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Vol. **7**

MARCH 30, 1905.

THE NEW AGE.

New Age 188 9

Books of the Week.

THE WAIL OF A HUMAN LIFE*

"De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine. Domine, exaudi vocem meam."

Well chosen are the first two words of the penitential psalm as the title of this most painful, most pathetic book, exquisitely phrased as only its writer knew how to employ language, and that, too, after his style had become chastened and purified in the fiery furnace of physical and mental tribulation. So far as I have read, there is not a sadder work in all literature. Composed as it was, and as others have been, in prison, the author dipped his pen in a chalice mixed of tears and blood.

For one, I do not envy the man or the woman, whatever the repulsion from the fault so fully expiated, who can read these lamentations unmoved by sympathy and compunction. To think of this, the most versatile and brilliant man of letters of his time—poet, dramatist, story-teller, essayist, scholar, wit, humorist, in some or most of those capacities super-excellent in his day and generation, and further, as is admitted, genial and kindly of heart, incapable of wittingly doing hurt to man or beast, and then to consider what he fell to. How the gold became dim and the fine gold changed!

The question presents itself whether, except in the eyes of an antiquated and savage jurisprudence, a survival of the middle or the dark ages, he was a criminal at all, whether a more humane and rational code would not have regarded him as one afflicted, more meet for an asylum than a prison cell. That view finds confirmation from his own words: "What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion." He was, that is to say, if not mentally, morally insane.

Habituated by nature and wont to luxury and self-indulgence as he had been, sybarite and hedonist in the widest sense of those terms as he was, equity, had it entered into the matter of his sentence, a maximum one, two years imprisonment with hard labour, the most breaking down permitted by law, would have suggested that upon one of such antecedents prison life, with its rigours, its monotony, its humiliations, must tell with a hundred-fold crushing severity. The book affords too ample testimony of how and what he suffered:

I have lain in prison for nearly two years. Out of my nature has come wild despair; an abandonment to grief that was piteous even to look at; terrible and impotent rage; anguish that wept aloud; misery that could find no voice; sorrow that was dumb.

* "De Profundis," by Oscar Wilde. Methuen and Co., London. 5s. net.

(2nd.notice)

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Again :

The plank bed, the loathsome food, the hard ropes shredded into oakum till one's finger-tips grow dull with pain, the menial offices with which each day begins and finishes, the harsh orders that routine seems to necessitate, the dreadful dress that makes sorrow grotesque to look at, the silence, the solitude, the shame.

Once more :

While I was in Wandsworth prison I longed to die. It was my one desire. When, after two months in the infirmary, I was transferred here, and found myself growing gradually better in physical health, I was filled with rage. I determined to commit suicide on the very day on which I left prison.

To make matters worse his mother died while he was in confinement: "No one knew how deeply I loved and honoured her. Her death

was terrible to me ; but I, once a lord of language, had no words in which to express my anguish and my shame."

But Worse Remained.

Misfortune was not done with him yet ; still worse was in store for him :

I had lost my name, my position, my happiness, my freedom, my wealth. I was a prisoner and a pauper. But I still had my children left. Suddenly they were taken away from me by the law. It was a blow so appalling that I did not know what to do, so I flung myself on my knees and bowed my head and wept.

That was his sorrow's crown of sorrow ; then he drank the cup of wormwood to the dregs, and plumbed the very nadir of misery. He comments on the incident : "We are denied the one thing that might heal us and keep us, that might bring balm to the bruised heart, and peace to the soul in pain." Yes, so it is with our law and prison discipline, a system as stupid as it is odious and cruel. To wound a prisoner in his tenderest feelings, to degrade him in his own eyes, to destroy his self-respect, and thus fondly it is imagined that transgressors are to be reformed and converted into good and useful citizens.

Bond or free, in captivity or at large Oscar Wilde was and could not be other than a monumental, a colossal egoist, individualist he preferably styles himself. He says :

I was a man who stood in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age. I had realised this for myself at the very dawn of my manhood, and had forced my age to realise it afterwards. Few men hold such a position in their own lifetime, and have it so acknowledged. It is usually discerned, if discerned at all, by the historian or the critic, long after both the man and his age have passed away. With me it was different. I felt it myself and made others feel it. Byron was a symbolic figure, but his relations are to the passion of his age and its weariness of passion. Mine were to something more noble, more permanent, of more vital issue, of larger scope.

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The plank bed, the loathsome food, the hard ropes shredded into oakum till one's finger-tips grow dull with pain, the menial offices with which each day begins and finishes, the harsh orders that routine seems to necessitate, the dreadful dress that makes sorrow grotesque to look at, the silence, the solitude, the shame.

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Accordingly, a curious psychological problem confronted him : how was he, who entertained

such transcendent, almost fantastic conceptions of the importance of his personality, to face the world on his liberation? Was he, as some advised, to forget that he had ever been in prison at all? That he decided would be fatal—nothing less than the denial of his soul. Should he seek to lose himself in the wide world? That might be practicable for lesser men. As for him it was impossible ; to one of his renown the world was shrivelled to a handbreadth, and everywhere his name was written on the rocks in lead. Never to smile again, to wear gloom as a king wears purple, that also would never do ; still less should he cherish any possible bitterness of feeling against the world. Free from all resentment, hardness, and scorn, he would be able to face life with much more calm and confidence than he would were his body in purple and fine linen and the soul within him sick with hate. Morality could not help him. He was a born antinomian. Religion could not help him. His faith was given not to things unseen, but to the visible and the tangible, and his gods dwelt in temples made with hands. Reason could not help him. It told him that the laws under which he was convicted were wrong and unjust laws, and the system under which he had suffered a wrong and unjust system.

Whence came his help?

Whither, then, was he to look for aid? To that something hidden away in his nature, like a treasure in a field. Humility ; but Humility in the artist he somewhat esoterically defines as the frank acceptance of all experiences. His sufferings and sorrows in gaol were to be regarded but as means to more complete self-expression and self-realisation, the only things of value in life, but as helps to his own spiritualisation and self-perfection. "Pleasure," says he, "for the beautiful body, but pain for the beautiful soul."

Christ, the most supreme of individualists, as he calls Him, and the story, save in sacred writ, nowhere else more exquisitely and touchingly related of the supreme Man of Sorrows and his sympathy with sin and suffering, "as being in themselves beautiful holy things and modes of perfection," are elaborately cited as at once the chief exemplar and the highest exposition of his theories of life and self-development.

Another source of solace and of support which he looked to was Nature, whom we often and rightly designate as pitiless, lovely as she is and fount of highest joy :

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Nature, whose sweet rains fall on unjust and just alike, will have clefts in the rocks where I may hide, and secret valleys in whose silence I may weep undisturbed. She will hang the night with stars, so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my footprints, so that none may track me to my hurt: she will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole.

Alas! the book of Nature too soon closed its pages to mortal eyes that had ever been responsive to beauty in all its manifestations.

Nor should we begrudge to the unfortunate his protective egoism, and after all he had more right than most to be egotistical. Let us hope that those philosophising attempts, half-consciously self-deceptive as they must have been, to put the best face upon a broken heart, served him in good stead towards the last. On leaving prison he found himself forsaken by all but a faithful few. His dazzling plays had been withdrawn from the stage. His name was tabooed as an obscene expression. He took refuge in Paris, and there, almost destitute in a humble little hotel, sheltered by the charity of a foreign host, kindlier to him than his own countrymen, he died in agony, raving and clutching his head, and was buried in the vast suburban cemetery of Bagneux.

One of the characters in one of his plays, "Lady Windermere's Fan," I think, is made to say "Our feet are in the gutter, but our eyes towards the stars." Poor Oscar Wilde; if his eyes were ever on the summits, more than the feet of him had lain in the kennel, though now, as we will hope, his troubled soul has gained a tranquil star. S.

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MARCH, 1908

Rapid Review.

De Profundis. By OSCAR WILDE. Methuen. 5s. net.)
A remarkable manuscript written in prison and sent to the author's friend, Robert Ross, setting forth the view that sorrow is the crown and completion of the artist's life.

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OSCAR WILDE'S PRISON MEDITATIONS.

A profoundly interesting and pathetic book is "De Profundis," the prison meditations of Oscar Wilde (Methuen. 151 pp. 5s. net.). It might have been entitled "How Oscar Wilde found Christ in Reading Gaol," and it would not have been wrongly entitled. Not that Oscar Wilde became religious. He says explicitly, "Religion does not help me." But Christ helped him. To have written his realisation of the beauty and glory of His life, his conception of the divinity of sorrow, it was worth while to have gone to gaol for two years:—
There is still something to me almost incredible in the idea of a young Galilean peasant imagining that he could bear on his own shoulders the burden of the entire world . . . and not merely imagining it, but actually achieving it, so that at the present moment all who come in contact with his personality . . . in some way find that the ugliness of their own sin is taken away and the beauty of their sorrow revealed to them.
The whole book is a prose poem, which for "pity and terror," and yet also for pathos and a radiant hope, will be prized and cherished long after all his other works and those of most of his contemporaries are forgotten. For here is the true cry of the heart *de profundis*, which will find an echo in all hearts that have been awakened by the touch of sorrow.

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THE LITERARY WORLD.

March 15, 1905.

A PRODIGAL.

De Profundis. By Oscar Wilde. (Methuen. 5s.)

THIS strangely moving book will be read for the striking beauty both of its thought and of its style. But the value of the record as a unique revelation of mental and spiritual experience will depend for each reader upon the answer he gives to the question, Is it a sincere utterance, or is the writer posing once more—after a new and unexpected fashion? In spite of some indications of the old Oscar Wilde and of his artificiality and colossal vanity—it would be more than a miracle if so suddenly all trace of his former self had disappeared—we believe that the record is, in the main, the sincere expression of a new spirit that came to the writer through the bitterest degradation and suffering. The book was written during the last months of his imprisonment in Reading Gaol. It contains, incidentally, a terrible indictment—which deserves pondering—of the dehumanising influence of our prison treatment, and yet from the shock of that treatment in the writer's case came a strange redemption.

The first keynote struck in the book is of the marvel of sorrow. 'It is really a revelation. One discerns things one never discerned before.' There are times when sorrow seems to the writer the only truth. If when he is free a friend omits to invite him to a feast he will not care, but if any friend refuses to let him share a sorrow he will feel it bitterly.

I have a right to share in sorrow, and he who can look at the loveliness of the world and share its sorrow, and realise something of the wonder of both, is in immediate contact with divine things, and has got as near to God's secret as any one can get.

The sorrow of the world, instead of being as he once thought the surest evidence of God's non-existence, becomes to him the proof that the world 'has been built by the hands of love, because in no other way could the soul of man, for whom the world was made, reach the full stature of its perfection.'

There is frank confession and condemnation of wrongdoing and self-ruin:

The gods had given me almost everything. But I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease. I amused myself with being a *flâneur*, a dandy, a man of fashion. I surrounded myself with the smaller natures and the meaner minds. I became the spendthrift of my own genius, and to waste an eternal youth gave me a curious joy. Tired of being on the heights, I deliberately went to the depths in the search for new sensation.

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lord over himself. Now, in the degradation of prison life, he regains himself. He faces the actual facts of the past and the present. Absolute humility, he feels, is the only thing for him; he must not indulge in any bitterness against the world, however harsh and hostile, he must cherish always and to all people the spirit of love. Just as the body absorbs things of all kinds, even things common and unclean, and transforms them into strength and beauty; so the soul, he discovers, can transmute what in itself is base, cruel and degrading into noble moods of thought and feeling.

Of the finest and most remarkable part of the book, that in which the writer speaks of the profound impression made upon him as he read again in prison the story of the Gospels, and of the wonder and admiration to which it moved him, we can say little here. The following passage will give some idea of the sympathy and beauty with which the theme is treated:

Yet the whole life of Christ—so entirely may sorrow and beauty be made one in their meaning and manifestation—is really an idyll, though it ends with the veil of the temple being rent, and the darkness coming over the face of the earth, and the stone rolled to the door of the sepulchre. One always thinks of Him as a young bridegroom with his companions, as indeed He somewhere describes Himself; as a shepherd straying through a valley with his sheep in search of green meadow or cool stream; as a singer trying to build out of the music the walls of the City of God; or as a lover for whose love the whole world was too small.

Now and then the writer of this remarkable book strikes a wrong note, now and then he lets his old love of whimsical paradox lead him astray, but in spite of that the book bears witness to the high qualities of his nature, which before had been obscured and which only the direst adversity brought out, and we are left to regret that he did not live to fulfil the hopes and aims for the future of which he speaks.

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A M U S E M E N T

The new book by Oscar Wilde has more meaning for those who knew him than for others, though it must have some influence even with the most thoughtless. I saw Oscar Wilde in his most glowing hours, and I saw him when life's gloom was tragic. It was his experience to know the meaning of literary success in London—for which so many strive and only the few obtain. He was a society jester, with fun and philosophy, and many gifts beside. His temperament with success was a dangerous possession, and in his later conclusions, after tragic chastening, he knew that he was made for a law unto himself. But this is limited justice, and the good man must think of others, as his pleasure may be their ruin. Wilde lacked self-control, and having the means, London opened its costliest and worst gates to his gold-laden purse; and had coppers been there, instead of sovereigns, he would never have seen the prison-cell as an enforced inmate.

* * *

The prison brought out powers which nobody thought he had, but the possibilities of a true poet like Wilde—and the true poet has humour with his tears—are beyond common conception. These possibilities are frequently a revelation to the poet himself, for his soul is as a field, and weeds and flowers spring up unexpectedly. Discipline and solitude bring organisation to thought, though some may question this in regard to the poetic temperament, to which liberty may be as life. However, we know noble work has been written in prison, and the regular life within its frowning walls may give the mind finer growth. To some extent we are all in prison, and never out of it. We do not call the house or the room a prison, but such it is. Kept to narrower limits, and the mind getting freer play, its expression will be stronger and brighter. Wilde could not regulate himself, but when others compelled him to live a simple, severe life, he found his capacity for thought of greater activity than ever.

* * *

In his poetic phrasing he speaks of the time when he went down the primrose path to the music of lutes. At this time he gave out his smart sayings, coloured by very questionable morality. He was spoiled by success, and the jingling gold, with meaningless praise from weak minds, overthrew him. The casual observer who saw him then, and listened to him, would have been incredulous had a prophet whispered some of the sentences which, in cold, severe light, and with an emancipated soul, he was to write in Reading gaol. It is wonderful how the poetic temperament, in its nobler moods, is attracted to the work of the Reformer

A M U S E M E N T

The new book by Oscar Wilde has more meaning for those who knew him than for others, though it must have some influence even with the most thoughtless. I saw Oscar Wilde in his most glowing hours, and I saw him when life's gloom was tragic. It was his experience to know the meaning of literary success in London—for which so many strive and only the few obtain. He was a society jester, with fun and philosophy, and many gifts beside. His temperament with success was a dangerous possession, and in his later conclusions, after tragic chastening, he knew that he was made for a law unto himself. But this is limited justice, and the good man must think of others, as his pleasure may be their ruin. Wilde lacked self-control, and having the means, London opened its costliest and worst gates to his gold-laden purse ;

and had coppers been there, instead of sovereigns, he would never have seen the prison-cell as an enforced inmate.

* * *

The prison brought out powers which nobody thought he had, but the possibilities of a true poet like Wilde—and the true poet has humour with his tears—are beyond common conception. These possibilities are frequently a revelation to the poet himself, for his soul is as a field, and weeds and flowers spring up unexpectedly. Discipline and solitude bring organisation to thought, though some may question this in regard to the poetic temperament, to which liberty may be as life. However, we know noble work has been written in prison, and the regular life within its frowning walls may give the mind finer growth. To some extent we are all in prison, and never out of it. We do not call the house or the room a prison, but such it is. Kept to narrower limits, and the mind getting freer play, its expression will be stronger and brighter. Wilde could not regulate himself, but when others compelled him to live a simple, severe life, he found his capacity for thought of greater activity than ever.

* * *

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we call Christ. With all the criticisms of the centuries, there are the preacher's strange, simple words; and in all our modern complexities and bewilderments they hold us, and are gaining strength with the thoughtful. Wilde must have read and meditated much in relation to Holy Writ, and he was far nobler than with his cigarette carelessly receiving the approbation which people poured on work that will be forgotten when "De Profundis" will hold the thoughtful student. It is well, in our days of endless superficial writing, that a deeper note is struck, and we can ponder pages which have a real message. Oscar Wilde left us a legacy through his life's tragedy.

MARCH-APRIL 1905.

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

Freedom

"DE PROFUNDIS."

Wilde's "De Profundis," it is said, is attracting a wide circle of readers, interested no doubt in the morbid self-revelment of a broken man soothing the misery of his prison life with piteous platitudes about humility and resignation. It is a sad spectacle, but we would advise those whose hearts may have been touched by the prison agonies of a sensitive man to bethink themselves of the whole question of prisons and legal punishment. Some years ago this subject was being discussed, and some agitation seemed to be growing that promised hope of reforms. Nothing, however, has been done, and the thousands of unhappy victims on whom our brutal system takes its vengeance are enduring these tortures without the power of expressing all they suffer. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" would far better repay perusal than "De Profundis," for here we have the most scathing indictment of our prison system ever written. Let the English people recall those heart-rending lines:—

The vilest deeds, like poison weeds,
Bloom well in prison air:
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there:
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,
And the Warder is Despair.

*Amusement
April 1905*

"De Profundis," by Oscar Wilde, has been widely read, and is, beyond question, one of the most unique works seen for years. Wilde wrote every word from his heart, and, as a life-record in strange circumstances, it touches the soul. The pen of Wilde was destined to work in very varied scenes, and the fine lessons of "De Profundis" should be of much use to us all. Many lectures can be given from this book. Messrs. Methuen and Co. are the publishers.

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FOR HEALTH AND IMMORTALITY.

The Ecclesiastical Review.

APRIL 8, 1905.

"DE PROFUNDIS."

THE superficiality, the hollowness, we had well-nigh said the absolute worthlessness, of much that passes for literary criticism is deplorably exemplified in the notices of the much-advertised volume which is represented as the last work of Oscar Wilde. Memories of that gifted and shamefully wasted life are still too painful to revive. No one ever doubted Oscar Wilde's intellectual gifts. Every one was aware of his brilliant opportunities. All marked his fall with a pity which could not be dissociated from an admission of its justice and a certain sense of indignation that one who might have risen so high should have fallen so low. Such as he was, Oscar Wilde passed from public view ten years ago. He was not forgotten, he was put aside. The man had proved so utterly unworthy, he had so completely profaned and blasphemed the noblest gifts and graces of humanity, the artistic sense, the faculties of painter and poet, the harvest of culture, the claims of domestic and personal purity, that there could only have been one excuse for recalling public attention to his dishonoured name. Had the man changed, had he repented in sackcloth and ashes, had he in self-abasement striven to make amends for the wrong he had done to humanity, then his memory might have been revived, in some manner cleansed, and claiming the consideration which is due to honest admission of fault and recognition

of the more excellent way. We should have more than tolerated a changed Oscar Wilde, we should have offered him the tribute of that respect which is owed to "godly sorrow." The notices of "De Profundis" have, with some great exceptions, led the public to believe in this changed Oscar Wilde. They greatly err. The book is disappointing, it is even distressing. If it be really the work of Oscar Wilde in his prison, as we take it to be, then we have one more proof, if more proof were wanted, of the utter uselessness of all external agencies in the work of changing a man's heart. Viewed as detached pieces of literature, there are fine passages in the book. This was to be expected. Oscar Wilde had everything but originality. He had culture, literary appreciation, facility in perceiving and expressing, receptivity, and, above all, memory. Whistler,

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who had so plentifully the originality which Wilde lacked, said of him in that Whistler-play which hurt, "Oscar, of prodigious memory." Such a man might be trusted, not indeed to originate, but to reproduce thought with ease and grace. It is characteristic of Wilde that he should tell with inimitable pathos the story of the man who raised his hat "as, handcuffed and with bowed head, I passed him by." It is also characteristic of him that he should at once go on to spoil this moving little story with the extravagance, "Men have gone to heaven for smaller things than that." Making allowances for Wilde's love of hyperbole and inveterate use of the purple patch, there are many observations and reflections in this book which are touching and beautiful. But through all runs a vein of insincerity. It is as if the man were recording, not what he felt, but what he thought. The picture is of Oscar Wilde as he would like the world to see him. And the worst of it is, that is the real man. The dying criminal, writing in the late nineties, is unchanged in heart and mind from the brilliant *poseur* of the early eighties. He writes from the depths indeed, but, it would seem, without real moral consciousness of his true position. For example, he preserves the same absurdly exaggerated idea of his own position which made him the subject of so much good-humoured ridicule even in his balmy days. "Few men hold such a position in their own life-time, and have it so acknowledged. It is usually discerned, if discerned at all, by the historian or the critic, long after both the man and his age have passed away. With me it was different. I felt it myself, and made others feel it. Byron was a symbolic figure, but his relations were to the passion of his age and its weariness of passion. Mine were to something more noble, more permanent, of more vital issue, of larger scope." The man who remained so completely lost in self-deception as to his true place and work scarcely carries conviction when he proceeds to discourse on the paramount excellence of the virtue of humility. It is not in the least sur-

prising that he should point out complacently that all the moral discoveries he has made in prison are "foreshadowed and prefigured in my books." That the man suffered in prison is unquestionable. That his suffering wrought any sound moral result is open to doubt. Much of what he has to say about suffering is well-expressed. But he seems to have very little idea of suffering as discipline. He treats it chiefly in relation to the outside world, and not to the inward sifting. He contrives to convey the impression that he suffered unjustly as far as his particular offence was concerned, although his life had been such as to deserve punishment.

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His confession, if such it may be termed, is a general acknowledgment of yielding to perverse indulgence, by which he may mean what he shrinks from saying, but he appears to be wishful to make the world believe that his sentence was the result of his mistaken confidence in justice (he can only refer to his libel action) and not of the sin of which he was convicted.

The book is in parts pathetic, but it is never convincing. It is the record, as far as it is a genuine record and not mere posing, of a man not really changed, who was capable of regret, and remorse, but not of veritable repentance; who, to the last, never understood the true extent of his failure, as he had never truly estimated the measure of his powers and his achievements. It has served to recall a memory which it does not make clean. On the whole, the strongest impression it makes is that of unavailing pain in the contemplation of moral wreckage, the picture of the deluded egotist in his prison looking back upon a career with which he fondly imagined the historian and the critic would busy themselves in after ages, looking forward to successes still to be achieved. "There is before me so much to do that I would regard it as a terrible tragedy if I died before I was allowed to complete, at any rate, a little of it." Within three years of writing that, Oscar Wilde was dead, having done nothing.

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THE WORLD'S WORK

THE WORK OF THE BOOK WORLD

Out of the Depths

Posthumous books have always a curious "voice from the grave" effect, even where they are nothing like autobiography. But the latest and last publication to bear the name of Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis* (Methuen, 5s.), is so tensely personal as to carry with it even a more ghostly significance than usual. We seem nowadays so far removed from the glitter, the paradox, the artificiality, the terrible tragedy which his name calls to mind, that it requires something of a retroactive mental effort to take up again the thread of the old and shocking story. Those of us who can remember the sheer delight with which the work of this man was received, who can recall the old charm, always somewhat exotic and superficial, of his plays and his books, have in the years which followed his oblivion grown somehow out of the humour for his strange genius. Much has been said and written for some years about an unpublished book in the hands of his literary executors,

said to have been written during the days of his prison life. This is the book which is now given to the public over the signature of Mr. Robert Ross, who evidently remained a friend of its writer through all bitterness to the end of his life. There may be two opinions of the pride which the editor takes in this fact, and in the constant allusion in the book to the friend R., which one can only suppose to be his own initial. If this is the case, and Mr. Ross fails of the meed of merit which he thinks should attach to such faithful service, he may well console himself with the fine tributes paid in the book itself to his fidelity. Here is a passage about such an act of friendship:

"Where there is sorrow there is holy ground. Some day people will realise what that means. They will know nothing of life till they do. — and natures like his can realise it. When I was brought down from my prison to the Court of Bankruptcy, between two policemen, — waited in the long dreary corridor that, before the whole crowd, whom an action so sweet and simple hushed into silence, he might gravely raise his hat to me, as, handcuffed and with bowed head, I passed him by. Men have gone to heaven for smaller things than that. It was in this spirit, and with this mode of love, that the saints knelt down to wash the

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He who had been so witty and so heartless appears here in a new light. The book is a veritable monotone of sorrow. It is, as it were, a voyage of discovery through the land of shadows, because until he entered the prison gate the writer seems never to have looked upon the face of grief or to have realised that it existed in a sad world. But, Columbus-like discoverer of lower depths though he be, he still remains what he best describes when

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"I will not say that prison is the best thing that could have happened to me, for that would savour of too great bitterness towards myself. I would sooner say, or hear it said of me, that I was so typically a child of my age, that in my perversity, and for that perversity's sake, I turned the good things of my life to evil, and the evil things of my life to good."

Of his sufferings he says:

"I have lain in prison for nearly two years. Out of my nature has come wild despair; and abandonment of grief that was piteous even to look at; terrible and impotent rage; bitterness and scorn; anguish that wept aloud; misery that could find no voice; sorrow that was dumb. I have passed through every possible mood of suffering, and while there were times when I rejoiced in the idea that my sufferings were to be ended, I could not bear them to be without mean-

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