had to do with such men as Carnot and Eiffel and Renan; and all that he tells us of them has point and interest. He visited Haussmann at the time when he was writing his memoirs in the infirmity of old age. "Quel métier!" said the great Prefect of the Seine. "I used to say that all literary folk were idlers. I know the truth now." Haussmann, Mr. Sherard remarks, was not without "the touch of *cabotinage* which tinged the Third Empire throughout." He means the Second Empire, but the observation is shrewd enough. The slovenliness of the sentence, with its mistake and its conflict of metaphors, is characteristic of the writer's style in dealing with those important persons who did not appeal to his taste. They get nothing better than fair journalese. But when we approach, for instance, the long account of Wilde's last days and of his deeply felt estrangement from Mr. Sherard, the note changes utterly, and the writing becomes mannered and ornate, with chameleonic effect. Haussmann (to leave this digression) was delivered of the interesting opinion that "the only possible form of democratic government under which France can prosper is Empire. France (said he) may put up with a republic for some years, for many years; but just as surely as water finds its way eventually back to the sea, so also will France find her way back to monarchical government." Eiffel, on the other hand, appears as a man with no ideas at all, apart from the manipulation of steel. What struck him most in England was the excellence of the railways; and he considered the Forth Bridge the most admirable thing in the world. Was it not ugly! he was asked; and he replied, "Is what is useful ever ugly?"—a truly engineering remark. He had discovered by experience that the people who were most impressed by the Eiffel Tower were the Americans; next came the Russians, and then the English. Mr. Edison said of it, as characteristically as truly, "What Englishman could have had this idea?" and returned home with a project for building a tower twice as high in New York. "Nous verrons cela," remarked Eiffel.

From the chapters, full of explosive detail and anecdote, in which Mr. Sherard does his duty by the *hommes sérieux*, the reader may turn to others—many of them—in which the writer tells of what Daudet called *la pourriture montmartraise*. These pages reek of dissolution. They are filled with the morbid interest of the pathology of character. Drink, drugs, vice, vanity, crime, disease, eccentricity, mania, all forms of weakness and wickedness heaped together under the canopy of Art—it is a singular dance of death that Mr. Sherard describes. One feels how well he realises that this sort of thing is first-rate "copy," but one feels too that he is speaking of what he knows. Names are used with the utmost freedom. Mr. Sherard, too, has many anecdotes of the days before his own, told in connection with the men and women he personally knew. He attended the funeral of Maquet, the principal of Alexandre Dumas' many "ghosts." He tells us:—

It is related that one day Aurélien Scholl, then quite a youth, was dining at Dumas' table. Dumas, who always prided himself on his cooking, announced a marvellous sauce, and having helped Scholl to some, asked with the expectant vanity of the artist, "Well, what do you think of my sauce?" "Est-ce de Maquet?" asked Scholl innocently.

At times Mr. Sherard is frankly autobiographic. "It was at this Hôtel Voltaire," he says once in a parenthesis, "that one night I roused Henry Harland from his sleep to ask him to serve me as second in a duel which had been forced upon me." When writing of Dowson, who died under his roof, and of Wilde, with whom he had at one time a close and honourable friendship, he makes no pretence of a detached attitude. Speaking of some of those who have written upon Ernest Dowson in the character of friends of that miserable person, he demands whether "the sacred name of friend appertains to him also who, when a man of genius has died abandoned and forlorn, and the rare mourners are returning from his humble obsequies, emerges from the penumbra of the lych-gate, notebook in hand, to gather such details about his agony and death as shall point a homily on the pitfalls of the artistic life." (This is a fair sample of the mimetic dropping into "prave 'orts" to which reference has already been made.) The story of his connection with Dowson in the last days, as given here, is to the credit of his heart: the poet's other friends, it would appear, had cut the wreck adrift. The picture he gives of Dowson and his unsavoury life is a revolting one; his apology for the man, on the score of some undefined but "tragic and appalling" catastrophe in his life, may touch the reason, but will never deceive the instincts. All that he writes here of Wilde is supplementary to an earlier volume on the subject; but it abounds in things that will need to be considered in any future study of that melancholy career. After these few glances at the copious material of Mr. Sherard's book, let us leave the rest to the public.

X Christian. Jan. 18. 1906

Art for Art's Sake. In a biography recently published there is an amazing revelation of the spirit which is not infrequently found amongst people who cultivate art for art's sake. The subject of this biography was a man who once set the fashion for the *beau monde*, but whose end was tragic in the extreme. His friend and biographer excuses his crime as an aberration, but he sheds this light on the artistic spirit of the man:—

Ugliness (he used to say) I consider a kind of malady, and illness and suffering always inspire me with repulsion. . . [The man in pain] fills me with nothing but aversion. He is tedious. He is a bore. I cannot look at him. I must get away from him.

It had been kinder to have written no biography at all than to make bare, before all the world, a spirit like this. It is by no means uncommon, however. The luxurious refinement of manners and the cultivation of the æsthetic *for their own sake*, must lead to what is hardly distinguishable from inhumanity. How great the contrast between such a spirit and the magnificent spirit which animates nurses, and the unknown multitude of people who, for Christ's sake, seek out and help the suffering and the miserable. What a world ours would be if it were overrun with "artists" of the type above referred to!

Art and Soul. In contrast to this sad biography, with its glorification of art for art's sake, a remarkable book has just been published by the celebrated singer, Mr. D. Ffrangcon Davies, in which he urges, with wonderful force, the cultivation of *soul* in all true artists. It is rare to hear an artist speaking so plainly, but there can be no doubt as to the truth of his words. High art is no safeguard against low morals. Speaking of "art for art's sake," Mr. Davies says:—

If the history of art and religion teach anything, it is that æstheticism, pure and simple, leads to gehenna and gaol, not to heaven and liberty. A purely æsthetic cult lands men into frank, degenerate paganism.

The whole spiritual system, spirit, mind, sense, soul, together with the whole muscular system from feet to head, will be in the wise man's singing, and the whole man will be in the tone.

This is a worthy conception of an artist's work. If it prevailed, artists would become a great blessing to men, instead of, as they have too often been, the reverse.

Yorkshire Weekly Post. 13 Jan. 1906.

"TWENTY YEARS IN PARIS."

It is a topsy-turvey world! From Hyde Park oratory to the fashion in high-class playwriting gives Mr. Shaw a unique position. It seems almost the rule of the road to fame that you must begin by being scoffed at. Then, of course, comes the question, "What is Fame, and what is notoriety?" The prohibition of Mr. Shaw's play, "Mrs. Warren's Profession," and the arrest of the managers and actors who produced and played it in New York, do not in every eye dim the dramatist's, the daring dramatist's, reputation. And this brings me reluctantly to the late Oscar Wilde. One day when the lunacy of that strange genius is accepted as condoning offences which happily few people understand, his work will at least hold the attention of the student of literature and of character, and his tragic end become a subject for pity. I am drawn to mention him because I have received from a friendly publisher (Hutchinson) a very interesting volume, "Twenty Years in Paris," by Robert H. Sherrard, who being well acquainted with Wilde has something to say about his last days that makes a striking chapter in the history of the world's literary life. Most of us have read Wilde's remarkable little book "De Profundis," overflowing with a sense of pity for others that redeems to a great extent whatever Wilde may have written deserving of condemnation. I confess I am unaware of any such writings, but I have not read two of his novels. It needed his death to give life to his last work.

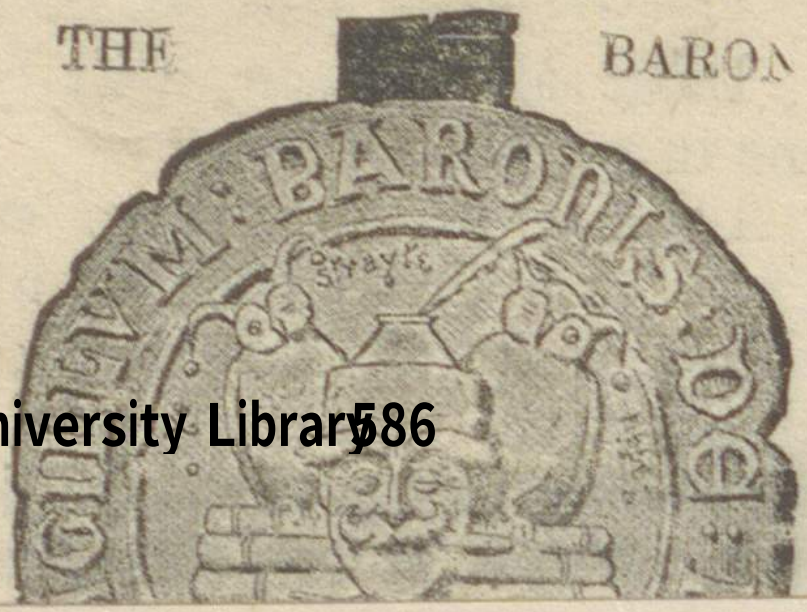
"THE AWAKENING OF PITY."

Mr. Sherrard reproduces in the record of an interview which M. André Gide had with Wilde at Berneval directly after his release, a notable paragraph which deals with the awakening of that pity which is so beautifully expressed in "De Profundis." "The Russian writers are extraordinary," said Wilde. "What makes their books so great is the pity which they put into them. Formerly I was very fond of 'Madame Bovary'; but Flaubert would have no pity in his book, and that is why it seems small and narrow; pity is the side of a work which is open, and by which it appears unbounded. Do you know, it was pity which prevented me from killing myself? Oh! during the first six months I was terribly unhappy—so unhappy that I wished to kill myself; but what kept me back from doing so was looking at the others, seeing that they were as unhappy as I was, and feeling pity for them. Oh, dear! pity is an admirable thing! And I did not know what pity was" (Gide remarks, "He was speaking in a low tone of voice, and without excitement.") "Have you ever grasped what an admirable thing pity is? As for me, I thank God on my knees every night—yes, on my knees I thank God every night for having taught me to know it. For I went into prison with a heart of stone thinking of my pleasure only; but now my heart is altogether broken, pity has entered into it; I have now come to understand that pity is the greatest and most beautiful thing in the world." Mr. Sherrard is well worth reading, and might easily make a welcome break in the exacting work of electioneering.

Punch 3 January 1906

Having lived for twenty years in Paris, performing the duties of correspondent for an American Journal, Mr. SHERARD has compiled his recollections. As his duties brought him into intimate connection with most of the personages who helped to make history in France in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the book has especial value. Amongst the later comers on the stage who were known of the chronicler was OSCAR WILDE. Of the closing scenes in the tragedy of his life a simple touching narrative is to be found in the pages of *Twenty Years in Paris* (HUTCHINSON).

THE BARON



Truth Literary Supplement 31 Dec. 1905

LITERARY LIFE IN PARIS.

"Twenty Years in Paris. Being some recollections of a Literary Life." By Robert H. Sherard. Illustrated with portraits, etc. (Hutchinson and Co. 16s. net.)

Mr. Sherard's "Twenty Years in Paris" is a book of the most varied, vivid and delightful recollections. We open sublimely with Victor Hugo, who made the memorable threat that after death he would track the Almighty to the furthest recesses of the heavens and cry, "Maintenant, Seigneur, expliquons-nous." Yet Mr. Sherard was most struck with the Master's modesty! "It often struck me that perhaps the finest trait in Victor Hugo's character was that in the midst of the great and universal adulation with which in his extreme old age he lived surrounded, his natural simplicity and external modesty never deserted him." When, *e.g.*, Mr. Sherard would in parting have paid the aged poet the homage of kissing his hand, Hugo drew his hastily away and said, "That is done to kings only." Then, gripping his guest's hand firmly, he added, "Voilà comment cela se fait entre hommes." Nevertheless, Victor Hugo's exemplary modesty did not prevent his telegraphing to every king who had a subject under sentence of death to demand his instant reprieve, nor his amazement at Queen Victoria's leaving unanswered such a peremptory demand for the respite of a Jersey murderer. Perhaps the most interesting chapter of this fascinating book is that describing De Lesseps in his fall—the most interesting and also the most appallingly pathetic. Is there anything more pathetic than the sight of a great man who survives himself, whose body but holds together the wrecks and ruins of his mind, and whose life, like the light in a Roman vault, shines only to show the miserable decay of mortality? For the shock of the Panama business unhinged De Lesseps' mind, and Mr. Sherard found him imbecile! "He has the fixed idea that the Queen of England will come and make all things right. He often rises in his chair, and asks if Queen Victoria has arrived, and when any visitor comes he thinks it is she at last." Mr. Sherard's haunting picture of the broken old man is, however, relieved by his description of the adoration of wife, children and servants with which he is surrounded. Hardly less profoundly pathetic is Mr. Sherard's terrible picture of the last days and of the last resting-place of Oscar Wilde. Here is a thrilling incident which happened in Mr. Sherard's presence to Daudet, that will give an idea of the vivid and varied interest of these reminiscences:—

On another occasion while I was writing my notes in Daudet's company the valet brought in a card. It was that of a well-known Paris author. Daudet told the valet to admit him. While the two men were talking I went on with my notes. They conversed in whispers. Daudet was sitting at his desk facing me, the visitor was bending over the table speaking into his ear. After a while, glancing up, I saw a strange expression on Daudet's face, which, as I watched it, grew more and more marked. At last he caught my eye. I understood his meaning, and I got up and rang the bell. The valet entered, and he and I then walked up to the table and stood close by the visitor. Daudet said, "Well, my dear ——, that is agreed upon. But it can't be done to-day, because, as you see, I have a visitor. To-morrow we will talk it over once more." The man did not seem satisfied, but, after a short hesitation, he took his leave. When he had gone Daudet said, "You have witnessed an unusual thing. Poor —— went mad before your eyes. He was quite sane when he entered the room, and was telling me something quite rational. After a while he began to talk nonsense, and in the end suggested that we should both kill ourselves *hic et nunc*, in order, as far as I could make out, to [illegible] I am glad you were in the room; for when men get taken that way there is no saying what they may do."

read from

Newcastle Chronicle 24 Jan. 1906.

TWENTY YEARS IN PARIS.

"Twenty Years in Paris." By Robert H. Sherard. Hutchinson and Co., 16s.

Mr. Sherard's acquaintance with Paris is extensive and peculiar, and in this volume of reminiscences he tells us of many things seen and heard and done in the "gay" city—which in some of its aspects is perhaps the most tragic in the world. For almost all of the twenty years in which he has been in Paris Mr. Sherard has owed the bulk of his income to journalism, and very largely to American journalism. Now whatever may be the merits or demerits of the American newspaper it is always original, and so our author in fulfilling some of the tasks imposed upon him by imperative cables from the other side found himself in strange places and amongst strange people. It has been his duty to interview the builder of the Eiffel Tower on the summit of the edifice, and to follow American millionaires and see how much money they spent in two hours, and what they spent it on. He has been at the Bullier with a royalty, whom he met casually in a cafe, and he has been intimate with the literary giants of a generation. He visited Victor Hugo when the master was holding court, and dined with Ferdinand de Lesseps—of whom he has words only of gratitude and kindness to say—in prosperity and in adversity; he knew Zola intimately, was with Daudet the afternoon before he died, and he interviewed Bernhardt concerning the famous cat story. These, indeed, are only a few of the incidents of a very crowded life, but they are all dealt with most charmingly, for Mr. Sherard is a most vivid raconteur, and his pages in the lighter vein are entirely entertaining. There is, of course, a dark side to the book, for Mr. Sherard saw, both in the course of his professional work and his personal connections, much of that tragedy which is nowhere in the world so abundant as amidst the superficial gaiety of Paris. There was the tragedy of de Lesseps, for instance, one of the great tragedies of last century; and there was that too, of Oscar Wilde. And the writer's outspoken friendship for the unfortunate author of "Dorian Gray" brought him much obloquy, and a great deal of pecuniary loss. There was the pitiful end of the brilliant Ernest Dowson, and there was the miserable death of Verlaine, preyed upon by two of the human vampires in which Lutetia abounds and buried with a kleptomaniac mountebank for chief mourner. Of such is the sombre side of life in Paris, especially amongst those whose genius is tempered by a little madness; and it is small wonder that an observant and faithful chronicler like Mr. Sherard leaves with us a feeling of melancholy when his book is laid aside. Not, however, that there is not comedy, and even riotous farce in his pages. We read of the amused wonder of Edison at the honours showered upon him in Paris, and of his inherent democracy, nowhere better displayed than in the story of the Kaiser and the phonograph. Mr. Sherard tells us that Edison had promised the Emperor a phonograph—that was in the days, of course, before they became an international affliction—and as the phonograph was rather long in arriving the German Ambassador was asked to remind him of the gift. "Ah yes!" said the inventor, I believe I did promise that young man a machine." Mr. Sherard knew Whistler well, and heard one of the best of that caustic person's "bons mots," which concerned the bore who, meeting him in a cafe, said "Well, Whistler, how are you getting on?" "I'm getting off," was the artist's reply, as he gulped down his drink and departed. Though Mr. Sherard served American masters he is quite frank in his dislike of the more yellow of American journalistic methods—and he takes a justifiable pride in the fact that he protested against, and refused to participate in them. He refused, for instance, to enquire into the rumour that Blaine was living a double life in Paris, and to perform other kinds of the dirty work—the phrase is plain and justified—which disgraces the American press; but he was nevertheless as enterprising and painstaking as any of his colleagues, and is to be credited with more than one big "scoop," one of which consisted in being first to announce the rout of Boulangerism at the polls. Mr. Sherard, in short, was a capital journalist, and as he has proved often enough, a capable writer of more lasting work; and in this very entertaining volume we have solid proof of his ability in both spheres, for he tells his story with all the brightness of good journalism, and all the grace of a captivating style.

T.P's Weekly. 12 Jan. 1906.

Effervescent wit.

Tennyson's dictum: "It isn't what we say, but how we say it, that matters; only the fools don't know it," or as Cowper puts it:

> "Manner is all in all; whate'er is writ,
> The substitute for genius, sense, and wit,"

is as true of some sorts of wit as it is of poetry. The wittiest of Irish judges said to me not so long since of his own sallies, which always "set the table in a roar," "I don't know how it is, but all my jokes when repeated or printed seem flat as ditch-water!" Effervesced soda-water, too, is the only adequate description of the jokes of another Irish Judge, the late Lord Morris, when repeated or printed. Where is the point, again, of these two jokes which I find quoted with appreciation by Mr. Sherard in his "Twenty Years in Paris": "I hope you are very well," said Oscar Wilde to Lord Beaconsfield on meeting him at some "At Home." "Is anyone ever very well, Mr. Wilde?" was the brilliant rejoinder of the Premier. Would Oscar Wilde, himself the wittiest of men, have thought this brilliant, if anyone else had said it, or if it had been said by any one else in a less significant way? Or would Mr. Sherard have thought the following retort of Whistler's brilliant if it had been uttered by any other man or in any other way than by "the Master" in his own magisterial manner. "What do you think of so-and-so, Mr. Whistler?" "Think? I never think." Where here is the wit? It must have lain elusive in the manner, since it has certainly evaporated in transit. When Thackeray, however, replied to the question, "What do you think of Tupper over here?" put to him by an American, "We don't think of Tupper," he sent his joke across Great Britain and the Atlantic, to say nothing of the centuries, in perfect safety.

Wit lost in transit.

Not so long since a friend told me a story of which he, no more than I, could see the point when told! "I thought it was funny, for everyone laughed at it," he said apologetically. He had probably dropped a stitch which unravelled and tangled the whole web, just as Goldsmith mislaid the point of the joke *re* a dish of sere and yellow peas: "These peas ought to be sent to Hammersmith." "To Hammersmith?" "Yes, that's the way to Turnham Green." Whereof the point was lost in Goldsmith's version, "That's the way to *make 'em green.*" The best of these chestnuts, however—for I apologetically admit that it is a chestnut—is that of the rencontre between the Oxford student with a mere shred of a gown hanging from his shoulders and the Proctor. "That's a very short gown you've on, sir," severely remarked the Proctor. "Short? It will be long before I get another." The Proctor was so tickled by the retort that he not only overlooked its flippancy, but repeated it appreciatively to a Don he met soon after in this way: "I met Raikes just now with a scandalously short gown, and when I took him to task for it do you know what the fellow said? He said, 'It would be a long time before he got another.' I don't know when I heard anything so smart," added the Proctor, shaking with laughter. "Smart?" rejoined the perplexed Don, "Smart? 'It would be a long time before he got another.' I can't for my life see the joke." "And I can't now," replied the bewildered Proctor. "[illegible] seemed funny when he said it."

there is no saying what they may do."

Review of Reviews,

January 1906

TWENTY YEARS OF PARIS.

Few more interesting books were published last month than Mr. Robert H. Sherard's "Twenty Years of Paris" (Hutchinson. 492 pp. 16s. net). These Parisians, he says, are a great people, and may fairly claim to be what Victor Hugo called them—citizens of the metropolis of the civilised world. Mr. Sherard's reminiscences, which are indexed for reference, illustrated by excellent portraits, and written [illegible] which is very pl[illegible] though it sometimes required rather more careful proof-

reading, are concerned with a variety of personalities, from Aubert the murderer, by no means one of the least interesting, to Ernest Dowson, the poet. English readers will perhaps turn first to the last four chapters dealing mainly with Oscar Wilde, especially with his life in prison and after he came out. Mr. Sherard has no doubt of the sincerity of "De Profundis," and equally no doubt of the implacability of Wilde's enemies, of which he gives some gross instances. He also describes his visit to Wilde's grave at Bagneux, and the details of his last days, which he collected there. A very interesting chapter deals with journalism in France, contrasting it, on the whole to the advantage of our neighbours, with journalism in England. Among the personalities of which reminiscences are given are Edison, Baron Haussmann—a little-known personality—Renan, Fer[illegible] Lesseps, Eiffel, Maupassant, Louise Michel, Zola, Mallarmé, Alexandre Dumas fils, and Victor Hugo. These are but a few names taken at random.

"DAILY CHRONICLE"

SEPT. 27, 1905.

Mr. Robert Sherard writes his memories of "Twenty Years in Paris," in a volume which Messrs. Hutchinson are soon to publish. Among the celebrities of whom he has personal memories are Victor Hugo, Ferdinand de Lesseps, General Boulanger, Baron Haussmann, Jules Verne, Renan and Zola. Apart from the personalia the book contains [illegible] with anecdotes, on recent French history.