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Oscar Wilde
Scrapbook

Vol. **7**

As to the hotel and the room in which Wilde passed the last months of his life, one does not wish to hurt the feelings of the excellent Monsieur Dupoirrier, and all I will say—for anyone curious in the matter can visit it himself—is that in London his room would be considered dear at a rental of four shillings a week. It is a small gloomy room looking out on a courtyard, furnished with the stained and musty furniture of the cheap hotel garni.

Further, "A" will not deny that André Gide and Ernest Lajeunesse had more than a slight acquaintance with Wilde. Gide relates that he found Wilde in a café once "absolument dénué de ressources," and Ernest Lajeunesse's description of the poet's funeral fully warrants anything that I have written about it. As to Monsieur Renaud, whose acquaintance I made the other day, I have not the least doubt that his description of his meeting with Wilde in the Calisaya is absolutely correct.

And I think that not the least tragic thing in Oscar Wilde's life in Paris was that the cruel contempt of the world forced him to associate once more with the very men whom in his "De Profundis" he had renounced for ever—men who, par acquit de conscience, used to throw him now and then a little silver of their gold, or, when they wanted diversion, fetched him from his gloomy solitude in the Latin Quarter to entertain them at dinner, be it at Paillard's or at the Grand.

There are at present being hawked round London, advertised in a catalogue of second-hand books, a number of Wilde's letters written during the period between his release from Reading and his death. They are the best contradiction of "A's" complacent representations. Here is the bookseller's description of two of these letters, which I quote from the catalogue:—

"A. L., signed and dated Paris, August 8, 1898, has reference to a MS forwarded of which he has received no acknowledgement, fears he will be turned out of his hotel; indeed the whole Letter is a chronicle of misery and despair and nearly hopeless."

"A. L., October 19, 1898, dated Paris, still harping on the same strings, namely making incessant appeals for money, has been ill in bed, asking for proofs of his play ('An Ideal Husband'), etc. . . . 17s. 6d."

ROBERT HARBOROUGH SHERARD.

Vernon (France), March 7, 1905.

THE OSCAR WILDE BOOK.

Mr. John Campbell, M.P., will, on Monday, ask the Home Secretary whether he can state what facilities for literary work were accorded to the late Mr. Oscar Wilde during his incarceration in Reading gaol.

2019-03-18 Jissen Women's University Library

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MARCH 10,

G. P. O.

OSCAR WILDE

Sir,—Permit me to say that Oscar Wilde towards the end repeatedly expressed a desire to a friend to be received into the Catholic Church. The friend in question advised him to wait, and Oscar Wilde called him "the cherub with the flaming sword, forbidding my entrance into Eden." I appreciate the difficulty in which that friend found himself under circumstances I need not go into, and exonerate him from blame. In the end the priest was sent for, but by the time he arrived Oscar Wilde, though conscious, was unable to move or speak, but he gave a sign, and in view of the fact that he had earnestly when in full consciousness repeatedly asked to see a priest with the object of becoming a Catholic, he was conditionally baptised, absolved, and anointed. R.I.P.

SACERDOS.

MARCH 11,

G. P. O.

OSCAR WILDE

Sir,—With the exception of his two sons, who, at the time of his death, were not of an age to know the circumstances attending it, the late Mr. Oscar Wilde was survived by no near relatives. But my first husband was his elder brother; my little daughter bears his name; and I should like, if you will allow me, to state how very distasteful the correspondence which has lately appeared in your columns is to me and many others. And this is not only for our own sake, but for that of my poor brother-in-law's memory. Nothing could have horrified him more than that men calling themselves his friends should publish concerning his latter days details so disgusting as those appearing in your issue of yesterday, or dispute over any change in his religion to which he may have assented on his death-bed.

During these latter days, he had a settled income from his wife's estate enough to provide him with the necessities of life. His temperament was such that he attached a greater value to its luxuries; and this, I think, explains that often he found it difficult to provide himself with ordinary comforts. But he would have been the last to wish that letters should be written to the papers concerning these matters or his personal debts, all of which will be paid off in time, in the ordinary course of events, from the royalties still accruing from his plays and other works.

I should be glad to think that this expression of my wish may put an end to this unpleasant correspondence. If it does not, I can only appeal to your correspondents to be very careful of what they write, and to reflect upon what Mr. Oscar Wilde would think if he could read their letters. In life, he never said or countenanced a coarse or common thing. Personally, I write with too much reluctance to reply to them again, and I leave the matter to their sense of decency and chivalry.

LILY TEIXEIRA.

9, Cheltenham-terrace, Chelsea, March 11.

MARCH 10,

St. James' s

G. P. O.

Gazette

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LILY TEIXEIRA.

Sir,—Will you allow one of your readers to express a hope that we have now heard the last of Oscar Wilde's last days in Paris? They do not make for edification. The events about which your correspondents are quarrelling do not affect the author's style or the value of his literary work, and it is surprising to me that his friends should wish to "wake" him in the Press. I cannot understand why "A" should think it so important that Wilde made no profession of faith, or that "O" should wish to persuade "A" that he did. If the subject, however, is to be continued, it would be more entertaining to learn why Wilde took the extraordinary action against Lord Queensberry. Under whose advice did he take the proceedings? Was he sober at the time? Was "A" there? Who was responsible for urging him to such a fatal step, more serious even than becoming a Roman Catholic?

I remember meeting Wilde in one of the American bars of which "A" has such agreeable memories. We were not ejected on that occasion, and I remember the subject of conversation was the manuscript now published under the name of "De Profundis," which in its present form offers no solution to these problems. Wilde told me it contained all the answers to the questions I am asking now. Will not Mr. Robert Ross, who has so far ruthlessly exercised his editorial discretion, oblige with further extracts? They might possibly gratify "A," and satisfy "O," and they would interest many others, besides
Z.

[Robert Ross]

Evening Standard,

MARCH 14,

"DE PROFUNDIS."

MR. ROBERT ROSS AND THE
SUPPRESSED PORTIONS.

Whilst there is no intention of opening in the columns of the "Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette" a correspondence on the subject of Mr. Oscar Wilde's "De Profundis," which has given rise to so much controversy, certain statements which Mr. Robert Ross, the editor of the work, made to our representative may interest our readers.

"My object," he said, "in publishing the book, as I have indicated in the preface and in my letter to the 'St. James's Gazette,' was that Mr. Oscar Wilde might come to be regarded as a factor in English literature along with his distinguished contemporaries. The success of 'De Profundis' and the reviews lead me to believe that my object has been achieved."

"I cannot expect the world to share my admiration of Mr. Oscar Wilde as a man of letters, at present, although that admiration is already shared by many distinguished men of letters in England, by the whole of Germany, and by a considerable portion of the literary class in France."

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"With regard to the authenticity of the manuscript, I may say that it was well known that during his incarceration at Reading Gaol he was granted the privileges of pen and paper, only permitted in exceptional cases, at the instance of influential people not his personal friends. The manuscript of 'De Profundis,' about which he wrote to me very often during the last months of his imprisonment, was handed to me on the day of his release. The letters he had written to me in reference to it are published in the German edition of the work, and later on, perhaps, they may appear in England if I think it desirable to publish them here.

"Contrary to general belief the manuscript contains nothing of a scandalous nature, and if there was another object in publishing the work it was to remove that false impression which had gained ground. The portions which I have omitted in the English publication, apart from the letters to which I have already referred as appearing in the German edition, are all of a private character. There are one or two unimportant passages which the English publisher—very wisely, I think—deemed unsuitable for immediate reproduction in England?

"In Germany Mr. Oscar Wilde's place in English literature has already been accepted. 'Salome,' for instance, is now part of the repertoire, and Strauss, the great musician, is engaged on an opera based on Mr. Wilde's work, which he selected out of many others because of its popularity in Germany, and also, no doubt, on account of the dramatic intensity of Mr. Wilde's interpretation of the Biblical story.

"It is not for me to criticise or to appreciate 'De Profundis' on which many competent writers have given their opinions, but I should have imagined that it was sufficiently clear that Mr. Oscar Wilde had not attempted to throw any blame for his misfortunes on any one but himself.

"The manuscript is written on blue prison foolscap. There are a few corrections. Although Mr. Wilde gave me very full instructions with regard to those portions which he wished published he allowed me absolute discretion in the matter, which he did about all his other manuscript and letters."

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MARCH 17, 1905.

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Glasgow Evening Times, Glasgow Evening
News

"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."—"De Profundis,"
by Oscar Wilde.

EVENING STANDARD

Evening Standard

AND ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

APRIL 24, 1905.

OSCAR WILDE'S WORKS.

Keen Demand By Collectors.

An inevitable result of the publication of "De Profundis" and the consequent re-awakening of interest in the author's personality, is the great demand for complete copies of Oscar Wilde's works. Second-hand booksellers have the field to themselves, as for various reasons, it appears that no publisher is likely to issue a reasonably-priced edition of Wilde's novels, poems, and plays.

Meanwhile it is instructive to note the sums demanded for first editions of the more important of his productions. Booksellers are charging five guineas for a copy of "Dorian Grey," while one guinea less is asked for "The Happy Prince and Other Stories." In 1878 Wilde carried off the Newdigate Prize at Oxford with a poem entitled "Ravenna," which was subsequently published at a shilling. A few copies are still in existence, but instead of a shilling they cost from five to eight guineas each.

There is also keen competition among collectors to secure magazines containing contributions by this author. Copies of "The Spirit Lamp" and "The Chameleon," monthly magazines issued during the early nineties, have increased in value from a shilling to three, and even, four guineas.

Oscar Wilde's plays are not so expensive. Messrs. French have published eighteenpenny editions of "The Importance of Being Earnest" and "Lady Windermere's Fan." There was an edition *de luxe* of the former issued in 1899 at a guinea which can now be obtained for about thirty shillings. His other plays, "An Ideal Husband" and "A Woman of No Importance," do not appear to have been published.

In France and Germany Oscar Wilde is looked upon as one of the masters of literature, and his works have a great sale, notably "Salome." So far this religious drama has not been seen in London, but next month two performances will be given by private subscription.

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APRIL 29, 1905.

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EVENING STANDARD
AND ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

Evening Standard

OSCAR WILDE'S WORKS.

"ILL-GOTTEN GAINS OF UNSCRU-
PULOUS PUBLISHERS."

3/6

Mr. Stuart Mason, M.A., writes to us from Oxford:—In your note on Oscar Wilde's works in your issue of the 24th inst. there are some inaccuracies which I shall be glad if you will allow me to correct. It is true that the first editions of many of Mr. Oscar Wilde's works are now very rare, and consequently fetch high prices, but in most of the instances referred to by your correspondent the prices are very much exaggerated. The successor of Messrs. Shrimpton (who published "Ravenna" in 1878) offered me an original copy a few weeks ago for 10s. 6d., though doubtless he will now raise his price. It is possible that booksellers may be asking five guineas for the large paper signed edition of "Dorian Gray," of which only 250 copies were issued, but the ordinary editions and various pirated reprints may be had for almost as many florins. I have an American edition which costs 25 cents. "The Happy Prince" is on sale at the original publishers for 2s. 6d., though the first edition (1888) may be worth 21s. Certainly nothing except one of the 75 copies on large paper can fetch anything like four guineas. "The Spirit Lamp," of which 13 issues appeared at 6d. and two at 1s., is certainly scarce, and a complete set is worth anything up to £5 5s., and "The Chameleon" as much. "An Ideal Husband" was published by Mr. Leonard Smithers in 1899 at 7s. 6d., and is now sold at about double this, though if on large paper it fetches considerably more. "A Woman of No Importance," which, according to your correspondent, does "not appear to have been published," was issued by Mr. John Lane in 1894. A facsimile reprint by a piratical publisher in Paris can be obtained for less than 21s., the published price, though original editions are worth more.

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Spurious Works.

"While on the subject may I enter a protest through your influential columns against certain statements made by one W. R. in an article entitled 'Notes for a Bibliography of Oscar Wilde,' which appears in the current issue of 'The Booklover's Magazine'? The compiler repeats the horrible libel that Mr. Wilde was the author of a story called 'The Priest and the Acolyte,' which was published in the first (and only) number of 'The Chameleon,' in December, 1894.

"When cross-examined by Sir Edward (then Mr.) Carson, during the libel action against Lord Queensberry, Mr. Wilde vehemently denied the authorship of this story. 'From the literary point of view, it was,' he said, 'highly improper. I thought the treatment rotten, and the subject rotten. It was worse than immoral; it was badly written. I have only read it once, and nothing will induce me to read it again. I think it violated every artistic canon of beauty. The story filled me with disgust.' Certain words he declared to be 'disgusting, perfect twaddle.' Yet now that the past is blotted out, and it seems probable that Mr. Wilde's name will again find a place in the literature of the nineteenth century, this old libel is revived in what is supposed to be a correct bibliography of his published writings. Of course, I am aware that this story has been reprinted with Mr. Wilde's name on the title-page, but surely a serious bibliographer should make sure of his ground before rushing into print. The author's real name is known to me, and indeed it was an open secret in Oxford ten years ago, but it would be scarcely fair to make it public now.

A Biographer's Mistake.

"The second statement which W. R. makes in his bibliography, and I take exception to, is that Mr. Wilde translated into English 'Ce qui ne meurt pas,' from the French of Barbey D'Aurevilly. The Paris publisher who issued this translation at a fabulous price, sedulously nursed the rumour which he himself floated, and Mr. R. H. Sherard was led, through being misinformed, to perpetuate the mistake in his 'Story of an Unhappy Friendship,' though he has since told me that he regretted it, and I am sure that if he had had any voice in the issuing of the new and cheaper edition of this work, which Messrs. Greening have recently brought out, he would not have allowed the passage to remain.

"W. R., in his attempted bibliography, shows little or no signs of original research, and his article contains nothing which has not appeared in other works, or which could not have been discovered by looking through the catalogues of various second-hand book-sellers. I may add that I am, in collaboration with another, preparing a full, accurate, and complete bibliography, including all Mr. Wilde's little-known contributions to magazines from 1876, and this will be published in book form, when ready, possibly together with a uniform edition of all Mr. Wilde's writings.

"It is a pity that Mr. Robert Ross, who has so admirably prefaced and edited Mr. Oscar Wilde's last prose work, 'De Profundis,' does not, as the author's literary executor, claim copyright over all Mr. Wilde's writings, and so put an end to the ill-gotten gains of unscrupulous publishers who are flooding this country with pirated reprints."

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MAY 6, 1905.

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Evening Standard

EVENING STANDARD AND
ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

Prices of Oscar Wilde's Works.

Sir,—Mr. Mason's letter in your paper on Saturday last reminded me that I had given me some little time ago a copy of a play called "The Last of the Trelawny's," in which, I was told, Oscar Wilde had a hand. On looking this up to-night, I find that, curiously enough, it was first acted "in a private drawing-room in Dublin on the 1st May, 1875"—exactly 20 years ago. The play was printed at Dublin by Charles Chambers, 36, Dame-street, 1875, "at the request of friends—for private circulation only," the authors being named as Eldred Pottinger and Amaury Bouchier. "Captain Eldred Pottinger (late Royal Horse Artillery)" and "W. C. R. Wilde, Esq." are amongst the cast. Whether Amaury Bouchier is a real personage, or merely a name to cover the collaboration of the house party, which included Oscar Wilde, I cannot say.

RANDALL DAVIES.

Sir,—I am obliged to Mr. Stuart Mason for correcting the mistake which in my book on Mr. Oscar Wilde attributes to him the authorship of a translation of Barbey d'Aurevilly's "Ce Qui Ne Meurt Pas."

At the time when I wrote the incriminated passage I had received from the person who afterwards published this translation a letter, in which he informed me that Mr. Wilde had done this work for him. It seemed strange to me that my friend should have thus employed his pen, even in the service of a master so impeccable as Barbey; but one has seen Pegasus in the plough ere this; and then, again, Fate has such ironies that here too the unlikely was so unlikely as to appear true.

It needed but the perusal of the opening sentences of the first page of this translation to convince me that I had been wilfully deceived. It was then, however, too late to correct the mistake in my book, for this had been published. However, I made haste to expose the fraud, and that in no measured language.

Mr. Mason has rendered me a further and signal service. His explanation why this mistake was not corrected by me in the present edition of my book should clear me of the odious charge of opportunism which has been too freely levelled against me in connection with this re-issue.

ROBERT SHERARD.

Vernon, France, May 2.

EVENING STANDARD AND

ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

Prices of Oscar Wilde's Works.

Sir,—Mr. Mason's letter in your paper on Saturday last reminded me that I had given me some little time ago a copy of a play called "The Last of the Trelawny's," in which, I was told, Oscar Wilde had a hand. On looking this up to-night, I find that, curiously enough, it was first acted "in a private drawing-room in Dublin on the 1st May, 1875"—exactly 20 years ago. The play was printed at Dublin by Charles Chambers, 36, Dame-street, 1875, "at the request of friends—for private circulation only," the authors being named as Eldred Pottinger and Amaury Bourchier. "Captain Eldred Pottinger (late Royal Horse Artillery)" and "W. C. R. Wilde, Esq." are amongst the cast. Whether Amaury Bourchier is a real personage, or merely a name to cover the collaboration of the house party, which included Oscar Wilde, I cannot say.

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ROBERT SHERARD.

NEW YORK HERALD

JULY 1, 1905

Is Oscar Wilde Living or Dead?

UNDER this caption a writer in the July Critic suggests a possibility that the great apostle of the Aesthetes is still in the flesh, either living as a recluse in a Spanish cloister, as one informant assured him, or resident at this very moment in the city of New York. For the latter version his authority is a clerk in a well known bookstore "whom I know to be a sincere and intelligent man."

Said this clerk:—"I know, for I saw him only two weeks ago right here in New York."

"On the street?"

"No, not on the street."

"Did you try to speak to him?"

"I did for ten minutes. And I have hardly ever heard a talker more brilliant."

But now, as if he had unintentionally betrayed himself, the clerk withdrew himself into his shell and refused all temptations to emerge from it.

Corroborative evidence is offered by the fact that some mysterious influence seems to be watching over the publication of Oscar Wilde's books and refusing to allow the re-issue of those which he himself had not cared to recognize in his riper years.

Furthermore, "De Profundis" was published in the Neue Rundschau of Berlin before it appeared in this country. The translator stated that the time for the publication of this extraordinary human document in English had not yet come.

"We see that those who had Mr. Wilde's interest at heart proceeded in their customary way. The German publication was a ballon d'essai. Would this not lead one to believe that if there was a deus behind all this machina, his secret purpose was to return to England, wreathed with Continental laurels?"

"It is also necessary to mention another point, perhaps trifling in itself, but surely a strong link in the chain of circumstantial evidence:—In the German translation of 'De Profundis' there is one sentence which I saw quoted in an article, 'Oscar Wilde als Buesser,' and which is, curiously enough, omitted in the English edition. I translate literally:—' . . . as a revenant, in the French phrase, as one whose face has become gray and distorted with pain [I return.] Terrible as are the dead when they rise from their graves, the living that come back from the grave are far more terrible. . . . Why is this sentence left out? There is nothing in it to shock even an Anglo-Saxon conscience. It is powerful; it is suggestive; it is beautiful, and can have been omitted purposely only for one reason—namely, that a personal application to its author could have been made."

It is urged that Wilde loved the unexpected and the sensational, and that it is quite in keeping with this trait to "carry to the last point of consistency the Christ-pose, blasphemously perhaps, which he adopted in his last book, 'De Profundis,' and from his tomb to roll the stone and rise from the dead?"

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Westminster Gazette.

JULY 25 , 1905

"DE PROFUNDIS" IN FRENCH.

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Sheffield Daily Telegraph,

JULY 26 , 1905

Sheffield
Daily Telegraph

THEOLOGICAL.

"The Hibbert Journal," July, 1905. (2s. 6d. net.)
(London: Williams and Norgate.)

The new number of this quarterly is as good as ever, and in its "Bibliography of Recent Literature," and other special features, it is not to be surpassed. A series of articles on "Impressions of Christianity from the Points of View of the non-Christian Religions" is opened by Mr. C. G. Montefiore, who treats, with sympathetic reticence, of "The Synoptic Gospels and the Jewish Consciousness." Other articles are no less admirable, though we differ from Dr. Hugh Walker, of St. David's College, Lampeter, in what seems to us a perverse estimate of "Oscar Wilde: The Closing Phase." He sees "the birth of a soul" where we can see but a new pose rather than a new birth. We must leave him to the Dean of Westminster, whose protest against "De Profundis" has not yet received an answer.

But the article which will be read by everybody is that by Torkild Skat Rørdam, C.T., of the University of Copenhagen, which attempts an answer to the question, "What was the lost end of Mark's Gospel?" It is the best critical article on a New Testament subject that we have met with for some years; and, whatever may be the worth of the conclusions indicated—and, in the main, we think they will win acceptance—the methodical co-ordination of the data is beyond praise, and can hardly be improved upon. Were it only for this article the July number of the Journal would be memorable, and it serves to show that the faith of Christians need in no wise be imperilled by free discussion.

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OXFORD CHRONICLE.

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Pall Mall Gazette,

July 26

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ACADEMY

JULY 29, 1905.

The "entente" has caused the French journalists to write more than of old about English literature; but it has not yet caused them to write about it with absolute accuracy. We have just been glancing at an annotated introduction to a French translation of "*De profundis*," and have been startled by the havoc played with the proper names. Who is "Sir Jones"? Apparently Mr. Henry Arthur Jones is meant. Who are the following: Ridder Haggard, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Ralph Walter Emerson, Boswel, Sir Irving, Vilde? What has Sir Lewis Morris done that he should forfeit his title, and figure as Louis Morris?

Intentions

So much for the spelling. Some of the "explanations" in the footnotes are even more remarkable. The description of Mr. Henry James as "the Bourget of the other side of the channel" may pass; but what are we to think of the description of Mr. Hall Caine as "the English Pierre Decourcelle"? The author of "The Eternal City" is perhaps being confounded with his colleague, Mr. George R. Sims. And what will the editor of the *Saturday Review* think of the description of his organ as "the English equivalent of the *Revue des deux Mondes*"? Nor is it only the living who are misrepresented. The illustrious dead also suffer. We are informed that Turner died in 1801, that Shelley was the author of "Endymion," that Max Müller, "after travels and excavations wrote 'Troy and its Remains,'" that "Literature and Dogma" was the work of "Thomas Arnold, a religious and philosophic writer of very early date," and that Colenso "wrote a Pentateuch which was condemned by a Synod." After this it appears a trifle to read of Mr. Smithers, the publisher, under the name of Smyders, and to be told that the word "shibboleth" is "a term of the masonic lodges." We had hoped better things than this from the "entente," but we shall go on hoping.

AUGUST 19, 1905.

It is pleasant to be able to correct a slip before any watchful reader points it out. In our issue of July 29 we noted a number of mistakes in the spelling and signification of certain English proper names, stating that the errors were made in the introduction to a French translation to of "*De Profundis*." We hasten now to say that the work was not "*De Profundis*," but "*Intentions*," and that the actual French translator of "*De Profundis*" is far too good an English scholar to make any such errors.

But our little slip is not likely to rouse such feeling as the statement in a French contemporary that M. Sienkiewicz's new novel, "*Chevaliers teutoniques*," has been translated into French "*from the Russian*." And that when M. Sienkiewicz has been newly confined to his house by an order of the Governor-General of Warsaw for signing and publishing in the Russian papers a protest against the Russification of Polish schools! The author of "*Quo Vadis*" is, of course, a Pole, and writes only Polish.

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