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Oscar Wilde  
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Vol. 8



## REVIEWS.

**The Duchess of Padua.** By Oscar Wilde. (Methuen and Co. 12s. 6d. net.)

Except to the complete collector of Oscar Wilde's work, the sumptuous volume under consideration offers few points of interest.

It is a specimen of Wilde's earliest work, being written in the early eighties, and belongs to his most imitative period. All that he wrote at this time, whether in verse or in prose, reminds one of the characteristic remark concerning Mrs. Cheveley in "The Ideal Husband." It "shows the influence of too many schools." The intrinsic merits of "The Duchess of Padua" are not remarkable. Presenting as it does a stirring dramatic tale in the framework of the Jacobean drama, we feel that the outcome should have been a vital and interesting piece of work. How is it, then, that the play possesses so little grip?

No doubt it is a dangerous thing for a writer to experiment with dramatic styles of a bygone age, but there are writers, such as Mr. Swinburne, who have so imbued themselves with the spirit of the Jacobean age as to impart a vigour and vitality to their experiments. Oscar Wilde had the true artist's affection for

the rich pageantry of words, but he cared too little for the concrete humanity which underlay the splendid rhetoric of Shakespeare and his immediate successors.

Mr. Robert Sherard, in his "Life of Wilde," has told us that Oscar Wilde was "agreeably taken with the sound of the words :

'Am I not Duchess here in Padua?'

from his play, and he often quoted them."

Had he paid more attention to the psychology of his personages and less attention to the sound of the lines, it would have been better for the play. As it is, the play at its best is like a clever imitation of that multi-coloured, flat-surfaced world which painters in an age which knew nothing of perspective brought into pictures. Certainly it is not Jacobean.

One has only to turn to Webster and Massinger, let alone Shakespeare, to realise how superficial a thing is this experiment in verse-drama. Oscar Wilde might have made of this stirring tale of love and vengeance—one of those violent and essentially southern tragedies which appealed so strongly to Wilde's sense of the theatre—a really dramatic drama. All that he has given us is a wordy play which never pierces beyond externals and is even at crucial moments theatrical rather than dramatic.

It is fortunate that never again did he return to this form of drama. His next experiment, some ten years later, "Lady Windermere's Fan," was a revelation of the true genius of the man. By the student, however, who is interested in the development of Wilde's powers as a writer, the present work should not be neglected. Its very faults are characteristic of the man: its audacious borrowing of Shakespearean phrases—its clever imitation of the Jacobean mannerisms—its predilection for violent colouring. He was ever a borrower, ever an imitator, though this was not due, as some have alleged, to poverty of thought and invention, but to sheer indolence. He collected fine phrases, melodious words, as some men collect rare butterflies, others curious antiques. And we who can remember the extraordinary power of his "Dorian Gray"; the fine wisdom of his "Intentions"; the fresh and delightful wit of "The Importance of Being Earnest"; the intellectual clarity of his "Soul of Man under Socialism"; realise fully how well he could have dispensed with these imitative affectations.

But they are part and parcel of the man's temperament, and as such must be recognised. Here, as in his first work, they abound, only unfortunately there are few of his merits to counterbalance them. But now and again there are touches of pleasant poetry, and happy fancies, which lift the play into a higher sphere of wit. Here, for instance (Act II), where the Duchess says to her lover Guido:—

"You are my lord,  
And what I have is yours, and what I have not  
Your fancy lends me, like a prodigal  
Spending its wealth, on what is nothing worth."

Or here, where Guido, steeling himself against his passion, declares he will take his kisses back:—

*Duchess:* Alas, you cannot, Guido,  
For they are part of Nature now; the air  
Is tremulous with their music, and outside  
The little birds sing sweeter for those vows.

Imitative, no doubt, but in this and various other passages—more particularly at the tragic close of the play—there is quite an agreeable Jacobean flavour about many of the lines. It is a pity that so often a speech is spoilt by the intrusion of some commonplace line or palpably borrowed conceit. It is only fair to add that in some of the more flagrant cases the lines have been bracketed by the author, and although, as Mr. Robert Ross, the editor, remarks in a short prefatory note, "there is no evidence to show" whether the passages "were omitted for stage representation or were intended to be omitted by the author altogether," one may reasonably infer that the latter was the more probable.

It is a pity that Oscar Wilde did not treat this Italian story as Browning treated his Florentine

tragedy in "The Ring and the Book," or as Rossetti treated his Lombardian tale, "A Last Confession." In these cases each poet expressed the drama in the form best suited to his own peculiar genius. Rossetti, perhaps, owed something to Browning's vivid, graphic manner of telling a story; but "A Last Confession" is full of distinctive Rossetti touches. But the wilfulness, the capriciousness which marked the development of Wilde's literary career lead him in many futile experiments. And such works as "The Duchess of Padua" afford further material for those who are always scoffing at this erratic genius for his insincerity and superficiality. At his best, we do not think he was

either insincere or superficial. He was a superb humorist as well as an artist; and there are always people who mistake a truth wittily expressed for a superficiality. Truth for them must always wear a surplice and stole—or it is a masquerader. Even in "De Profundis" the humorist peeps out at times, and this it is which has disturbed many readers and made them doubt the writer's sincerity. To us the sincerity seems indubitable. Moreover, no man who was merely the clever poser, as Wilde has ever seemed to the average dramatic critic, would have written "The Soul of Man under Socialism."

Oscar Wilde's best work, however, needs no defence in the pages of THE NEW AGE. It is a pity the "Duchess of Padua" gives so slender a promise of what he could achieve.



# Daily Chronicle

## WIT AND DALLIANCE.

THE WORKS OF OSCAR WILDE, complete in 13 volumes. London, Methuen, 12s. 6d. net each.

By Edward Thomas.

April 13. 1908  
This uniform edition of the prose and verse of Oscar Wilde is attractive in many ways. It is well printed on good paper; it is edited by Mr. Robert Ross; and it is altogether suited to the work it enshrines, though we miss the illustrations to "A House of Pomegranates." One of the volumes, already reviewed here, contains "The Duchess of Padua," practically a new work by Wilde. Another contains "De Profundis," with not only a score of pages omitted from the other English editions, but four letters from Wilde in Reading prison to Mr. Ross, and the two memorable letters on prison life printed in "The Daily Chronicle" in 1897 and 1898. In the further ten volumes before us the work is of an extraordinary variety. There are poems and prose poems; the four modern plays in prose, full of plot, epigram, and stagecraft, than which no one has written anything better fitted to make a perfect theatrical entertainer—altogether a catalogue of opulent or witty writings.

### The Versatile Man.

No writer of such reputation has in recent times equalled Wilde's versatility. But to connect one class of work with another there is little except the epigrams which he was so fond of repeating from book to book, instead of leaving them all in "Dorian Gray." It can hardly be said that they contain a body of ideas, a philosophy gradually completing itself. The books have the appearance of being too deliberate—done to satisfy a belief that he could do this or that exceedingly well. That is not how they came to be written: to think so would be to accuse the writer of affectation, and who dares to bring that charge against any man who is not an imbecile? That they all sprang from the heart and brain of this man there is no doubt, and there is no more difficult or fascinating character study still left untouched than Wilde's. But it can, with fairness be said that his works are works of fancy—fancy which has no divine call, but is free to choose between several paths—not of imagination, which is for ever engaged in continuing the work of the creation; works of wit, not of humour, certainly not of the comic spirit. His writings are clothes that reveal the man only in the dubious manner possible in an age when it is scarcely possible to be well dressed, but only to be usually or unusually dressed. "Sleep, like all wholesome things, is a habit": so he wrote when discussing the prison life after he had shared it. Before that, he might have said a hundred things about habit, but this one was impossible.

### Decorator—Not Creator.

He decorated. He never created but one thing in his life, "Salome," and that was in French, perhaps by way of tribute to Flaubert and M. Maeterlinck. "The Critic as Artist" is equal to almost anything that has been written about criticism by anyone since Coleridge; but then the writer's decorative instinct has actually made a sea of words to hide the pearls. Except "Salome" and "The Critic as Artist," his writings raise him, indeed, to the position of the greatest rhetorician since De Quincey. But it was a sad fate for one who thought so much of art and the artist that he should have been a signal example of the man who describes beautiful things, talks about beautiful things, as if that were the same as creating them. He used beautiful words about beautiful objects, and thought it art. It was a fitting punishment of one who could address Beauty as if she were a light woman:

There are a few

Who for thy sake would give their manlihood  
And consecrate their being: I at least  
Have done so, made thy lips my daily food,  
And in thy temples found a goodlier feast  
Than this starved age can give me, spite of all  
Its new-found creeds so sceptical and so  
dogmatical.

But with these limitations, how admirable he is; what exquisite patterns are his prose plays; how heavy and gorgeous and costly is "Dorian Gray," "The House of Pomegranates," and even the poems with all their wordiness, and their echoes of Arnold and Keats; what grace and abundance everywhere, what wit and dalliance! His writing can be like a dress wholly of jewels and fine gold, every part of it equally rich, but weighing the wearer to the ground and crushing her. Or it can be swift, sharp, and hard, logic and paradox, clad in complete steel. In either case it is on parade. It calls attention to itself. The words have a separate value from the things which they are meant to express. On paper, he seems often not affected, but incapable of sincerity. Thus, literature is made a craft rather than an art, related to wallpaper and carpets more than to life. It is a literature of the idle classes, for the idle, by the idle. Life flows past it, while it languidly watches the waves; only now and then there is a cry, and a watcher has fallen in and gone down; and still life flows past, regardless of the voice repeating "Experience, the name we give to our mistakes," or "I am dying beyond my means," or "Merely to look at the world will always be lovely."



April 24

1908

## \* THE WORKS OF OSCAR WILDE.

By the issue of this sumptuous edition the publishers and Mr. Robert Ross, Wilde's literary administrator and executor, have done much to redeem from undeserved neglect writings that deserve to live. Some of them probably will live as long as English literature is read and appreciated by a cultured world. These eleven volumes, out of an edition of fourteen to be completed later, comprise substantially the works of the author, except "Dorian Gray" and some miscellanies. His plays, poems, tales and shorter pieces in prose, the "De Profundis," and the much-discussed "Salomé" are included in what is a really representative collection of the writings of one of the most extraordinary men of letters who have wielded our tongue with consummate mastery and enriched our national store of wit, wisdom, and humour by their contributions thereto.

The remark of somebody (was it Byron?) that Scott's works were a library in themselves might, with some modification, be applied to those of Oscar Wilde. One meets with a bewildering profusion of intellectual output, some of it entitled to rank with the finest of its kind, all of it claiming, and making good its claim unmistakably, to the consideration due to a man who possessed the supreme gift of genius. It is difficult and perhaps unnecessary to attempt a discriminative estimate of Wilde's powers, to say in what direction lay his chief strength. The truth is he manifested abnormal mentality in several directions. The brilliant dialogue of his plays yet flings out a contemptuous challenge to the humdrum commonplaces of the majority of living playwrights. Both in these and in his prose pieces his attainment of the incomparable virtue of style seems absolute, perhaps because style is so rare a thing in the slipslop compositions that burden the shelves of today. Here, indeed, Wilde seems unassailable. He trims and polishes his periods with the perfection of the art which conceals art until they stand out flawless, and yet to all appearance natural and inevitable. Among moderns he deserves place with the greatest masters of style for his opulence of phrase chastened by fine economy. He uses words like the old painters used their colours; he has all tints on his palette, and chooses the right one with an unerring sense of harmony.

Perhaps it is as a poet that Wilde strikes his most widely-recurrent note. One feels that a poet is at work behind the prose pieces almost as much as when reading those cast in strictly metrical form. This power of poetic vision is set forth beyond possibility of mistake in the amazing "De Profundis," where his analysis of the Christly character is depicted in a few strokes such as could never have come from any pen but one inspired by the divining power of lofty imagination. The following passage may serve as a keynote:—

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. His miracles seem to me to be as exquisite as the coming of spring, and quite as natural. I see no difficulty at all in believing that such was the charm of his personality that his mere presence could bring peace to souls in anguish, and that those who touched his garments or his hands forgot their pain; or that as he passed by on the highway of life people who had seen nothing of life's mystery saw it clearly, and others who had been deaf to every voice but that of pleasure heard for the first time the voice of love and found it as "musical as Apollo's lute"; or that evil passions fled at his approach, and men whose dull unimaginative lives had been but a mode of death rose as it were from the grave when he called them; or that when he taught on the hillside the multitude forgot their hunger and thirst and the cares of this world, and that to his friends who sat and listened to him as he sat at meat the coarse food seemed delicate, and the water had the taste of good wine, and the whole house became full of the odour and sweetness of nard.

Nobody but a poet could have written that, and where is the pulpit who can sermonise half as well? Yet this is Wilde the outcast, who fell, and wrote these words after his fall.

Merely noting that this edition of "De Profundis" contains a good deal more matter than the original issue, let us turn to his purely metrical compositions. These are of varying merit, as could only be expected in works ranging from a Newdigate Prize poem to such a manifestation of power and beauty as "The Sphinx" or to a revelation of pathos and tragedy like "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." But between these there are some that touch notes that we are unaccustomed to associate with the usual bent of Wilde's extraordinary faculties. We catch echoes among them of the poets of an earlier day. Sometimes it is Keats who seems to be speaking. Presently there is a roll almost Miltonic, and again the philosophic restraint of Wordsworth comes suggestively to the front. Yet it is not these that surprise one. Few, probably, think of Wilde as one who, had the Fates spun differently the warp and weft of his life, might have become a noble and impassioned singer of Empire. Take a few stanzas from his "Ave Imperatrix," evidently inspired by some of our disastrous Asiatic campaigns:—

For southern wind and east wind meet  
Where, girt and crowned by sword and fire,  
England with bare and bloody feet  
Climbs the steep road of wide empire.

O lonely Himalayan height,  
Gray pillar of the Indian sky,  
Where saw'st thou last in clanging fight  
Our winged dogs of Victory?

For not in quiet English fields  
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,  
Where we might deck their broken shields  
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,  
And many in the Afghan land,  
And many where the Ganges falls  
Through seven mouths of shifting sand.

O wandering graves! O restless sleep!  
O silence of the sunless day!  
O still ravine! O stormy deep!  
Give up your prey! Give up your prey!

Where are the brave, the strong, the fleet?  
Where is our English chivalry?  
Wild grasses are their burial-sheet,  
And sobbing waves their threnody.

For an artistic study in the value of uncommon words "The Sphinx" must surely be unrivalled. Poe with his "Raven" is completely effaced. But over all there is the irrepressible glamour of the poetry of situation, the unfailing eye for scene, and the no less unfailing grasp of dramatic contrast in the light of history. There is no room for quotation from a poem that is a masterpiece of objective description, exalted by the subjective faculty that sees through and beyond the bars imposed by mere sensible limitations. In the "Ballad" the sense of awful tragedy that pervades and overhangs like a lurid pall is apt to blind the reader to Wilde's exquisite perception of phrase colour, in which he is at least the equal of Coleridge. Much of the poem, indeed, recalls the "Ancient Mariner" alike in word-painting and apprehension of the supernatural. But it has the great advantage of not being open to the criticism once passed upon Coleridge's poem—that it lacked a core of commonsense. All is lucid in the "Ballad," perhaps because it was written upon a subject of fact instead of upon one of phantasy. With all Coleridge's power of delineating the abnormal, however, he wanders perilously near the ludicrous occasionally. By way of comparison take this stanza from the "Ballad":

It is sweet to dance to violins  
When Love and Life are fair:  
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes,  
Is delicate and rare:

*But it is not sweet with nimble feet  
To dance upon the air!*

There is a power of climax and contrast, a grip of the unexpected in the last two lines, that convey an impression of terror for which we may look in vain among modern English poets, not excepting even Mr. Swinburne. The dramatic sense of the poet stood him in good stead here. No one but a dramatist would have brought out the horror of the situation with equal directness. In the simplicity of the means employed we are taken back to some of the finest of the Elizabethans.

One would have liked to say something of "Salomé," that drama steeped in Oriental passion. Why the author chose to write it in French is not quite apparent, unless he thought it a dish too highly flavoured for the average English palate. Nevertheless, it is essentially English in cast of expression, though it wears a French dress, and it is vividly characteristic of Wilde in his intenser mood.

\* The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde. Eleven volumes. (Methuen.)



Although the recent issue of the complete works of Oscar Wilde has naturally cut down the prices of pirated copies, the original first editions do not seem to have been affected in any marked degree. The highest price any one of them has touched was obtained in January for "Rose Leaf and Apple Blossom," by Sir J. Rennell Rodd, with Wilde's introduction "Envoi," inscribed "Compliments of J. M. Stoddart, Dec., 1882" (*Philadelphia*, J. M. Stoddart & Co., 1882), which went for £9 5s.; but this was a very inflated price. The first editions of the plays run generally from £1 1s. to £3 10s. (with the exception of "Salome," which may fetch anything up to £10), autographed copies, of course, fetching the most. The autographed first edition "Dorian Grey" sold for £3 18s. in March last.

[This paragraph is compiled, by kind permission of Messrs. Elliott Stock, from "Book Prices Current: A Bi-Monthly Record of the Prices at which Books have been sold at Auction".]

## Literary World May 1908

Oscar Wilde. By L. C. Ingleby. We have had more than one life of Oscar Wilde in the past few years, and we cannot agree with the author of this, the latest biography, that a new one was called for. If it had been, however, it would certainly be a work of a very different type from that under review; Mr. Ingleby's biography consists very largely of contemporary criticisms, newspaper notices and excerpts from the works of Wilde himself. When the voice of the writer does make itself heard, moreover, it is concerned with mere adulation and comparison that has no merit as criticism. As an instance we may quote the following passage: "To compare the blatant nonsense that Mr. Bernard Shaw foists on a credulous public with the coruscating *bon mots* of his dead compatriot, as seems to be the fashion nowadays, is to show a pitiful lack of intelligence and discernment; as well compare gooseberry wine to champagne, the fountains in Trafalgar-square to Magara." It would seem that Mr. Ingleby is one of those people who must be reminded occasionally of the fact that 'abuse is not argument.' (Laurie. 12s. 6d. net.)

### No Irrevocable Past.

I must not be afraid of the past; if people tell me that it is irrevocable I shall not believe them; the past, the present, and the future are one moment in the sight of God, in whose sight we should try to live. Time and space, succession and extension, are merely accidental conditions of thought; the imagination can transcend them and move in a free sphere of ideal existences. Things also are in their essence of what we choose to make them; a thing is according to the mode in which we look at it. 'Where others,' says Blake, 'see but the dawn coming over the hill, I see the sons of God shouting for joy.' . . .

What lies before me is my past. I have got to make myself look on that with different eyes, to make God look on it with different eyes. This I cannot do by ignoring it, or slighting it, or praising it, or denying it; it is only to be done by accepting it as an inevitable part of the evolution of my life and character: by bowing my head to everything I have suffered.

'De Profundis,' by Oscar Wilde. New Edition. (Methuen).

In view of the acuteness of political feeling at present, the contents of the "Fortnightly Review" will be appreciated as topical and suggestive. "The New Liberal Policy" is discussed with sympathy and discrimination by a contributor who obscures his identity under the nom-de-plume of "The Vicar of Bray." The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers writes with temperate reasoning on "The Education Compromise," and in connection with the same subject, the Rev. W. G. Edwards Rees propounds his views vigorously on "The Folly of the Secular Solution." Mr. Sydney Brooks' signature is attached to an authoritative and comprehensive survey of the Republican forces for this year's Presidential contest in the United States. A number of literary and miscellaneous articles are included, one on "The collected plays of Oscar Wilde," by Mr. St. John Hankin, and another on "Italian Realism and Art," by Mr. M. A. R. Tucker, being particularly interesting contributions.

Star May 2, 1908

## BOOKS AND BOOKMEN.

### "The Duchess of Padua"—Tennyson's Notes—"The Statue."

Very welcome is the complete edition of the works of Oscar Wilde which Mr. Robert Ross is editing for Messrs. Methuen. The first six volumes contain the plays, and the first contains "The Duchess of Padua." It is printed in large type on hand-made paper, with large, cool margins that delight the eye. Mr. Ross tells us that the original manuscript of the play was stolen, with other unpublished works, from the author's house in April, 1895. In a dedication Mr. Ross says that Wilde himself regarded "The Duchess of Padua" as being unworthy of him. The play is interesting, because it is by the man who wrote "The Importance of Being Earnest." Wilde wrote it in his green, unknowing youth, when he was cutting his literary teeth and catching Shakespearean measles and Elizabethan whooping-cough. The poetry in the play is sham poetry, and the blank verse is sham blank verse. Wilde mimics all the Elizabethan conventions and he mimics them very cleverly, so cleverly that one begins to wonder whether the whole Elizabethan drama is not an elaborate humbug. No doubt Wilde intended "The Duchess of Padua" to be a serious and solemn essay in the Elizabethan manner, but it reads like an ironic parody. It is a good, sound literary maxim that it is only bad work which can be parodied. The ease with which Wilde unconsciously parodies the Elizabethan tragedy suggests that our reverence for it is uncritical. It is significant that Mr. Swinburne, who belongs to the straitest sect of Elizabethans, has in his last play discarded the Elizabethan rhetoric in favor of bare, hard brevity. The truth is that literary tricks are out of place in the theatre. If all the literary trickery were cut out of the Elizabethan plays what life would be left in them? We are all taught to pretend to like dead literary jargon, and we all do our best to keep up the pretence. But when we read modern imitations of it we are assailed by a horrible suspicion that the whole thing is pure artifice without any vitality in it, except the vitality which provides sustenance for the learned moth and the literary worm.

## AMATEUR PERFORMANCE.

### "THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

Yesterday afternoon, in the Palace Theatre, Oscar Wilde's clever and ingenious comedy, "The Importance of being Earnest," was presented by amateurs. The performance was patronised by a large and fashionable audience, and the ladies and gentlemen who appeared in the cast gained ready approval. Warm applause was heard at frequent intervals, and at the close of the last act the performers were called before the curtain and enthusiastically greeted. Those who have seen this play produced in Cork some years ago by a professional company will remember that it is a typical example of its author's later style, the dialogue being always clever and frequently brilliant, especially in the passages of paradox. It was given yesterday with much success. From the rising to the falling of the curtain there was not a single hitch, which proved with what pains and care the production had been rehearsed and staged. The performance will be repeated this afternoon, and as it is in aid of that excellent organisation, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Help Society, it is to be hoped that the kind and public-spirited amateurs will play to a crowded house. The cast was as under:—

Mr. John Worthing.....	Mr. K. I. Nicholl.
Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.....	Mr. Pascoe Stuart.
Canon Chasuble.....	Mr. H. V. Jackson.
Lane.....	Mr. E. L. E. Paine.
Merriman.....	Mr. O. Lewis.
Lady Bracknell.....	Mrs. L. W. Parsons.
Hon. Gwendoline Fairfax.....	
Miss Cecily Cardew.....	Mrs. Leigh-White.
Miss Prism.....	Mrs. E. S. Brook.

Act I.  
Mr. Moncrieff's rooms in London.  
Act II (next day).  
Garden at Mr. Worthing's country house.  
Act III (same day).  
Drawing-room in Mr. Worthing's country house.

In the role of Worthing, Mr. Nicholl depicted himself with incisive forcefulness, and his love-making was natural. As the Gwendoline Fairfax, Mrs. Leigh-White contributed an entirely charming conception of the part, speaking her lines with perfect fluency and with a perfect command of the language.

PREVENTS CHAPPED HANDS.  
CREMOLIA  
28 PATRICK ST.  
Brooke Hughes.  
INDIVIDUAL-DISTINCTIVE  
ENGRAVING  
IN SEPIA MEZZOTINT

MEMENTO.—Le numero de mai de The Fortnightly Review contient des études de Mr St John Hankin sur les Collected Plays of Oscar Wilde

## THE BRITISH DRAMA

### Italian Survey of the Contemporary Stage in England.

Mario Borsa, an Italian, has written a study of the contemporary British drama, entitled "The English Stage of To-day" (John Lane Company, New York) which has been translated and edited by Selwyn Brinton. Dr. Borsa begins by contrasting the commercial prosperity of the theatrical industry in London with the backward condition of theatrical art and the lack of a good prose drama. He makes

a general survey of the dramatists now or recently writing, including Henry Arthur Jones, Arthur Wing Pinero, Alfred Sutro, J. M. Barrie, W. S. Gilbert and Oscar Wilde. He makes many pertinent observations on the drama of "the great British public."

## Reynolds' May 3, 1908

A most interesting French season commences at the Shaftesbury on Tuesday, when Madame Suzanne Despres, an emotional actress of quite exceptional calibre, will appear in "La Rafale," a play which has been seen here in both French and English. Madame Despres is the wife of M. Lugne Poe, director of the celebrated Theatre d'Œuvre in Paris, who has introduced Maeterlinck, Oscar Wilde, Ibsen, and other foreign writers to the Parisian public. Although naturally Madame Despres has been latterly associated with her husband's theatre, she has been seen at the Comedie Francaise, the Gymnase, and the Odeon. An interesting selection of plays is promised during her stay, which, as I noted last week, is under the direction of Miss Andrews, whose business representative on this side is Mr. B. A. Meyer.

## DAILY TELEGRAPH, May 4

Some perplexities of the Radical party are illustrated in a paper on the New Liberal Policy in the "Fortnightly" for May, the conclusion arrived at being that Peckham and Manchester have taught moderation to his Majesty's Government and strengthened Mr. Asquith's dislike to entrusting himself to the guidance of the extremists. The anonymous writer suggests Mr. Churchill's defeat in Manchester may be a blessing in disguise.

The possibilities of the next Presidential election in America, some criticism of Oscar Wilde's collected plays, and a sketch of the past Rugby football season are amongst other good papers in a magazine of many interests.

## Ladies' Field, May 9

which theatre Madame Despres has been associated for several years, playing all the principal rôles in classic and modern work. The Théâtre de L'Œuvre has presented some of the most interesting work of modern times. M. Lugné Poe was the first to introduce Maeterlinck, the "Belgian Shakespeare," to the Parisian public, and has exploited plays by Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, Tristan Bernard, etc., in all of which plays he has been assisted by his wife, who has, of course, played the leading parts. The Théâtre de L'Œuvre has a world-wide reputation.

## Free Lance, May 6

### Ibsen and Oscar Wilde.

The Theatre de L'Œuvre has presented some of the most interesting works of modern times, and in this connection it is interesting to note that M. Lugné Poe was the first to introduce "Maeterlinck" to the Parisian public, and has further exploited in the French capital the plays of Ibsen and Oscar Wilde, in all of which he has been associated with his wife, Mme. Despres, who has, of course, appeared in the leading rôles.



In view of the acuteness of political feeling at present, the contents of the "Fortnightly Review" will be appreciated as topical and suggestive. "The New Liberal Policy" is discussed with sympathy and discrimination by a contributor who obscures his identity under the nom-de-plume of "The Vicar of Bray." The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers writes with imperate reasoning on "The Education Commis- sion," and in connection with the same subject, the Rev. W. G. Edwards Rees propounds his views vigorously on "The Folly of the Secular Solution." Mr. Sydney Brooks' signature is attached to an authoritative and comprehensive survey of the Re- publican forces for this year's Presidential contest in the United States. A number of literary and miscellaneous articles are included, one on "The lected plays of Oscar Wilde," by Mr. St. John unkin, and another on "Italian Realism and Art," by Mr. M. A. R. Tucker, being particularly interest- ing contributions.

Star May 2. 1908

## BOOKS AND BOOKMEN.

### "The Duchess of Padua"—Tennyson's Notes—"The Statue."

Very welcome is the complete edition of the works of Oscar Wilde which Mr. Robert Ross is editing for Messrs. Methuen. The first six volumes contain the plays, and the first contains "The Duchess of Padua." It is printed in large type on hand-made paper, with large, cool margins that delight the eye. Mr. Ross tells us that the original manu- script of the play was stolen, with other unpublished works, from the author's house in April, 1895. In a dedication Mr. Ross says that Wilde himself re- garded "The Duchess of Padua" as being unworthy of him. The play is interest- ing, because it is by the man who wrote "The Importance of Being Earnest." Wilde wrote it in his green, unknowing youth, when he was cutting his literary teeth and catching Shake- spearean measles and Elizabethan whoop- ing-cough. The poetry in the play is, sham poetry, and the blank verse is sham blank verse. Wilde mimics all the Elizabethan conventions and he mimics them very cleverly, so cleverly that one begins to wonder whether the whole Elizabethan drama is not an elaborate humbug. No doubt Wilde intended "The Duchess of Padua" to be a serious and solemn essay in the Elizabethan manner, but it reads like an ironic parody. It is a good, sound literary maxim that it is only bad work which can be parodied. The ease with which Wilde unconsciously parodies the Eliza- bethan tragedy suggests that our rever- ence for it is uncritical. It is significant that Mr. Swinburne, who belongs to the strictest sect of Elizabethans, has in his last play discarded the Elizabethan rhetoric in favor of bare, hard brevity. The truth is that literary tricks are out of place in the theatre. If all the literary trickery were cut out of the Elizabethan plays what life would be left in them? We are all taught to pretend to like dead literary jargon, and we all do our best to keep up the pretence. But when we read modern imitations of it we are as- sailed by a horrible suspicion that the whole thing is pure artifice without any vitality in it, except the vitality which provides sustenance for the learned moth and the literary worm.

## AMATEUR PERFORMANCE.

### "THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

Yesterday afternoon, in the Palace Theatre, Oscar Wilde's clever and ingenious comedy, "The Importance of being Earnest," was presented by amateurs. The perform- ance was patronised by a large and fashion- able audience, and the ladies and gentlemen who appeared in the cast gained ready ap- proval. Warm applause was heard at fre- quent intervals, and at the close of the last act the performers were called before the curtain and enthusiastically greeted. Those who have seen this play produced in Cork some years ago by a professional company will remember that it is a typical example of its author's later style, the dialogue being always clever and frequently brilliant, especially in the passages of paradox. It was given yesterday with much success. From the rising to the falling of the curtain there was not a single hitch, which proved with what pains and care the production had been rehearsed and staged. The per- formance will be repeated this afternoon, and as it is in aid of that excellent organisa- tion, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Help Society, it is to be hoped that the kind and public- spirited amateurs will play to a crowded house. The cast was as under:—

Mr. John Worthing.....	Mr. K. I. Nicholl.
Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.....	Mr. Pascoe Stuart.
Canon Chasuble.....	Mr. H. V. Jackson.
Lane.....	Mr. E. L. E. Paine
Merriman.....	Mr. O. Lewis
Lady Bracknell.....	Mrs. L. W. Parsons.
Hon. Gwendoline Fairfax.....	

Miss Cecily Cardew.....	Mrs. Leigh-White
Miss Prism.....	Mrs. E. S. Brook

Act I.  
Mr. Moncrieff's rooms in London.  
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In the role of Worthing, Mr Nicholl de- ported himself with incisive forcefulness, and his love-making was natural. As the Gwendoline Fairfax, Mrs Leigh-White con- tributed an entirely charming conception of the part, speaking her lines with judgment and effect. The delightful contrast in characterisation between the warm-hearted and impulsive Gwendoline, and her mother, Lady Bracknell, the austere and worldly leader of society, was fully emphasised by Mrs Parsons, whose dramatic powers won due appreciation. The character of Al- gernon Moncrieff in the hands of Mr Pascoe Stuart was adequately presented, and Miss Parsons, as Cecily Cardew, achieved distinction by her fresh and dainty style. The Canon of Mr Jackson was an interesting study, while Mrs Brook as Miss Prism (the governess), Mr Paine as Lane; Mr Mon- crieff's servant, Mr Lewis as Merriman, Mr Worthing's servant were all that could be desired. The staging of the comedy was admirable. The old-fashioned garden at Mr Worthing's country house in which the second act takes place in an atmos- phere laden with the perfume of roses was picturesque and striking. Brigadier-Gen- eral Johnson filled the position of acting manager, and to him in a large measure is due the smoothness of the performance. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers' string band sup- plied incidental music as follows:—

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## THE BRITISH DRAMA

### Italian Survey of the Contemporary Stage in England.

Mario Borsa, an Italian, has written a study of the contemporary British drama, entitled "The English Stage of To-day" (John Lane Company, New York) which has been translated and edited by Selwyn Brinton. Dr. Borsa begins by contrasting the commercial prosperity of the theatri- cal industry in London with the back- ward condition of theatrical art and the lack of a good prose drama. He makes

a general survey of the dramatists now or recently writing, including Henry Ar- thur Jones, Arthur Wing Pinero, Alfred Sutro, J. M. Barre, W. S. Gilbert and Oscar Wilde. He makes many pertinent observations on the drama of "the great British public."

## Reynolds' May 3. 1908

A most interesting French season commences at the Shaftesbury on Tuesday, when Madame Suzanne Despres, an emotional actress of quite exceptional calibre, will appear in "La Rafale," a play which has been seen here in both French and English. Madame Despres is the wife of M. Lugne Poe, director of the celebrated Theatre d'Œuvre in Paris, who has introduced Maeterlinck, Oscar Wilde, Ibsen, and other foreign writers to the Parisian public. Although naturally Madame Despres has been latterly associated with her husband's theatre, she has been seen at the Comedie Francaise, the Gymnase, and the Odeon. An interesting selection of plays is promised during her stay, which, as I noted last week, is under the direction of Miss Andrews, whose business representa- tive on this side is Mr. B. A. Meyer.

## DAILY TELEGRAPH, May 4

Some perplexities of the Radical party are illus- trated in a paper on the New Liberal Policy in the "Fortnightly" for May, the conclusion arrived at being that Peckham and Manchester have taught moderation to his Majesty's Government and strengthened Mr. Asquith's dislike to entrusting himself to the guidance of the extremists. The anonymous writer suggests Mr. Churchill's defeat in Manchester may be a blessing in disguise.

The possibilities of the next Presidential election in America, some criticism of Oscar Wilde's col- lected plays, and a sketch of the past Rugby foot- ball season are amongst other good papers in a magazine of many interests.

## Ladies' Field, May 9

which theatre Madame Despres has been associated for several years, playing all the principal rôles in classic and modern work. The Théâtre de L'Œuvre has presented some of the most interesting work of modern times. M. Lugné Poe was the first to introduce Maeterlinck, the "Belgian Shakespeare," to the Parisian public, and has exploited plays by Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, Tristan Bernard, etc., in all of which plays he has been assisted by his wife, who has, of course, played the leading parts. The Théâtre de L'Œuvre has a world-wide reputation.

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### Ibsen and Oscar Wilde.

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Author - May 1908

## BOOKS AT AUCTION.

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Although the recent issue of the complete works of Oscar Wilde has naturally cut down the prices of pirated copies, the original first editions do not seem to have been affected in any marked degree. The highest price any one of them has touched was obtained in January for "Rose Leaf and Apple Blossom," by Sir J. Rennell Rodd, with Wilde's introduction "Envoi," inscribed "Compliments of J. M. Stoddart, Dec., 1882" (*Philadelphia*, J. M. Stoddart & Co., 1882), which went for £9 5s.; but this was a very inflated price. The first editions of the plays run generally from £1 1s. to £3 10s. (with the exception of "Salome," which may fetch anything up to £10), autographed copies, of course, fetching the most. The autographed first edition "Dorian Grey" sold for £3 18s. in March last.

[*This paragraph is compiled, by kind permission of Messrs. Elliott, Stock & Co., "Book Prices Current: A Bi-Monthly Record of the Prices at which Books have been sold at Auction".*]



# Literary World

May 1908

**Oscar Wilde.** By L. C. Ingleby. We have had more than one life of Oscar Wilde in the past few years, and we cannot agree with the author of this, the latest biography, that a new one was called for. If it had been, however, it would certainly be a work of a very different type from that under review; Mr. Ingleby's biography consists very largely of contemporary criticisms, newspaper notices and excerpts from the works of Wilde himself. When the voice of the writer does make itself heard, moreover, it is concerned with mere adulation and comparison that has no merit as criticism. As an instance we may quote the following passage: 'To compare the blatant nonsense that Mr. Bernard Shaw foists on a credulous public with the coruscating *bon mots* of his dead compatriot, as seems to be the fashion nowadays, is to show a pitiful lack of intelligence and discernment; as well compare gooseberry wine to champagne, the fountains in Trafalgar-square to Magara.' 2019-03-18 Women's University Library 288 One of those people who must be reminded occasionally of the fact that 'abuse is not argument.' (Laurie. 12s. 6d. net.) }



## No Irrevocable Past.

I must not be afraid of the past ; if people tell me that it is irrevocable I shall not believe them ; the past, the present, and the future are one moment in the sight of God, in whose sight we should try to live. Time and space, succession and extension, are merely accidental conditions of thought ; the imagination can transcend them and move in a free sphere of ideal existences. Things also are in their essence of what we choose to make them ; a thing *is* according to the mode in which we look at it. 'Where others,' says Blake, 'see but the dawn coming over the hill, I see the sons of God shouting for joy.' . . .

What lies before me is my past. I have got to make myself look on that with different eyes, to make God look on it with different eyes. This I cannot do by ignoring it, or slighting it, or praising it, or denying it ; it is only to be done by accepting it as an inevitable part of the evolution of my life and character : by bowing my head to it.

'De Profundis,' by Oscar Wilde. New Edition. (Methuen).



# Sheffield Independent

May 1.

In view of the acuteness of political feeling at present, the contents of the "Fortnightly Review" will be appreciated as topical and suggestive. "The New Liberal Policy" is discussed with sympathy and discrimination by a contributor who obscures his identity under the nom-de-plume of "The Vicar of Bray." The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers writes with temperate reasoning on "The Education Compromise," and in connection with the same subject, the Rev. W. G. Edwards Rees propounds his views vigorously on "The Folly of the Secular Solution." Mr. Sydney Brooks' signature is attached to an authoritative and comprehensive survey of the Republican forces for this year's Presidential contest in the United States. A number of literary and miscellaneous articles are included, one on "The collected plays of Oscar Wilde," by Mr. St. John Hankin, and another on "Italian Realism and Art," by Mr. M. A. R. Tucker, being particularly interesting contributions.

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Star May 2. 1908



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MEMENTO. — Le numero de mai de *The Fortnightly Review* contient des  
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Philadelphia Press, May 3

## THE BRITISH DRAMA

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May 3. 1908

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May 14

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SUZANNE  
DESPRES,  
who is opening a short season, limited to eleven nights, at the Shaftesbury Theatre, under the direction of Miss Andrews of Paris, is the wife of M. Lugné Poe, the founder and director of the Théâtre de L'Œuvre of Paris, with

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## THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

## Oscar Wilde's "Intentions."

Oscar Wilde's essays wear surprisingly well. I have been re-reading this last week, in Messrs. Methuen's beautiful collected edition of his works, those famous papers of his on "The Decay of Lying," "The Critic as Artist," and "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," which so startled respectability in the early nineties, and I have been struck by the modernity of their tone. Mr. Bernard Shaw might father quite appropriately many of their paradoxes to-day, our newest Socialists might welcome Wilde's urging of discontent and revolt upon our labouring classes, and, on the whole, the book is disfigured by but few allusions to topics of the hour. One tell-tale feature, however, of their time these "Intentions" and their companion essay reveal; again and again they show their author's

## MUSICAL PROFESSION.

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The bath is open daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. On Sunday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. (entrance by side door). Spacious and comfortable. Every variety of food and drink. Bathing, hairdressing, and manicure. 76, Jermyn Street, London S.W.

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## WORLD IS IN THE

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E. B. ALEXANDER, Proprietor.  
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Months and for golfers.

Special terms for lengthened stay during the winter of heating.  
Fully Hotel in Westgate with Electric Light and System of heating.

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## CLIFTON DOWN HOTEL

CLIFTON, BRISTOL.  
Telegrams: "SOSPERSON, BRISTOL."  
Telephone: (Management) 530. (Visitors) 511.

charge, combined with the advantage of the BEST SITUATION in one of the HEALTHIEST SPOTS in GREAT BRITAIN, there are few hotels to compare favourably with the

## Reynolds' May 10, 1908

In her very entertaining book, "MODERN MARRIAGE, AND HOW TO BEAR IT" (T. Werner Laurie, 3s. 6d. net), Mrs. Maud Churton Braby discusses with gay wisdom and genial philosophy the attitude of modern men and women towards this, their most important relationship. It would be idle to call her book profound; she did not intend it to be. On the contrary, it is light, chatty, and intimate; but underneath her sprightly remarks there is to be found a mine of observation of the utmost usefulness to the already in the matrimonial toils, as well as to those about to enter them. We give Mrs. Braby credit for two conspicuous virtues—first, her wide reading, which enables her to quote on the subject modern authors, including Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, W. E. Henley, Stevenson, Stephen Phillips, and others; second, her frankness, which impels her to discuss vital phases of married life which, in a more squeamish age, would have been considered indelicate.

## Vampire (Manchester) May 10

Madame Suzanne Despres, the very intense actress who exploited the plays of Ibsen and Oscar Wilde in Paris, is running a short season at the Shaftesbury Theatre, which, close to the foreign homes of Soho, is becoming regarded as a Continental playhouse. As a matter of fact, Madame is no stranger to London, for, under another name, she acted here ten years ago. Madame and her company have since then toured in South America, Scandinavia, Roumania, and Germany.

## THE FORTNIGHTLY.

Mr. St. John Hankin is the author of an interesting paper on the collected plays of Oscar Wilde, in which the view is taken that that misguided genius despised the drama, and the drama avenged itself.

With his gifts for dialogue and characterisation, his very remarkable "sense of the theatre," he might have been a great dramatist if he had been willing to take his art seriously. But he was not willing. The result was that in the age of Ibsen and of Hauptmann, of Strindberg and Brieux, he was content to construct like Sardou and think like Dumas *filis*. Had there been a National Theatre in this country in his day, or any theatre of dignity and influence to which a dramatist might look to produce plays for their artistic value, not solely for their value to the box office, Wilde might, I believe, have done really fine work for it. But there was not. And Wilde loved glitter and success. It would not have amused him to write "uncommercial" masterpieces to be produced for half a dozen matinees at a Boxers' Hall. His ambition—if he can be said to have had any "ambition"—at all where the theatre was concerned—did not lie in that direction. So he took the stage as he found it, and wrote "pot-boilers." It is not the least of the crimes of the English theatre of the end of the nineteenth century that it could find nothing to do with a fine talent such as Wilde's save to degrade and waste it.

## Manchester Guardian May 12.

## THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL.

Perhaps some of those who saw Mr. St. John Hankin's prodigal last night thought he was untrue to life, as untrue to life as an Irishman who does not sty "Bedad" or a loving yeoman whose gaiters do not come half up his thighs.

But Lady Faringford is rather too like a reminiscential blend of the marchioness in "Caste," Lady Bracknell in "The Importance of Being Earnest," and a whole Almanach de Gotha of well-born Gorgons of the theatre.

## Bystander May 13

## "Modern Marriage" Again

Under the title *Modern Marriage and How to Bear It* (Laurie: 6s.) Mrs. Maud Churton Braby has written a clever and most entertaining volume. Very much that she says has been said before, but Mrs. Braby's virtue is that, while she yields to nobody, apparently, in her contempt for the so-called "modern" marriage (whatever that may be), she seems to be at heart an upholder of the principle of matrimony. The reader of this book may be assured of much that is sage and sound and much that is witty. He need not be afraid, either, that the author is afflicted with old-fashioned notions. Abundant quotations from Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Somerset Maugham, R. L. Stevenson, Grant Allen, and other authorities, stamp her as modern among the moderns. That she should have looked a little further back for doctrinal guidance as to the principles of Providence does not seem anywhere to occur to Mrs. Braby. But, then, had it so occurred, she certainly would never have written this book, which would have been a pity. V. C.

## Glasgow Evening Citizen May 13.

"Getting Married," the much be-paraphrased play of Mr. Bernard Shaw, was produced by a very competent company at the London Haymarket Theatre yesterday afternoon. If he had judged, indeed, from the intimations, the bits of gossip, which have been going the round, as the saying is, for the past two or three weeks, a stranger might have come to the conclusion that the production of "Getting Married" was one of the leading events—theatrical, literary, or otherwise—of the year.

Of late, however, as has been said, he has come to the front with a bound. Whether he will maintain his present position, which is largely due to his faculty for epigram, is another question. His epigram is more laboured than was the epigram of Oscar Wilde, it lacks something of the sense of conviction which accompanies the epigram of Mr. Chesterton. One thing, however, seems certain, and that is that "Getting Married," looking to its reception last night at the Haymarket, is not likely to enjoy a very lengthened stage career.

## Notes &amp; Queries May 16, 1908

OSCAR WILDE.—Please give me the name of the author of an English appreciation of all Oscar Wilde's works. DORN.

[Mr. L. C. Ingleby has recently published a volume entitled 'Oscar Wilde,' which contains an account and detailed criticism of all Wilde's writings.]

## HOME LIFE IN GERMANY.

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To get an insight into the home life of a foreign country may be compared to studying a man in his slippers as compared with forming a judgment of him when arrayed in frock-coat and varnished boots. Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick, herself a German born, though educated in this country, has arranged for us this glimpse into her native land in its slippers. And a most interesting, instructive, and amusing glimpse it is, full of humour and good judgment, admirably designed to give us an idea of the differences between English and German home life. She begins with the children—their education; then follows them to adolescence and maturity, so that we see the citizen in the making and learn something of him (and her) when the process is complete. Vastly different in every direction is the German method of education from our own. Thrift and efficiency would seem to be their keywords, and, as one would expect, the care which the State takes of the individual is at the cost of individuality. On the other hand, one must remember that the individuality of few people is worth preserving at the expense of some drawbacks which go with its preservation. Sport enters but little into the life of the people, either in youth or manhood. "I must confess," says our author, "that I have only once seen a German in full sporting costume. It was most impressive, though a sort of pinkish grey bound everywhere with green. As we were having a walk with him, and it was early summer, we ventured to ask him what he had come to kill. 'Bees,' said he, and killed one the next moment with a pop-gun."

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Mr. Mathison, J. A. (the "Pop-gun" if I am talked to a point, and do not waste the time of the Court.

Mr. Dickinson: Please go on. I have decided the

son disallowed the question, when the learned counsel

garded Mr. Cade's conduct as fraudulent, Mr. Dickinson

On Mr. Mathison asking the witness if he re-

eable.

say he did not regard Cade's conduct as dishonour-

memory was not very good. At the inquiry he did

Mr. Thacker, further cross-examined, said his

reputation on the coal market.

years, and he was a good old sort. He bore a good

By Mr. Mathison: He had known Cade for twenty

rate of the coal to London was 7s. 10d.

the had some correspondence with Cade. The railway

not supplied him with any coal. In October last year

that coal. Since that contract expired witness had

local and wagon hire. Cade had 532 tons 20wt of

trucks weekly. The contract price was 15s per ton,

March 31, 1901, and under that contract he had two

On July 6, 1900, witness entered into a contract with

to carry to charge wagon hire to London at 9d a ton,

included the coal and wagon hire, and it was cus-

and the price varied from 11s to 12s a ton. That

supplied was 930 tons 20wt of Nixon's Merthyr coal,

tween January and October, 1899, the total quantity

1901, supplied defendant with Nixon's Merthyr. Be-

company, between January, 1899, and Lady Day,

the orders he got Messrs. Evans to supply. That

duced his ledger and order-book, covering 1900 and

colliery-owners. He knew Mr. Cade, and witness pro-

he was agent for Messrs. Evans and Co., of Cardiff,

was a colliery agent, and in 1899 and for some years

Mr. John Dimes, of St. Catherine's, Cardiff, was



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A curious thing to note is that while newspapers are carefully supervised, books and pamphlets are circulated in Germany which would be suppressed here; and their stage is freer than ours. "Both French and German plays are acted all over Germany that could not be produced in England. It is most difficult to explain our attitude to Germans who have been in London, because they know what vulgar and vicious farces and musical comedies pass muster with us. It is only when a play touches the depths of life and shows signs of thought and of poetry that we take fright, and by the lips of our chosen official cry, 'This will never do.' Byron is the only English poet whom Germans read—Shakespeare being claimed by them as a German, while the favourite prose writers are Ruskin and Oscar Wilde, the two novels which are most read being "Dorian Grey" and "Misunderstood." These facts, coming from one who knows, are vastly interesting, but readers will find many more of equal interest in this fascinating volume. A good portion of the book is devoted to the description of domestic life and the problems which beset the housekeeper, such as the servant question and the feeding of the household. Women seem for the most part too busy in Germany to bother themselves overmuch about their rights, though woman is more emancipated than she used to be, and in Berlin there are three ladies' clubs, the subscription to one being six marks a year, which gives members the privilege of using comfortably-furnished rooms, having well-cooked meals at low prices, and enjoying a fine library with all the paper and magazines in four languages. The "Millionaires' Club" has a subscription of twenty-five shillings.

Altogether, in many ways, Germany has learnt to make the most out of a little, to provide an easy and happy existence for her sons and daughters on moderate terms. There are reverses to the medal, as to every medal, but there are enough advantages to make one sigh for a land where a small income can be made adequately to supply human needs. If one were to make a general observation on this book, it would be that it seems to prove that Germany is the country which sets greatest store by, and puts to the best use, intelligence. We are too often inclined to be shy of intelligence, and to smother our inmost convictions as presumptuous or dangerous. The Germans discuss them, tabulate them, dissect them, but are never ashamed of them. Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick has given us a book which is as readable as it is deserving of being read. She has neither the pen nor the eye of Octave Mirbeau, for instance, whose recent pages on Germany are so full of understanding; but she has knowledge and sympathy, and has really given us a glimpse into German home life.



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Nottingham  
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[Mr. L. C. Ingleby has recently published a volume entitled 'Oscar Wilde,' which contains an account and detailed criticism of all Wilde's writings.]

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## HOME LIFE IN GERMANY.

(METHUEN. 10s 6d. net.)

To get an insight into the home life of a foreign country may be compared to studying a man in his slippers as compared with forming a judgment of him when arrayed in frock-coat and varnished boots. Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick, herself a German born, though educated in this country, has arranged for us this glimpse into her native land in its slippers. And a most interesting, instructive, and amusing glimpse it is, full of humour and good judgment, admirably designed to give us an idea of the differences between English and German home life. She begins with the children—their education; then follows them to adolescence and maturity, so that we see the citizen in the making and learn something of him (and her) when the process is complete. Vastly different in every direction is the German method of education from our own. Thrift and efficiency would seem to be their keynotes, and, as one would expect, the care which the State takes of the individual is at the cost of individuality. On the other hand, one must remember that the individuality of few people is worth preserving at the expense of some drawbacks which go with its preservation. Sport enters but little into the life of the people, either in youth or manhood. "I must confess," says our author, "that I have only once seen a German in full sporting costume. It was most impressive, though a sort of pinkish grey bound everywhere with green. As we were having a walk with him, and it was early summer, we ventured to ask him what he had come to kill. 'Bees,' said he, and killed one the next moment with a pop-gun."

On the other hand, Germany trains her young to intellectual pleasures more than we do. Music and the theatre are far more intelligent amusements than with us. They like to be amused, but then they are amused with worthy themes instead of being bored by them, as all but a picked few English people are. They can trust themselves in their amusements, and are careful to make a good use of their time. Sunday with them is a day of healthy and intelligent diversion. "They sew, they dance, they fiddle, they act. They travel on the day of rest, and when they come to England there is nothing in our national life they find so tedious and unprofitable as our Sundays. They cannot understand why a people with so strong a tendency to drink should make the public-house the only counter attraction to the church on the working-man's day of leisure; and when they are in a country place, and see our groups of idle, aimless young louts standing about not knowing what to do, they ask why in the name of common-sense they should not play an outdoor game." Sunday is the day on which German theatres give their best pieces, and are most crowded.

A curious thing to note is that while newspapers are carefully supervised, books and pamphlets are circulated in Germany which would be suppressed here; and their stage is freer than ours. "Both French and German plays are acted all over Germany that could not be produced in England. It is most difficult to explain our attitude to Germans who have been in London, because they know what vulgar and vicious farces and musical comedies pass muster with us. It is only when a play touches the depths of life and shows signs of thought and of poetry that we take fright, and by the lips of our chosen official cry, 'This will never do.'" Byron is the only English poet whom Germans read—Shakespeare being claimed by them as a German, while the favourite prose writers are Ruskin and Oscar Wilde, the two novels which are most read being "Dorian Grey" and "Misunderstood." These facts, coming from one who knows, are vastly interesting, but readers will find many more of equal interest in this fascinating volume. A good portion of the book is devoted to the description of domestic life and the problems which beset the housekeeper, such as the servant question and the feeding of the household. Women seem for the most part too busy in Germany to bother themselves overmuch about their rights, though woman is more emancipated than she used to be, and in Berlin there are three ladies' clubs, the subscription to one being six marks a year, which gives members the privilege of using comfortably-furnished rooms, having well-cooked meals at low prices, and enjoying a fine library with all the paper and magazines in four languages. The "Millionaires' Club" has a subscription of twenty-five shillings.

Altogether, in many ways, Germany has learnt to make the most out of a little, to provide an easy and happy existence for her sons and daughters on moderate terms. There are reverses to the medal, as to every medal, but there are enough advantages to make one sigh for a land where a small income can be made adequately to supply human needs. If one were to make a general observation on this book, it would be that it seems to prove that Germany is the country which sets greatest store by, and puts to the best use, intelligence. We are too often inclined to be shy of intelligence, and to smother our inmost convictions as presumptuous or dangerous. The Germans discuss them, tabulate them, dissect them, but are never ashamed of them. Mrs. Alfred Sedgwick has given us a book which is as readable as it is deserving of being read. She has neither the pen nor the eye of Octave Mirbeau, for instance, whose recent pages on Germany are so full of understanding; but she has knowledge and sympathy, and has really given us a glimpse into German home life.







In "Paul Kelter," his best and biggest book in every sense of the term, Jerome has revealed himself as at once a humorist and a philosopher, a cynic and an optimist. You think the combination impossible, incongruous? But it need not be. For cynicism is not really that banal affectation which Oscar Wilde has defined as a knowledge of the price of everything and the value of nothing. It can be a noble, fructifying influence on a man's temperamental outlook. It can help him to realise that, because human nature is usually so weak and foolish, it is all the more admirable and lovable in its moments of supreme self-abnegation. Of Mr. Jerome's latest development on his political side this is not the place to speak. But the same honesty and courage, the same sanity and steadiness of outlook, and the same fixed passionate spirit of charity animates him in this new sphere of Socialism as in every other.

Daily Mail. May 16

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Free Lance, May 20. 1908

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ACADEMY MAY 23, 1908

ACADEMY

Last week we extended certain advice to Mr. Campbell, of the City Temple. We have come to the conclusion, like the young lady in one of Oscar Wilde's plays, *The Ideal Husband*, that the best thing to do with good advice is to pass it on to somebody else. Mr. Campbell has probably had enough of our advice of this kind. We will therefore request him to pass it on to Mr. Shaw. The advice was "to stop preaching for ever and during that time to read and listen and to cultivate intellectual humility." Mr. Shaw is a very good man, but he talks a great deal too much, and our readers will not allow us to invite them to be bored to death at the Haymarket Theatre. THE ACADEMY are not likely to be damaged intellectually or morally by listening to the sparkling wit of Mr. Shaw.

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**Pall Mall Gazette**

In writing of the Beaux of the Regency Mr. Lewis carefully studies the various authorities, and has made up his mind that the work will undoubtedly be useful. Brummell looms large in the work, and there is also much that is interesting if not much new. George Hanger, Sir John Lade, the eighth Lord of the Bedouin, the Duke of Norfolk (whom, by the way, we should have known as the Duke of Norfolk), Sir Lumley Skeffington, and others. A good many of the incidents are brought out afresh, including one which the author gives as a proof of Brummell's genuine wit. Asked once how he had caught a fish, he answered, "The scoundrelly landlord put me in a room with a fish." which Mr. Melville considers "might be a line in a comedy." It might—of one of the silly lines.

"The Beaux of the Regency." By Lewis Melville. (L)

## Daily News.

Perha the dramatic critics who on  
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**Daily Mail.** May 16

DORIAN GRAY.

Free Lance, May 20. 1908

Round and Round and Round Again.

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Miss Henry King's latest thing in coats is all her own design. It has silk corded lapels and cuffs, piped with velvet, and has cut-lin buttons. Her latest dress coat has six small buttons close together on the cuffs; the white waistcoat is adorned with purple buttons; and it has a purple cording all round it. My word!

Heard, sees a weird apparition at the window. It is the brother of his victim, who comes to avenge

"The Pirates' Revue" is one of the latest novelties offered to patrons of the variety theatre, and has appeared on the occasion of many thrills and much admiration. The scene of the little episode is the abode of a young violinist and his friend, both of whom are in love with the one who carries the best promise of her hand. Various scenes are enacted in the room an engagement intoxicated both with prizes and potatoes, he produces the piece to complete it. Having put the finishing touches to the composition he falls asleep on a couch, when his friend, determined to secure his sweetheart, steals this prize, and throws his body into the river which flows below. The murderer then sits down at the piano and plays over the dead man's composition.

the file is Mr. Joseph Lyons, who will be assisted by influential and representative committees, consisting of Lord Sumell, Mr. Alfred Butt, Mr. Frederick Harrison, Mr. Alfred Moul, Sir Edward Moss, Mr. Oswald Stoll, Mr. H. Beerbold, Tree, Mr. Fred Terry, and Mr. Lewis Waller.

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"The Beaux of the Regency." By Lewis Melville. (London: Hutchinson and Co.) 24s.

## Daily News.

Perhaps the dramatic critics who object to "talk" do not really express what they mean. They may possibly mean that they object to characterless talk, to dialogue which is redundant and is not calculated to take its place as one of the factors of dramatic expression. Thus, talk which is not the expression of the characters the dramatist has drawn is bad art, and an impertinence. Mr. Shaw is addicted to that kind of "talk," but all of his "talk" is by no means of that undramatic type. Indeed, his "Getting Married" seemed to me a drama up to a certain point because his dramatist persona did express the ideas they might reasonably be expected to hold, and in that clash of outlook there is drama. The "conversation" went wrong when the characters spoke pure Shaw. Of course, a dramatist can only project himself, but it should be his self varied by imagination. A drama is really a series of variations on the dramatist's nature. No man can really get outside of himself more than is in himself, but the genuine dramatic imagination enables a man to realize his own possibilities. If he makes all kinds of different characters express only the average of these possibilities, that is, his own ordinary, work-a-day self, he ceases to be a dramatist. Mr. Bernard Shaw does not always resist the temptation of allowing his character to be pure Bernard Shaw, and then his "talk" becomes tiresome and often impertinent.

That is what makes Oscar Wilde's plays seem so empty and crude nowadays. The characters fire off Oscar Wildisms for the fun of the thing. His "Lady Windermere's Fan" and "The Importance of Being Earnest" had a terrible amount of "talk," but its wit was obvious, and Oscar Wilde pandered to the average sense of the theatre by his Sardou-made plots, and he was immediately acclaimed a brilliant dramatist.

Our modern man's "talk" aims at something much finer than that. It aims at drawing character and at creating atmosphere.

Standard. May 29. 1908

MODERN MARRIAGE IDEAS.

"MODERN MARRIAGE AND HOW TO BEAR IT."  
By Maud Churton Braby. (Werner Laurie.  
3s. 6d.)

Most readers will associate the name of Mrs. Maud Churton Braby with a number of dainty and altogether delightful short stories that have appeared at different times in the English and American magazines. They will certainly not dream of connecting her with any advanced ideas on matrimony, for, so far as we recollect, her heroes have been of unexceptional moral character, and her heroines have borne "the white flower of a blameless life" with charming innocence and candour. Yet here is this tremendous philippic against marriage and love divided into parts like those of a scientific treatise, with sections devoted to the mutual dissatisfaction of the sexes, the various kinds of marriage, "children, the *cul de sac* of all reforms," and bristling with quotations from Meredith, Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson, G. B. Shaw, Grant Allen, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Mona Caird, and, saddest of all, that gay, irresponsible trifler, Mr. H. B. Marriott-Watson! It is all very mystifying, and our perplexity only deepens when we find that a good deal of sound thinking has gone to the book's composition, and that if it is in places alarmingly frank, it is also illumined by a very kind and tender spirit seeking light in the darkest spots of the matrimonial jungle.

Nottingham Daily Express.

The next volume in Mr. John Lane's "Living Masters of Music" series will be a biography of Richard Strauss, one of the most-talked-of composers of the present day. This has been written by that conscientious and erudite critic, Mr. Ernest Newman. Born at Munich in 1864, Strauss was the son of an instrumentalist in the Court Orchestra of that city. In 1894 he married Fraulein Pauline de Ahna, a young singer who had created the principal part in his opera, "Guntram." His last big work was "Salome," a setting of Oscar Wilde's drama, which was produced at Dresden in 1905.



In "Paul Kelter," his best and biggest book in every sense of the term, Jerome has revealed himself as at once a humorist and a philosopher, a cynic, and an optimist. You think the combination impossible, incongruous? But it need not be. For cynicism is not really that banal affectation which Oscar Wilde has defined as a knowledge of the price of everything and the value of nothing. It can be a noble, fructifying influence on a man's temperamental outlook. It can help him to realise that, because human nature is usually so weak and foolish, it is all the more admirable and lovable in its moments of supreme self-abnegation. Of Mr. Jerome's latest development on his political side this is not the place to speak. But the same honesty and courage, the same sanity and steadiness of outlook, and the same fixed passionate spirit are in him in this new sphere of Socialism as in every other.



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Referee May 17. 1908

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letters and in art which in healthier days was given to the full-blooded, cheery stories of Rabelais or the sun-tanned beggar children and full-bosomed maidens of Murillo. It is all a matter of taste, but hope is surely sweeter than a lustre that leaves a nasty taste in the mouth.

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Last week we extended certain advice to Mr. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple. We have come to the conclusion, like the young lady in one of Oscar Wilde's plays, *The Ideal Husband*, that the best thing to do with good advice is to pass it on to somebody else. Mr. Campbell has probably had enough of our advice by this time. We will therefore request him to pass it on to Mr. Shaw. The advice was "to stop preaching for two years, and during that time to read and listen and think and cultivate intellectual humility." Mr. Shaw is a very clever man, but he talks a great deal too much, and our duty to our readers will not allow us to invite them to go and be bored to death at the Haymarket Theatre. Readers of *THE ACADEMY* will not be either intellectually or morally benefited by listening to the sparkling trivialities of Mr. Shaw.



# Pall Mall Gazette

May 26. 1908

In writing of the Beaux of the Regency Mr. Lewis Melville has made a careful study of the various authorities, and has made a compendium that will undoubtedly be useful. Brummell looms large over the two volumes, and there is also much that is interesting if not much that is new concerning George Hanger, Sir John Lade, the eighth Lord Barrymore, the eleventh Duke of Norfolk (whom, by the way, we should hardly have called a Beau), Sir Lumley Skeffington, and others. A good many old stories are trotted out afresh, including one which the author gives as an instance of Brummell's genuine wit. Asked once how he had caught a cold, the reply was: "The scoundrelly landlord put me in a room with a damp stranger," which Mr. Melville considers "might be a line in an Oscar Wilde comedy." It might—one of the silly lines.

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"The Beaux of the Regency." By Lewis Melville. (London: Hutchinson and Co.) 24s.



# Daily News,

May 30.

Perhaps the dramatic critics who object to "talk" do not really express what they mean. They may possibly mean that they object to characterless talk, to dialogue which is redundant and is not calculated to take its place as one of the factors of dramatic expression. Thus, talk which is not the expression of the characters the dramatist has drawn is bad art, and an impertinence. Mr. Shaw is addicted to that kind of "talk," but all of his "talk" is by no means of that undramatic type. Indeed, his "Getting Married" seemed to me a drama up to a certain point because his dramatis personæ did express the ideas they might reasonably be expected to hold, and in that clash of outlook there is drama. The "conversation" went wrong when the characters spoke pure Shaw. Of course, a dramatist can only project himself, but it should be his self varied by imagination. A drama is really a series of variations on the dramatist's nature. No man can really get outside of himself more than is in himself, but the genuine dramatic imagination enables a man to realise his own possibilities. If he makes all kinds of different characters express only the average of these possibilities, that is, his own ordinary, work-a-day self, he ceases to be a dramatist. Mr. Bernard Shaw does not always resist the temptation of allowing his character to be pure Bernard Shaw, and then his "talk" becomes tiresome and often impertinent.

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That is what makes Oscar Wilde's plays seem so empty and crude nowadays. The characters fire off Oscar Wildisms for the fun of the thing. His "Lady Windermere's Fan" and "The Importance of Being Earnest" had a terrible amount of "talk," but its wit was obvious, and Oscar Wilde pandered to the average sense of the theatre by his Sardou-made plots, and he was immediately acclaimed a brilliant dramatist.

\* \* \* \*

Our modern novel's "talk" aims at something much finer than that. It aims at drawing character and at creating atmosphere.

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## THE PILGRIM PLAYERS.

I had a chat with the secretary of the Pilgrim Players the other day, and learned, rather regretfully, that the committee had abandoned the idea of presenting pastoral plays for this summer, at any rate. But when I was told of the ambitious schemes the Players have in view for the winter months I could not but agree that their decision was a wise one. At intervals from October to April it is intended to present some four plays, which in all probability will be Sheridan's "Critic," which has not been seen in Birmingham for some years; Oscar Wilde's clever comedy, "The Importance of Being Earnest," which I believe has never been done here at all; "The Interlude of Youth," and "Eager Heart." Then during the Birthday week there will be performances either of "Timon of Athens" or "All's Well That Ends Well," two of Shakespeare's most rarely played works, the intention being that the work begun a month ago shall become a regular Birmingham Shakespearean festival. The Pilgrim Players certainly realise the importance of being earnest, and it is an earnestness altogether to be admired. I trust it will meet with the appreciation it deserves.



Standard, May 29, 1908

## MODERN MARRIAGE IDEAS.

"MODERN MARRIAGE AND HOW TO BEAR IT."  
By Maud Churton Braby. (Werner Laurie.  
3s. 6d.)

Most readers will associate the name of Mrs. Maud Churton Braby with a number of dainty and altogether delightful short stories that have appeared at different times in the English and American magazines. They will certainly not dream of connecting her with any advanced ideas on matrimony, for, so far as we recollect, her heroes have been of unexceptional moral character, and her heroines have borne "the white flower of a blameless life" with charming innocence and candour. Yet here is this tremendous philippic against marriage and love divided into parts like those of a scientific treatise, with sections devoted to the mutual dissatisfaction of the sexes, the various kinds of marriage, "children, the *cul de sac* of all reforms," and bristling with quotations from Meredith, Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson, G. B. Shaw, Grant Allen, Tolstoy, Ibsen, Mona Caird, and, saddest of all, that gay, irresponsible trifler, Mr. H. B. Marriott-Watson! It is all very mystifying, and our perplexity only deepens when we find that a good deal of sound thinking has gone to the book's composition, and that if it is in places alarmingly frank, it is also illumined by a very kind and tender spirit seeking light in the darkest spots of the matrimonial jungle.



# Nottingham Daily Express.

The next volume in Mr. John Lane's "Living Masters of Music" series will be a biography of Richard Strauss, one of the most-talked-of composers of the present day. This has been written by that conscientious and erudite critic, Mr. Ernest Newman. Born at Munich in 1864, Strauss was the son of an instrumentalist in the Court Orchestra of that city. In 1894 he married Fraulein Pauline de Ahna, a young singer who had created the principal part in his opera, "Guntram." His last big work was "Salome," a setting of Oscar Wilde's drama, which was produced at Dresden in 1905.

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## OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

## THE NEW EDITION OF OSCAR WILDE.

The works of Oscar Wilde have now been collected and edited by his literary executor, Mr. Robert Ross. They have been published by Messrs. Methuen, after many delays and disappointments, in a sumptuous edition, limited to a thousand copies, consisting of twelve volumes, of which eleven are out, costing 12s. 6d. each. The volumes are printed on thick and creamy paper, in bold type, with generous margins. A worthy form is thus given to some of the most remarkable English prose and verse of the nineteenth century. The possessors of this luxurious edition are fortunate in everything except the binding, which is not beautiful in itself, and is foredoomed to dinginess and squalor. It is not good enough for the contents, and is too good for a mere temporary covering. This defect is shared by the best existing editions of Matthew Arnold, of Pater, and of other Victorian classics. It is an English compromise with appearances. French publishers reject this compromise by a method which is in the end more advantageous to their patrons, and certainly is more complimentary to authors whose work is likely to endure. They put all the value of a book into the printing, and leave the binding to individual taste.

However, Oscar Wilde has at length been rescued from the various kinds of unworthy exploitation which were threatening his reputation. For these the public has very largely itself to thank or to blame. It allowed itself to be amused by Wilde's plays, while it would not tolerate his name on the playbills; and the pirates, and even the forgers, had their way, simply because it was supposed to be impossible to produce an authorised edition.

This edition has now come, and we welcome it cordially; and we hope the time has also come when Wilde and his work may be discussed quite frankly and judged entirely on their merits. It requires no sophistry to distinguish the man from the artist and the artist from his work. We do it perpetually, without reflecting on it, for the classical authors. We have to do it, in many cases, even for the Greek and Latin men of action. Moral deficiencies don't improve by keeping, like wine. They are not less reprehensible in themselves because they are two thousand years old than if they had been committed twenty years ago; and in this respect at all events time-limits are disputable and dangerous. It is wiser and safer to take our stand on the distinction between the artist and the man. If that ground, that standpoint, be not accepted frankly, then a great many favou-

rites and consolers of mankind must be displaced. Time is the great healer, no doubt, but not the only one. Tragedy, on high authority, is purging and renovating. Wilde's tragedy was terrible. Let him have its fullest benefit. In so far as posterity will think of him at all, it will think first, if not wholly, of his work. And the time has come, undoubtedly, when we may initiate this process. We owe it to ourselves and to English literature. The debt should not be shirked by us and handed over to posterity. We should pay our share of it ourselves, since it is our contemporary literature, as a still living thing, that Oscar Wilde has adorned.

As we examine this new edition, we must be impressed by the variety and richness of the contents. Four volumes are occupied by those comedies which took London by storm, and then captured the English-speaking world. "Lady Windermere's Fan," "The Importance of being Earnest," "A Woman of no Importance," "An Ideal Husband"; these names revive many bright and happy memories. Their author, to adapt a fine phrase, has added to the gaiety of nations. He is, therefore, a benefactor to the race. He has also revived the traditions and legacy of Sheridan by giving us amusing plays which are at the same time excellent literature. These comedies are not only actable but readable, and we can enjoy them with a good literary conscience. Two volumes contain "Salome" in her original French; "A Florentine Tragedy," a fragment; "Vera; or, The Nihilists"; and "The Duchess of Padua," a youthful tragedy, in the Elizabethan manner, full of gorgeous phrases in sonorous and musical blank verse. One volume is occupied by "Intentions," with its four wonderful essays, a treasury of wisdom, paradox, constructive criticism, and epigram; and ending with "The Soul of Man under Socialism." Two volumes contain stories, and such pieces as "The Portrait of Mr. W. H.," to which has been added a most interesting University essay on "The Rise of Historical Criticism." One volume is given to "De Profundis," now issued finally and more completely than in the previous English edition. There is a volume of "Poems," extending to 345 pages. This makes up the eleven published volumes. The twelfth volume is to contain "Dorian Gray," not the least serious and significant of Wilde's writings; and the chief cause, we believe, of those delays and disappointments which we have already mentioned, through difficulties about the copyright. We understand that they have been adjusted, and that "Dorian Gray" will appear uniformly with the other volumes of this fine edition.

We can now realise how considerable Oscar Wilde's writing is in extent, since it occupies twelve large volumes. Our enumeration of the contents will have served to show its variety. It can be summed up, for convenience, as consisting of Poems, Plays, Tales or Romances, Critical Essays, and a volume of Autobiography. These divisions are by no means exhaustive, nor do they give a detailed account or conception of Wilde's various work. We hope to convey some impression of its quality and spirit in the appreciation which is to follow.

To define or to sum up so various an author is not easy. As to his manner or style, we might evade the difficulty by saying that, like Goldsmith, "he touched nothing that he did not adorn"; and if we substitute the word "enrich" for the term used in Goldsmith's epitaph our adaptation of Johnson's phrase may be excused by its accuracy. But besides enriching whatever he handled Wilde always enlightened it; sometimes by a new aspect, a new setting, a fresh and penetrating point of view; sometimes by a profound and illuminating thought. His paradoxes are often flashes of sound philosophy. He speaks of Homer and Milton "chanting in darkness the words that are winged with light," and Wilde made a destructive war on the Philistines, on the "cyngholds of the Commonplace, with winged words. Though he perished himself his work endures.

It is impossible to read Wilde for long, either in prose or verse, without realising how much he owes to Matthew Arnold, how immensely he was influenced by Arnold's thought and style. Now there are some lines in Arnold's "Resignation" where he speaks of the poet's attitude and outfit, and says:

Tears  
Are in his eyes, and in his ears  
The murmur of a thousand years.

These words may be taken as applicable to Wilde and his work. They define him as an artist, and they define the whole spirit and method of his art. It is quite true that he held the mirror up to Society, and reflected all its foibles in the most delightful and perfect way. And he went on to lash those foibles in witty and stinging epigrams; or he exposed the stupidities and cant of Society in brilliant paradoxes, which, however perverted, were generally more than half true. These qualities in him might be illustrated copiously from his Plays and Essays, or from any of his Romances. But, below and beyond this, there is always in him a very serious criticism of life, based on wide and thorough scholarship. Wilde was a pupil of Matthew Arnold in many senses, and not least by frequenting the best that has been thought and known in the world. He understood what Arnold really meant by criticism and its function, what Pater really meant by culture. Criticism, as he says, "makes the mind a fine instrument." It also, if it be sound and thorough, fills the mind with sympathy, with emotion. Wilde was filled with "the murmur of a thousand years." He was open to all the best influence and culture which have made our modern civilisation. He was filled with emotion, with profound human feeling, as he realised the tragedies and splendours of the past. There is also, it must be admitted, in some of his work a touch of the morbid and mephitic, which is as far from sane in the literary as in the moral sense of the word. At other times paradox is pursued to the point where it becomes a trick and an affectation. There is another sense in which "Tears are in his eyes." It is amazing and terrible as one reads his work, knowing his tragedy, to find how often "De Profundis" is anticipated; how the shadows were projected into his consciousness, into his expression. "For me the world is shrivelled into a palm's breadth, and where I walk there are thorns." "Hearts live by being wounded," he says in "A Woman of No Importance." "When the gods wish to punish us they answer our prayers," he says in "An Ideal Husband." And, again, "I feel that public disgrace is in store for me. I feel certain of it. I never knew what terror was before. I know it now. It is as if a hand of ice were laid upon one's heart. It is as if one's heart were beating itself to death in some empty hollow." These tragical premonitions could be multiplied from "The Soul of Man under Socialism," from many of the short stories, and, above all, from "Dorian Gray," which is in so terrible a fashion both a parable and a prophecy. Let us apply its moral to Wilde's work, to this fine edition of it, to his contribution to English literature. "When they entered they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master, as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty." So it was with the picture of Dorian Gray, in spite of all that Dorian himself had done and suffered. So it will be, as we think, with Oscar Wilde's better and enduring self and his works, in spite of all that his lower and perishable self did and suffered.



## THE NEW EDITION OF OSCAR WILDE.—II.

To Wilde, as to Renan, the city of the gods was Athens, not Jerusalem. His Utopia was one of the isles of Greece: not the arid Greece of pedants, but that land thrilling with romance and music, suffused with mystic light, which is presented by Mr. Frazer in his account of Pausanias. Greece in the past, Italy and England in the sixteenth century, France in the present, Arnold, Pater—these were the chief influences of Wilde's mind and art.

With such influences and such an outfit, he was not always in sympathy with the England of Queen Victoria. He was not only its critic but its satirist, and his satire is always delightful, whether he is dealing with individuals or with society, with literature or with life. "The English mind is always in a rage. The intellect of the race is wasted in the sordid and stupid quarrels of second-rate politicians or third-rate theologians." "In England the people who do most harm are the people who try to do most good. Charity creates a multitude of sins." "We are dominated by the fanatic, whose worst vice is his sincerity. Anything approaching to the free play of the mind is unknown amongst us. People cry out against the sinner, yet it is not the sinful, but the stupid, who are our shame." How skilful is the talk, both in the plays and in the stories; and how much of Lord Beaconsfield is in the atmosphere and presentation of Wilde's characters; as when Lord Henry, "helping himself to some quail," said that American novels were American dry goods; or when Ernest says, "The ortolans were delightful, and the Chambertin perfect, and now let us return to the point at issue." Then how witty are some of the criticisms on modern writers: "Mr. Hall Caine writes at the top of his voice." "Meredith! Who can define him? His style is chaos illumined by flashes of lightning. As a writer he has mastered everything, except language; as a novelist he can do everything, except tell a story; as an artist he is everything, except articulate." "Meredith is a prose Browning, and so is Browning. He used poetry as a medium for writing in prose." "The world will never weary of watching that troubled soul (Newman) in its progress from darkness to darkness." "Compilers of Lives and Recollections are the pest of the age. Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is always Judas who writes the biography. Formerly we used to canonise our heroes. The modern method is to vulgarise them. Cheap editions of great books may be delightful, but cheap editions of great men are absolutely detestable. We are overrun by a set of people who, when a poet or painter passes away, arrive at the house along with the undertaker, and forget that their one duty is to behave as mutes." "We are dominated by journalism. The public has an insatiable curiosity to know everything, except what is worth knowing. In centuries before ours the public nailed the ears of journalists to the pump. That was quite hideous. In this century journalists have nailed their own ears to the keyhole. That is much worse." "What is the difference between literature and journalism? Journalism is unreadable and literature is unread." "The public swallow their classics whole, and never taste them. It makes use of the classics of a country as a means of checking the progress of Art."

When he chose, Wilde moved easily among the deeper things of life. "The nineteenth century is a turning-point in history simply on account of two men—Darwin and Renan; the one the critic of the book of Nature, the other the critic of the book of God. Not to recognise this is to miss the meaning of one of the most important eras in the progress of the world. Creation is always behind the age. It is Criticism that leads us. The Critical Spirit and the World-Spirit are one." And Wilde has a very fine passage on that revelation of the prehistoric world which modern critical methods have brought. Science and criticism, as the nineteenth century realised them, have indeed transformed the universe and our conception of it, and are destined to create a new heaven and a new earth. Meanwhile, there is a fierce battle between the old and the new. Wilde felt it, and deplored it. "The courts of the City of God are not open to us now. Its gates are guarded by Ignorance, and to pass them we have to surrender all that in our nature is most divine." And how terribly true these words are of that Modernist conflict which is raging at the present hour!

These more serious thoughts and utterances lead us on to Wilde's most interesting and pathetic volume—his autobiography, his "De Profundis." Everything that Wilde wrote was of himself. That is its fault and its merit. All his works are an autobiography; but "De Profundis" is the fullest, the most tragic, the most persuasive revelation of himself. Wilde in this book "appreciates" his own catastrophe and shows us the limits of his mind and thought. We see where the substitution of beauty for conduct has led him; we find the range of his thought suddenly extended under the pressure of reality; we are conscious for the first time of feeling which is entirely sincere. Till then the defect of his work was precisely its æstheticism, a thing which in writing as in life involves a breach with fact and reality for which the writer paid as the man paid.