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An Outline of the Works of Oscar Wilde

By CHARLES J. FINGER

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One fiery-coloured moment of great life!
And then—how barren the nations' praise!
How vain the trump of Glory! Bitter thorns
Were in that laurel leaf, whose toothed barbs
Burned and bit deep till fire and red flame
Seemed to feed full upon my brain, and make
The garden a bare desert.

With wild hands
I strove to tear it from my bleeding brow,
But all in vain; and with a dolorous cry
That paled the ingering stars before their time,
I waked at last, and saw the timorous dawn
Peer with grey face into my darkened room,
And would have deemed it a mere idle dream
But for this restless pain that gnaws my heart,
And the red wounds of thorns upon my brow.

—Translation from the Polish of *Madame Modjeska*
by Oscar Wilde.

THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE

Thou knowest all; I seek in vain
What lands to till or sow with seed—
The land is black with briar and weed,
Nor cares for falling tears or rain.
Thou knowest all; I sit and wait
With blinded eyes and hands that fall,
Till the last lifting of the veil
And the first opening of the gate.
Thou knowest all; I cannot see.
I trust I shall not live in vain,
I know that we shall meet again
In some divine eternity.

Men in general often find it hard to dissociate the work of artists from the circumstances of their lives. Let a company fall to talking of Villon, and it is a safe bet that before long someone will drag in the incident of his having wandered very close to the gallows. Talk of Baudelaire, and we are prone to forget, for a moment, his *Flowers of Evil*, to recall that he painted his hair green. Of Dowson, we remember that he was a pot house drunkard and overlook his *Impenitentia Ultima*. Sometimes it seems, indeed, as though more truth was in the saying that the evil that men do lives after them and the good is often interred with their bones, than the reverse. Certainly Oscar Wilde's place in literature would have been decided long ago but for the distortion caused by circumstances in his life. But, as the mists clear, certain points stand out. It seems very definitely decided that as a poet he flew on wings too feeble to reach the clear, cold heights of Parnasus, two poems only being marked for distinction. *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and *The Sphinx*. As a writer of fiction he will probably be forgotten, or at best, remembered by one book, as is Charles Brockden Brown, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* living as a literary curiosity as *Wieland* lives, or as Beckford's *Vathek* lives, a thing at once odd and curious. As literary critic Wilde cannot rank with Hazlitt or Sainte-Beuve. As dramatist, doubtless, his fame is secure, and as essayist he will not be forgotten.

His friend, M. Andre Gide, has told us that Wilde said his novels and stories were written as the result of wagers made. That is hard to believe. Too plainly both novels and stories bear the earmarks of Wilde the stylist. His novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, approaches too nearly his expressed ideal, his desire to write a tale that should be of the wondrous beauty of a Persian rug. If Wilde wrote either novel or story on a wager, he must have wagered with himself. For Oscar Wilde took himself far too seriously to hang his art on a hair, to stake his literary reputation on the casting of a die. Indeed, he took himself and his art more seriously than he took the world, and that to his own undoing.

In another place I have shown how Wilde was influenced, how his life's path was pulled out of its calculated orbit because of his fem-



OSCAR WILDE.

At About 30 Years of Age

inine soul, and how heredity swayed his acts. Of that last he was well aware, has, indeed, confessed to the world more than once and especially in a passage in *The Critic as Artist*:

Heredity has become, as it were, the warrant for the contemplative life. It has shown us that we are never less free than when we try to act. It has hemmed us round with the nets of the hunter, and written upon the wall the prophecy of our doom. We may not watch it, for it is within us. We may not see it, save in a mirror that mirrors the soul. It is Nemesis without her mask. It is the last of the Fates, and the most terrible. It is the ONLY one of the Gods whose real name we know.

The feminine soul naturally had its influence, gave his literary work a tendency, a direction. To say that it did so seems so obvious as almost to be platitudinous. With that feminine soul he could never have written a *Call of the Wild*, for instance, nor could he have written a *Walden*, because he was physically and mentally incapable of living a life of adventure as Jack London lived, or of scaling life down to the bare bone as Thoreau did. The fact is that Wilde himself was a contradiction, this giant of a man with the feminine soul was the sport of the gods, and that the spirit of contradiction entered into his writings is everywhere apparent in the written page.

Another thing the feminine soul did for him. Because of that inner urge, he was filled with a burning desire to be admired, and therefore wrote much for the pyrotechnical effect. In a word, he loved to show off, to say and write things calculated to startle. You have exactly the same spirit manifest in Chesterton, in Belloc, too, but to lesser degree. But in Wilde, that self-satisfied strutting, that peacock exhibition of brilliant parts is very obvious, indeed.

Added to the spirit of contradiction and the pavonic display, there was, in Wilde, a strong spirit of partizanship. That accounts for his proclamation of himself as a kind of John the Baptist for Charles Baudelaire. Indeed, for a time, the Baudelairean influence colored all that he wrote and he outdid his master

in ornateness. The same spirit of partizanship led him to out-Pater Pater. He conceived it to be a worthy mission to acquaint the stolid British public with Platonic teachings, especially as relating to affection between men. That, of course, was as impossible a task and as hopeless as it would be to attempt to grow banana trees in Greenland. However, Wilde worked valiantly in his cause and, because of ignorance, and some wilful distortion and misrepresentation, much that he wrote in all sincerity later in his life plagued him.

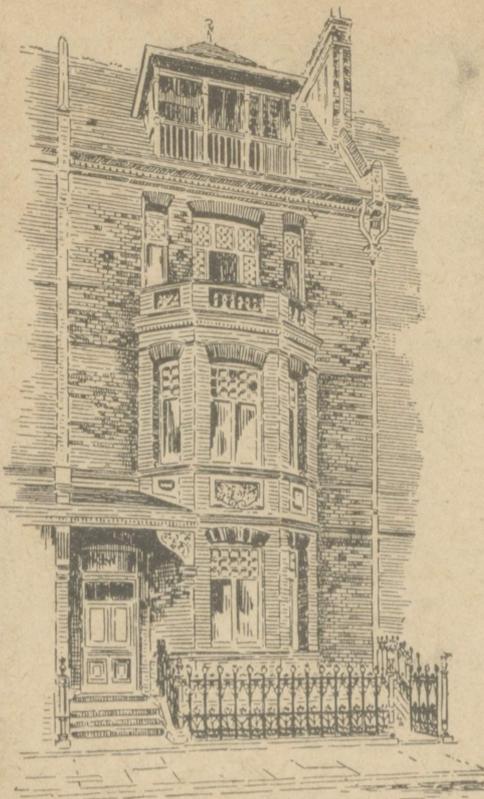
As final ingredients there may be cited his opposition to the commercialism and the philistinism of his day which he shared in company with John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold, and his real desire to cultivate the capacity for refined enjoyment of the beautiful in art and literature, an outcropping of his partizanship of Walter Pater.

THE SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION

In some respects Wilde was like a clever debater who takes keen delight in flouting the opposition. He was of that sort who, privately granting the conclusions of his opponent, will deliberately beat about the bush in an effort to discover entirely new reasons, spiritedly rejecting all those advanced by the other side. Chesterton is of the same stripe. To such men to be destructive, to dazzle, to astound, is meat and drink. Of all pleasures, there is none to interest them as does the game of conversational entanglements. At whatever cost, they must score off of the opposition, be that opposition an individual, the public, custom or convention. Nor do they come unscathed from the battle, for prejudices and widely held beliefs are very solid things to butt against. Not with entire impunity may anyone attack what men have imbibed with their mother's milk. Conventions and customs are results of ages of experience and to modify them with changing circumstances is, at the best, a slow task.

By way of instance of the argument contradictory and provoking, let us take a passage from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. It runs: "The modern sympathy with invalids is morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others." Reading that, your average man who belongs to a fraternal order, who subscribes to charity funds, who rushes to fountain pen when a begging list is thrust before him, is shocked. "What!" he exclaims, "would this fellow abolish sympathy? would he weaken personal love and human affection? Does he scorn the little child whose mother clung to it until it sunk into its grave? My dear, old mother who—" and so on. There would be sentimentalities, and, at the end, Wilde would stand condemned as a cold callous anti-Christ.

But without trying to read anything into what Wilde has written except that which was actually there, reading carefully and accepting it as the result of his own thought and experience, we find much of value. We remember that Wilde had pondered long on hereditary influences, was fully aware that he came from a failing stock and inherited fatal weaknesses. He had also said something anent the stupidity of holding that marriage was an institution determined by an omniscient divinity and if anything was made in heaven it was divorce, not marriage. Putting these together we have, not a cold and callous piece of impudence, but an idea which, if pon-



OSCAR WILDE'S HOME IN TITE STREET, LONDON, BEFORE HIS DOWNFALL.

dered, we find leads to the belief that society would do well to regard as an offense against itself the mating of undesirables from whom might spring unhealthy branches, or those prone to weaknesses or disease. Approached from another direction the teaching looks sound enough and we embrace it, calling it the gospel of Eugenics. Certainly, a couple having married and finding in the course of time that their union was unfavorable, unpromising as to their mutual happiness, would, most certainly, do well to separate, for of all creatures, who so unhappy as children of a joyless union? Hence Wilde's "Divorces are made in heaven." Hence, also, his scornful contempt for those who spend efforts on the result of those social ills which we see in the sick. After all, it is not vastly removed from Christ's swift answer to the sentimentalist: "Let the dead bury the dead." The Wilde idea closely touches Nietzsche's. There is little time to waste or failures. Man is in a state of transition and must be surpassed. The human race has a long march before it. Which leads to another apparently contradictory statement, another solid truth: "Discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or a nation." Of course it is, although shallow or thoughtless people denounced Wilde as a stirrer up of trouble when the saying was quoted by socialists and organizers of the unemployed. Had Wilde said, "It is the duty of every Englishman to be progressive," the platitude would have been hailed with delight, and he might have basked in the concentrated smiles of the black-coated million. But he chose the argument contradictory and shocked with a truth. The unthinking saw in the saying, not a very ordinary remark, but a gospel of discontent calculated to make men vicious and improvident, anarchical and cruel.

Take another instance of the argument contradictory, one from his essay, *The Decay of the Art of Lying*, which enraged many on this side of the Atlantic. Here it is:

The crude commercialism of America, its materializing spirit, its indifference to the poetical side of things, and its lack of imagination and of high unattainable ideals, are entirely due to that country having adopted for its national hero a man, who according to his own confession, was incapable of telling a lie, and it is not too much to say that the story of George Washington and the cherry-tree has done more harm, and in a shorter space of time, than any other moral tale in the whole of literature.

The book of collected essays, be it said, is called *Intentions*. Now Wilde's intention in the passage quoted, in the entire essay in fact, was to register a condemnation of the idiotic habit of pestiferous puritans in forever trying to tack a "moral lesson" to a work of art. And the desire to do that is distinctly an

American vice. Not more than two weeks ago I came across an instance in which a school teacher had set his pupil the task of writing an essay with this as subject: "What moral lesson do we get from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*?" Now it must be clear to any thinking man that Stevenson had no more idea of trying to convey a moral lesson in that glorious tale than he had of advocating murder and piracy. Healthy minds read for pleasure and not for moral profit, and no sane boy rushes out to murder his grandmother because he has read the life of Nero. But our moralists are forever trying to turn the world into a loveless place, a hell in which each and every one is expected to be forever in a state of awful spiritual anguish, imagining themselves to be reprobate, shaken with religious doubt. The dark and cruel fanaticism of the uplifter would rob both youth and man of joy, and the world would be, had the moral-lesson monger his way, a duller, blanker, grayer place every day. The uplifter would fasten upon us a blighting, spiritual tyranny. On young America, then, the meddlers made an early start. Washington, the national hero, must be portrayed first and foremost as inhuman, a something not of the world in which all men are liars. But at bottom, Wilde was driving home the salutary lesson that art is, must be, independent of morality: must, assuredly, follow its destiny quite independent of moral purpose.

From quite another point of view, from a common sense point of view, we may come to a realization of the folly of painting our national heroes as monsters of virtue—as Charles Grandisons, all correct and precise, and finick-



OSCAR WILDE AS A YOUNG MAN AT OXFORD.

ing. To endow our Lincolns and Washingtons with middle class respectability is to belittle them. The picture of them is unconvincing, as the picture of men without faults always is. Your sensible European knows better than to set up a moral scarecrow with all bad spots painted out, and loves his Nelson none the less because of the Lady Hamilton affair, approves of his Dickens while admitting he loved his glass, had a golden opinion of the late King Edward, although he had his affairs.

"The crude commercialism of America," that Wilde denounced time and time again, seems to be something that we are only now coming to realize. Thoreau denounced it, of course; also did Emerson, but theirs were voices in the wilderness. Today the cry is being taken up everywhere. Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, John Hall Wheelock and a dozen others are calling upon men to see something more than the mere piling up of dollars in life. It is being realized that we are, as a nation, sadly under-educated, that we have overlooked something of the highest import when we have overlooked real self-culture. Wilde's words, once considered odd, now no longer have the appearance of oddity.

The development of the race depends on the development of the individual, and where self-culture has ceased to be the ideal, the intellectual standard

is instantly lowered, and, often, ultimately lost. If you meet at dinner a man who has spent his life in educating himself—a rare type in our time, I admit, but still one occasionally to be met with—you rise from table richer, and conscious that a high ideal has for a moment touched and sanctified your days.

And in another place in the same essay, *The Critic as Artist*:

Who that moves in the stress and turmoil of actual existence, noisy politician, or brawling social reformer, or poor narrow-minded priest blinded by the sufferings of that unimportant section of the community among whom he cast his lot, can seriously claim to be able to form a disinterested intellectual judgment about any one thing? Each of the professions means a prejudice. The necessity for a career forces every one to take sides. We live in the age of the overworked, and the under-educated; the age in which people are so industrious that they become absolutely stupid. And, harsh though it may sound, I cannot help saying that such people deserve their doom.

To say that "we live in an age in which people are so industrious as to be stupid" has a ring of contradiction, especially to a people taught to sing with Dr. Watts:

How doth the busy little bee
Improve each shining hour,

but, after all, what have we in the paragraph but a very honest admission that in life, too much is often sacrificed to that *clat* of success, that too many signally fail to see that there is such a thing as losing a life while trying to gain it, that in the chase for supremacy or for wealth, the finer things are often missed. And you know, and I know, and ye all know that men are overworked and under-educated, and that there is a certain culture which modern education cannot supply. The position taken by Wilde is quite tenable to those who have been fortunate enough to read Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*. Nor is it a new truth that Wilde gives, but, on the contrary, a very old one brilliantly stated. In the tale told by Aesop, the tale of the dog crossing the bridge with a bone in its mouth. The shadow of notoriety is grasped at and the bond of really desirable things lost forever. It is the viewpoint indicated by that sturdy individualist Sumner that the man who makes the most of himself and does his best in his sphere, is far more valuable in the long run than the philanthropist who runs about with a scheme which would set the world straight if everyone would accept it. Wilde, in his oblique way, was getting the truth home that a man is a bundle of possibilities and that it behooves each and every man to find his bent, to chart his course true to some Polaris. And, moreover, each and everyone must find his compulsion in himself. "Become what thou art," said Nietzsche.

One thing more seems necessary to say in this connection anent the crude commercialism of America and its materializing spirit. For generations we have not only hammered away at the moral lesson, but have made the mistake

(Continued on page 4)

But, not to will the law of nature
To man appointed course
And when time will call to him
To go long walks with
In his manner will be outward men,
So gentle always mean

I know not what the law is called
Or what the law is man,
All the we know who do in good
Is that he will be strong,
The rule of it is like a son
A real story of a long

But this I know, that every law
That man has made for man,
Since first man took his first step,
As the sun was begun,
But when the wheel was bound, the clock
With a most evil son

With front of iron and feet of lead
To keep the golden yard,
We keep the old way unbroken any
With soul and body named,
And not many have been with the law
And not many have been with the law

THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL.
Reduced facsimile of manuscript.

DeMaupassant. It accounted for the vast interest which, as Frank Harris tells us, was manifested in Wilde's poem, *The Harlot's House*, as a poem slight enough, but as a picture very attractive, as all forbidden things are attractive.

Baudelaire, and Wilde as well, sometimes ran *fanti*, just as men in arguments are intoxicated with their own verbosity. So we find Wilde in the warmth of his partizanship not only couching a lance for Baudelaire, but handling edged swords, to be wounded later with his own weapons. Thus:

What is termed Sin is an essential element of progress. Without it the world would stagnate, or grow old, or become colorless. By its curiosity, Sin increases the experience of the race. Through its intensified assertion of individualism, it saves us from monotony of type. In its rejection of the current notions about morality, it is one with the higher ethics. And as for the virtues! What are the virtues? Nature, M. Renan tells us, cares little about chastity and it may be that it is to the shame of Magdalen, and not to their own purity, that the Lucretias of modern life owe their freedom from stain. Charity, as even those of whose religion it makes a formal part have been compelled to acknowledge, creates a multitude of evils. The mere existence of conscience, that faculty of which people prate so much nowadays, and are so ignorantly proud, is a sign of our imperfect development. It must be merged in instinct before we become fine. Self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice a survival of the mutilation of the savage, part of that old worship of pain which is so terrible a factor in the history of the world, and which even now makes its victims day by day, and has its altars in the land. Virtues! Who knows what the virtues are? Not you. Not I. Not any one. It is well for our vanity that we slay the criminal, for if we suffered him to live he might show us what we had gained by his crime. It is well for his peace that the saint goes to his martyrdom. He is spared the sight of the horror of his harvest.—*The Critic as Artist.*

That, which played a great part in Wilde's trial, is apparently a kind of advocacy of the M. Fr. Paulhan point of view, (*Le Nouveau Mysticisme*, page 94) the Decadent philosophy dished up and watered for British consumption. Baudelaire had said that "the vulgar sought goodness as an end," and Wilde had this:

To be good, according to the vulgar standard of goodness, is obviously quite easy. It merely requires a certain amount of sordid terror, a certain lack of imaginative thought, and a certain low passion for middle-class respectability.—*The Critic as Artist.*

Instances might be multiplied, but enough has been said to show that Wilde not only depended for effects upon a manifestation of his spirit of contradiction, but somewhat suffered in his art because of his partizanship. Still, of his originality there can be no doubt and a partizan is not necessarily a plagiarist.

As to the charge of plagiarism, while others have charged Wilde with the literary sin, it remained for his former friend, Lord Alfred Douglas, to be the most bitter in denunciation. "His (Wilde's) sonnets are, for the most part, Miltonic in their effects; the metre and method of *In Memoriam* are used in the greater number of his lyrics; and he used the metre which Tennyson sealed to himself for all time even in *The Sphinx*, which is his great set work; while in such pieces as *Charmides*, *Panthea*, *Humanitas* and *The Burden of Itys* he borrowed the grave pipe of Matthew Arnold." Writing of the poem *Le Mer*, Douglas says: "The Bird is Wilde, the plumage and call are Tennyson's to a fault." Again, "While Wilde arranges the stanzas as though they consisted of two lines, they really consist of Tennyson's four . . . Tennyson's suns as well as Tennyson's stanza!" In another place Douglas writes: "I have not space to enter into great detail with regard to those lyrics of Wilde which are not flatly Tennysonian. There are about twenty of them, and they include a cheap imitation of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, a flagrant copy of Hood's lines beginning 'Take her up tenderly'—(Douglas refers to the poem *The Bridge of Sighs*)—and sundry pieces which are childishly reminiscent of Mrs. Browning, William Morris and even Jean Ingelow. . . . Wilde was an over-sedulous ape, so over-sedulous, in fact, that he is careful to emphasize and exaggerate the very faults and defects of his masters."

Douglas is bitter as gall and, like the gallant Michael Monahan, I prefer to quote him with the sonnet he wrote on learning of the death of Oscar Wilde:

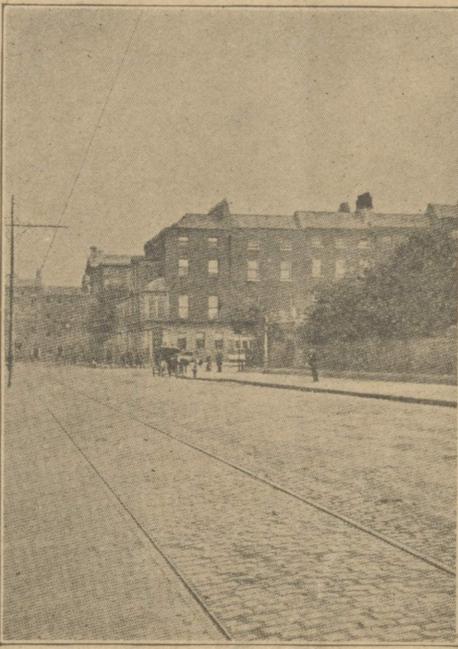
I dreamed of him last night, I saw his face
All radiant and unshadowed of distress,
And as of old, in music measureless,
I heard his golden voice and marked him trace
Under the common thing the hidden grace,
And conjure wonder out of emptiness,
Till mean things put on beauty like a dress,

And all the world was an enchanted place.
And then methought outside a fast-locked gate
I mourned the loss of unrecorded words,
Forgotten tales and mysteries half said,
Wonders that might have been articulate,
And voiceless thoughts like murdered singing birds,
And so I woke and knew that he was dead!

It leaves a sweeter taste in the mouth.

AS FICTION WRITER

Possessed with the spirit of contradiction, obsessed with the Baudelairean diabolism, Wilde tried his hand at fiction with curious results. Be it remembered that he was one of those odd and lucky individuals in whom bubble up at all times plots and ideas and situations capable of being used in the making of stories. Such minds see not only the thing before them, a man and a woman, we will say, walking towards one another over a bridge,



MERRION SQUARE, DUBLIN, WHERE OSCAR WILDE'S YOUTH WAS SPENT.

but with a leap into a strange world of possibilities or probabilities, there is conjured up within them a thousand visions of things odd and fantastic, which might happen. It is not even correct to say that they are men of great imagination—they are more than that. They are, in a respect, tortured men, men whose minds project them into all kinds of situations. They themselves die a thousand deaths, suffer a thousand sorrows and pains, are torn with a thousand griefs. You see that kind of character in Charles Dickens who is always on the verge of tears or laughter, enjoying life, actually enjoying it with Micawber, with Pickwick, with Sam Weller, with Cap'n Cuttle, with the Crummeles: suffering with *Oliver Twist*, with Sidney Carton, with his little Nell, with his Tom Pinch. Such men live the lives that they portray and there is a vast gulf separating them from those writers who artistically contrive their characters but keep themselves apart, from them as a Creator is apart from his creatures. Thackeray for instance, who will paint for you a Beatrix, a Henry Esmond, a Harry Warrington, a Madam Bernstein, a Captain Costigan, but who will step down as it were, among his audience, and comment upon the characters upon the stage; sometimes, indeed, interrupt his narrative to point a moral. Of that sort too was Trollope: of the other sort was George Eliot. Yet, in both cases, in the case of Dickens as well as in the case of Thackeray, with George Eliot as with Trollope, you have accurate pictures of life and of society, and the prejudices, the motives, the ambitions the form and construction of the mind of the fictional personages are as evident to the reader as if he lived in their very presence.

Accepting Dickens and Thackeray as examples, we see Wilde with that peculiar constitution of mind which made him prone to identify himself with his characters, but, again, he had that streak of perversity in him which refused to allow the characters he imagined to act a rational way or to live in a rational world. There was in him that childish and destructive habit of destroying his own toys,

the habit we see in Chesterton who paints pictures perfectly credible in his *Auberons* and *Barkers and Quins*, but sets them to doing fantastic tricks, standing on their heads, running about in queer disguises and undertaking to do things that would, in a sane society, promptly land them in the lunatic asylum. And, of course, with the trick of perversity, Wilde had that Baudelairean bent.

With what has been said kept in mind, consider Wilde's story, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*, which appeared in the *Court and Society Review* in 1887 and in book form in 1891. In the story you have a mimic world that is a faithful reflection of the contemporary world with its lords and ladies and society folk of wealth, hobnobbing with poets, socialists, nihilists, sceptics and odd characters. To verify the truth of his picture of the reception at Bentick house, one has but to turn to the pages of the newspapers of the day, the society journals rather, and mark the names of those in the public eye: Lady Jeune, William Morris, Prince Kropotkine, Burne Jones, Labouchere, the Positivist crowd with Frederic Harrison and his friends, the theosophists with Madam Blavatsky and Sinnett, the agnostics with Annie Besant and Stewart Ross and Dr. Marsh; others too, Cunninghame Graham, Bernard Shaw, Belfort Bax, Walter Crane. Such a gathering is hardly possible in America where there is no democracy, but, instead, an aristocracy of wealth. It was, and is, quite possible in the older country in which there is a real democracy, where two impulses are present, a respect for tradition and for visible authority and a regard for precedent on the one hand, and on the other a regard for certain abstract principles and a strong sense of the value of individual judgment. Between an organized aristocracy and an organic people things are balanced and the triumph of one does not develop into despotism, nor does the triumph of the other result in sullen mob rule. So, as I say, the picture of the reception is perfectly credible and Wilde paints well, as well as Dickens paints when he tells us of the belfry in *The Chimes*, or of Fountain Court in his *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

But now mark the Wilde who twists things, who, in a stage set for things as they are, chooses, in his contradictory spirit to bring in events as they are not at all apt to be.

One of his characters is a palmist and to him goes the hero, Lord Arthur Savile. The palmist, Mr. Podgers, tells his client that his fate is read—that he is to become a murderer. Now see the odd kink, the paradox. Lord Savile, being about to marry, finds his mind occupied with the prediction. So, since it is decreed that he must do murder, the sooner it is done and out of the way, the better. There is a kind of Benvenuto Cellini touch here, the Cellini who when at work in his shop finds his brain on fire because a fellow has annoyed him, so rushes out dagger in hand to stab him and have done with it; the Cellini who finding himself filled with amatory desire while at work, satisfies himself with his model and gets to work again. So Wilde's Lord Savile. To him it does not very much matter who the victim is, so he tries to poison an aunt and fails, then attempts to kill an uncle with an infernal machine. Disgusted with his ill success he takes a walk along the Thames embankment to ponder, when his eyes lights upon the palmist leaning on the parapet with folded arms, gazing into the black depth. Then:

In a moment he had seized Mr. Podgers by the legs and flung him into the Thames. There was a course oath, a heavy splash, and all was still. Lord Arthur looked anxiously over, but could see nothing of the cheiromantist but a tall hat, pirouetting in an eddy of moonlit water. After a time it sank, and no trace of Mr. Podgers was visible. Once he thought that he caught sight of the bulky misshapen figure striking out for the staircase of the bridge, and a horrible feeling of failure came over him, but it turned out to be merely a reflection, and when the moon shone out from behind a cloud it passed away. At last he seemed to have realized the decree of destiny. He heaved a deep sigh of relief, and Sybil's name came to his lips.

You see the kink, of course. A murder with no cause. A murder and no remorse. The victim rather a scarecrow kind of figure. And you see also, the Baudelairean gesture properly watered for English consumption. Bear in mind, too, the quotation made a few pages ago from *The Critic as Artist*, relating to sin as an essential element of progress.

Of course, the story is all tricky fooling and certainly not worth while. It is thin stuff,

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fects. But Wilde's fairy tales were fairy tales for grown ups and not for children. Indeed, it is safe to say that for small folk who are in the Grimm's Fairy Tale age, they do not stand the test of reading aloud—the only test in a children's book. Oliver Goldsmith observed wittily that Dr. Johnson made his little fish talk like great whales. Oscar Wilde made his fairy animals and creatures talk like Oscar Wilde. Try this on a child and observe the effect. "Tomorrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river horse, couches there among the burushes and on a great granite throne sits the great God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines, he utters one cry of joy and then is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the Cataract."

It would be waste of space to spend words on what children do, and do not, appreciate. Had Wilde sought a guide, he could have taken none better than his contemporary, Walter Crane. One careful study of Walter Crane's illustrations to Grimm's household stories, the picture of the Sleeping Beauty for example, would have been sufficient. But Wilde was not writing for children, nor had he the faculty of doing so. What Wilde cared about was his style—consideration of that filled his horizon. Besides, his fairy tales carried altogether too obvious a moral lesson. Children demand simplicity, and simplicity and Oscar Wilde were ever strangers. The single tale, *The Happy Prince*, be it said, is in altogether a different category. Wilde must have written it because he wished to write it. Turning to the bibliography of Oscar Wilde, I find that in every case, when fellow authors have written about the book of fairy tales, there has been mention of *The Happy Prince*. Walter Pater mentions it in a letter dated June 12th, to Oscar Wilde: it is mentioned in a poem printed in the *Harlequinade*; Thomas Hutchinson has a dedication to Oscar Wilde in his *Jolts and Jingles*.

"To you who wrote *The Happy Prince*,
The sweetest tale of modern time."

THE STAGE

It would seem that in some mysterious way, all things pointed to success for Wilde as a playwright. His love for gorgeous scenes, for spectacular effects, for swift surprises, for witty dialogue, for neat, staccato sentences, for the brilliant social life, for silver laughter—all these were ingredients for success on the boards. More, in his essays, we find the result of his study of the theater, a study concerning itself sagely with stage, with scenery, with effects, with management. As spectator and as critic, he accumulated a vast store of knowledge and we find him, in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, experimenting with that knowledge. As Shaw pointed out, Wilde played with everything; with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theater.

Wilde's appearance on the English stage was as a bright star in a dark sky. His advent caused a flutter like the advent of Sheridan. It was a time when the theater had sunk, when stage craft had slipped into the slough of spectatorship. People flocked, here to see the dresses that Mrs. Patrick-Campbell wore, there to see Wilson Barrett in the lime light with his subordinates duly subordinate, to another place to gaze at the spectacles provided by Augustus Harris, to the music halls for an exhibition of strong animal spirits and physical agility, to the Lyceum to bathe in the heroics of Henry Irving, to melodramas, to pantomimes, to acting versions of old plays that were little more than falsifications. "Nobody goes to the theater," wrote Shaw in 1896, "except the people who also go to Madame Tussaud's. Nobody writes for it, unless he is hopelessly stage struck and cannot help himself. It has no share of the leadership of thought; it does not even reflect the current. It does not create beauty; it apes fashion. It does not produce personal skill; our actors and actresses, with the exceptions of a few persons of natural gifts and graces, mostly miscultivated or half cultivated, are simply the middle class section of the residuum. The curt insult with which Matthew Arnold dismissed it from consideration found it and left it utterly defenseless." And it was into a theater world thus described,

that Oscar Wilde stepped with his skill and cultivated taste.

The situation was much as it is today in the world of moving picture production, a situation extremely demoralizing to true art in which, by what we may call the star system, a few short sighted managers strive to obtain vast wealth. I say demoralizing to art, because in time the public wearies of its stars, and, having been educated to no standard, deserts the field. I point to the moving picture world as analogy, because in spite of all the advertisements of the correspondence schools featuring scenario work as the way to fame, it is pretty well admitted that today plays are written for actors, for stars, and actors do not exist to act. Therefore we have, perforce, so much that is sensational, childish or merely vulgar; so little on the screen that is artistic.

But Wilde with his wit, his gentle mirth, and, above all, his pose as egotist, took London by storm. It was a real triumph of ability over ineptitude. There was a delightful page written by A. B. Walkley in the *Speaker* at the time *Lady Windermere's Fan* was produced, a passage that gives an admirable picture of not only the play, but the author, and it is easy to believe the astonishment of the fashionable audience at the St. James's Theater. "The man or woman who does not chuckle with delight at the good things which abound in *Lady Windermere's Fan* should consult a physician at once; delay would be dangerous. Of Mr. Oscar Wilde's coming forward at the end, cigarette in hand, to praise his players, like a preface of Victor Hugo, and to commend his own play, 'of which I am sure, ladies and gentlemen, you estimate the merits almost as highly as I do myself,' you will already have read. I am still chortling... at its exquisite impertinence."

There was something new indeed for London: piquancy, pungency, wit, ingenious situations—to cap all, a throwing overboard of the conventional self-deprecation and a public self glorification. Wilde, clever, lucky, amiable, was a Beaumarchais re-divivus. He walked into his place like a monarch; considered his new position to be his birthright. Life became to him as a holiday. I think that my friend Haldeman-Julius hit the mark when he said to me, one day, that Wilde would live for posterity as Sheridan has lived. There is a singular resemblance between the two men indeed. Lord Byron, the friend of Sheridan, has left on record his opinion that he had never heard nor conceived of a more extraordinary conversationalist; has told us how men spent nights listening to him; has told us that no one equaled him at a supper: has told us how he retained his wit even when drunk. It is Wilde to a hair. There was, in Wilde, the sparkling individuality of the author of *The School for Scandal*, the sustained brilliancy, the infinite variety, the inexhaustible vigor. Both men had the art of repartee, of heaping witticism on witticism and happy phrase on phrase in a fine crescendo. Both had the gift of satire—not the satire of Swift to biting and stinging, but the satire of La Bruyere, a satire that hides behind a gracious smile. One is inclined to think that the plays are too good for acting, so swiftly come arrow after arrow of wit.

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father? Nothing ages like happiness. —An Ideal Husband (Act I.)

I choose, deliberately, the less talked of portions of the plays I quote. Here again:

Lady Hunstanton. We who are wives don't belong to any one.

Lady Stutfield. Oh, I am so very, very glad to hear you say so.

Lady Hunstanton. But do you really think, dear Caroline, that legislation would improve matters in any way? I am told that, nowadays, all the married men live like bachelors, and all the bachelors like married men.

Mrs. Altonby. I certainly never know one from the other.

Lady Stutfield. Oh, I think one can always know at once whether a man has home claims upon his life or not. I have noticed a very, very sad expression in the eyes of so many married men.

Mrs. Altonby. Ah, all that I have noticed is that they are horribly tedious when they are good husbands, and abominably conceited when they are not.

Lady Hunstanton. Well, I suppose the type of husband has completely changed since my young days, but I'm bound to state that poor dear Hunstanton was the most delightful of creatures, and as good as gold.

Mrs. Altonby. Ah, my husband is a sort of promissory note; I am tired of meeting him.

Lady Caroline. But you renew him from time to time, don't you?

Mrs. Altonby. Oh, no, Lady Caroline. I have only had one husband as yet. I suppose you look upon me as quite an amateur.

Lady Caroline. With your views on life I wonder you married at all.

Mrs. Altonby. So do I.

—A Woman of No Importance (Act II.)

Compare such a discharge of wit with the current popular "Revue" with its slap stick farce, its reference to booze, to negroes, to sporting drummers and the absurd bids for applause by a little thrown in about the flag—and let us hope that we may produce a Wilde. But for sheer color and gorgeous vision, Wilde achieved nothing better than his unpublished *Burmese Masque*, *For Love of the King*. As in a lightning flash the eye takes in a scene of wondrous richness. King Beng on his ruby sewn cushion; the blinding blue of an eastern sky; the hundred waiting elephants; the peacocks; the silken banners "propelled with measured rhythm"; the tables and chairs piled high with fruits on golden dishes; the flower crowned courtiers and dancing girls, some half nude, others splendidly robed. But everywhere that intense brightness of a sunlit scene. There is little in the *Masque* that would make it attractive to a stage manager, much that should attract a scenario man. Indeed, it reads as though Wilde had visualized the possibilities of the screen world. I copy from Act II, Scene I:

"The jungle, once more. Time; noonday. In place of the hut is a building, half Burmese, half Italian villa, of white, thick wood, with curled roofs rising on roofs gilded and adorned with spiral carvings and a myriad golden and jewel-encrusted bells. On the broad verandahs are thrown Eastern carpets, rugs, embroideries.

"The world is sun soaked. The surrounding trees stand sentinel like in the burning light. Burmese servants squat motionless, smoking on the broad white steps that lead from the house to the garden. The crows croak drowsily at intervals. Parrot's scream intermittently. The sound of a guitar playing a Venetian love song can be heard coming from the interior. Otherwise life apparently sleeps."

It is an arabesque; it is a something very like that novel Wilde wanted to write, the novel that was to have been as splendid as a Persian rug; it is a word weaving in silk and gold and splendid feathers taken from quetzal and peacock, and golden crested wren. It is, in a word, Oscar Wilde in his glory; a free fantasia of description; a rhapsodie of color.

As may well be imagined, Wilde was the target of the dramatic critics of his day, especially of those of the malignant type. The type is not unfamiliar and Coleridge has characterized it.

No private grudge they need, no personal spite; The *etna scoria* is its own delight! All enmity, all envy, they disclaim; Disinterested thieves of our good name; Cool, sober murderers of their neighbor's fame.

But Wilde was no Keats to be wounded by abuse. For instance, consider his letter to *St. James's Gazette* from which I copy a paragraph as follows:

"When criticism becomes in England a real art, as it should be, and when none but those of artistic instincts and artistic cultivation is allowed to write about works of art, artists will no longer read criticisms with a certain amount of intellectual interest. As things are at present, the criticisms of ordinary newspapers are of no interest whatsoever, except in so far as they display, in its erudite form, the Boetianism of a country that has produced some Athenians, and in which some Athenians have come to dwell."

WILDE AS CRITIC

The critic of the critics was himself a critic. Whether he modified his *scork* to suit his editors, or whether he was of the kindly sympathy

Continued on page 12

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An Ancient Sanity.

Editorial in Charleston (S. C.) American. Mr. Haldeman-Julius, of Girard, Kans., who has revolutionized the publishing of classic literature and sold about forty million books in a few months' time, gives the interesting information that the book which has been most frequently ordered is "The Trial and Death of Socrates." This is encouraging not only as showing a genuine desire on the part of readers to secure the best literature, but it is an encouraging omen for good citizenship. We have sometimes wondered how our committees engaged in Americanization work overlooked the tremendous value of this book as a noble exposition of the duty of citizenship. There does not exist in any volume in the world a finer exposition of the precepts of what we sometimes call "Law and order." To read the defense which Socrates makes of the law under which he has been unjustly convicted and condemned, is to have a new understanding of the dignity of law as the heart of the state.

As Socrates languishes in prison waiting the day of death, knowing full well that he has been condemned by hatred and bigotry and envy, and not by justice, Crito comes to the cell to urge Socrates to escape, the means having been provided. He urges the need that the world has of Socrates, and points out that if Socrates refuses the means of escape it will be thought by the world that his friends made no effort to save him. And like a benign father Socrates talks to Crito patiently, explaining why he may not escape even though his death has been brought about unjustly. He pictures the Law of the Commonwealth coming to him as he prepares to escape, and saying: "What do you mean by trying to escape, but to destroy us, the laws, and the whole city, so far as in you lies? Do you think that a state can exist and not be law-abiding, in which the decisions of law are of no force, and are disregarded and set at naught by private individuals? . . . In every and in court of justice, and everywhere you must do whatever your city and your country bid you do, or you must convince them that their commands are unjust. . . . We brought you into the world, nurtured you, educated you. Yet we proclaim that if any man is dissatisfied with us, he may take his goods and go away whithersoever he pleases. No one of us stands in his way, if he is dissatisfied with us and with the city. But we say that every man of you who remains here, seeing how we administer justice, and how we govern the city, has agreed by the very fact of remaining here to do whatsoever we bid him. And we say he who disobeys us does a threefold wrong; he disobeys us who are his parents, and he disobeys us who fostered him, and he disobeys us after he has agreed to obey us, without persuading us that we are wrong. Yet we did not bid him sternly to do whatever we told him; we offered him an alternative; we gave him the choice to obey us or to convince us that we were wrong." Then when the question of the injustice of his condemnation comes up, he pictures the Laws as saying: "If you repay evil with evil in this shameful way you will injure those whom you should least injure. . . . Now you will go away wronged not by us, the laws, but by men."

If men have wrongly used the law, says Socrates, that in no wise justifies the antagonism to law. To defeat the law is to defeat many who in after time will need the law.

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Continued from page 10

thetic nature of a Michael Monahan or a William Marion Reedy is impossible to say, but certain it is that the Wilde of the criticisms is altogether a different being from the Wilde of the satirical epigram. You find very little of the Wilde perversities and idiosyncrasies, certainly none of the Hazlitt waspishness nor any of the Mencken bluntness. Now and then there is discovered occasional touches of tenderness as in his criticism of William Morris's *House of the Wolfings*, (*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 2nd, 1889) and again in the review of W. B. Yeats's *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, written for the magazine of which Wilde was editor, the *Woman's World*, February, 1889. There is a geniality almost equal to that of Charles Lamb or of Leigh Hunt somewhat evident. "As we read Mr. Morris's story (The Wolfings) with its fine alternations of verse and prose, its decorative and descriptive beauties, its wonderful handling of romantic and adventurous themes, we cannot but feel that we are as far removed from the ignoble fiction as we are from the ignoble facts of our own day. We breathe a purer air, and have dreams of a time when life had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and was simple, stately and complete." Certainly, Wilde as critic, sought to be just, was at pains to write frankly, vividly, accurately as possible. As critic he was thoroughly in earnest. The clever smartness we discover in him in his plays is absent in his critical work.

WILDE AS ESSAYIST

Perhaps Wilde was to the fashionable of London much as the robust Henry Fielding was to the literary world when Samuel Richardson wrote *Clarissa Harlowe*. He had to shock the polite world out of its terrible complacency. For there were such proper waxen figures as Samuel Smiles and Martin Farquhar Tupper cooing, and there were many who modeled their conduct upon the example of Sir Charles Grandison—milk and water men, sanctified prigs, pious and irreproachable gentlemen in whose mouths butter would not melt. To be respectable was the one virtue, and tender sensibilities were shocked when Shaw wore a woolen shirt and when Morris solemnly sat on his silk hat. Yet, there must have been a secret delight in scandal. Turning over the newspapers of the day we find prominence given to items with salacious base. For instance, the crimes of Jack the Ripper, the Charles Dilke divorce case, the Parmell-O'Shea tangle, Stead's Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon. The fascination of murder held them as now. Quiet men and women found something of vast interest in reading reports of acts of violence, in living in imagination unrestrained lives. But, the record of crime had been left to inept hands. To be sure in novels, action hinged upon crime, but in novels criminals were always black, lost souls who bore the brand of Cain on their brows, had no single redeeming trait and went their way for a time certain of being laid by the heels. It was, then, a tremendous and daring conception of Oscar Wilde to take a wholesale murderer as the subject of an essay, but he did so and produced a most interesting piece of work conceived in graceful vein in his *Pen, Pencil and Poison*—the story of Thomas Griffiths Wainwright. The subject of the essay has been confused with another murderer, Henry Wainwright, also an educated man with literary tastes, familiar with the actors and poets of his day, but the last named murderer was but a clumsy fellow compared with Wilde's hero.

The late Max Nordau in his book *Degeneration* has found, stupidly enough, evidence of a love for "immorality" in Wilde because of the essay, tearing from the context certain passages and adducing them as proof of Wilde's diabolism. One paragraph is truly amusing in its ingenuousness. I quote from page 320:

"Oscar Wilde apparently admires immorality, sin and crime. In a very affectionate biographical treatise on Thomas Griffith Wainwright, designer, painter, and author, and the murderer of several people, he says: 'He was a forger of no mean or ordinary capabilities, and as a subtle and secret poisoner almost without a rival in this or any age.' This remarkable man, so powerful with pen and pencil, and poison.' He sought to find expression by pen or poison.' 'When a friend reproached him with the murder of Helen Abercrombie, he shrugged his shoulders and said: 'Yes; it was a dreadful thing to do, but she had very thick ankles.'

'His crimes seem to have had an important effect upon his art. They gave a strong personality to his style, a quality that his early work certainly lacked.' 'There is no sin except stupidity.' 'An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.'

"He cultivates incidentally a slight mysticism in colours. 'He,' Wainwright, 'had that curious love of green which in individuals is always the sign of subtle, artistic temperament, and in nations is said to denote a laxity, if not a decadence, of morals.'

That, of course, is sheer stupidity. We do not denounce Charles Dickens because he told the story of Bill Sikes, of the Artful Dodger, of Fagin, nor do we shudder at the name of Conrad because he ended *Victory* as he did. Doubtless, Max Nordau, on similar grounds to those on which he condemned Wilde and Ibsen and Nietzsche as degenerates, might have found cause to place the Bible on his index expurgatoris. The fact is that Oscar Wilde wrote a fine essay on the murderer and not perhaps so much because he was a murderer, as that he was one of those extraordinary men who failed to become what he bade to be, and was the friend and companion of such men as Charles Lamb, Dickens, Macready and Hablot Browne. Perhaps Wilde had in mind his own case, certainly there are prophetic passages and there is for example a parallel existing between the incident told by Gide when he met Wilde in connection with Wainwright.

While he was in gaol, Dickens, Macready, and Hablot Browne came across him by chance. They had been going over the prisons of London, searching for artistic effects, and in Newgate they suddenly caught sight of Wainwright. He met them with a defiant stare, Forster tells us, but Macready was "horrified to recognize a man familiarly known to him in former years, and at whose table he had dined."

Look at the essay on Wainwright as the picture of a man who tortures himself, a man of taste and sensibility at whose heart the worm of misery gnawed constantly, a man sickened with secret maladies, a man with brain on fire who moved among his fellows with a smiling face, fearing at every moment the knocking at the gate which would mean his doom—read the essay with all that in mind and you will be rightly attuned for the pleasure. No show mannikin, no machine of creaking wood has Wilde in his Wainwright, but a living thing, a frightened thing, a tormented thing, a vice ridden thing. You feel the daily fear that must have been in the murderer's heart though Wilde does not play on the vulgar emotions, displaying remorse crudely as Dickens does in his tale of the murderer Jonas Chuzzlewit. But, in some mysterious manner, Wilde makes his reader sense a melancholy, just as Beethoven makes us sense a melancholy in that immortal passage of his seventh symphony when the stringed instruments sob in the bass.

AS POET.

Oscar Wilde did not have a jealous care of the art poetic. There was too much of that "style" for real ecstasy; that style, too, was too often encumbered with preciousities, overhung with ornamentation. Then, too, he was constantly trying new forms, experimenting, seeking a satisfactory model. Yet it would be wrong to assert that his poetry lacks verbal charm, and the average man who has no great patience with poetry, who would never sit down to read an *In Memoriam* or an *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, the kind of a man who loses himself among poetic phrases, finds that Wilde evokes a picture by words full of color. Take this, for instance:

SYMPHONY IN YELLOW

An omnibus across the bridge
Crawls like a yellow butterfly,
And, here and there, a passer-by
Shows like a little restless midge.

Big barges full of yellow hay
Are moved against the shadowy wharf,
And, like a yellow silken scarf,
The thick fog hangs along the quay.

The yellow leaves begin to fade
And flutter from the Temple elms,
And at my feet the pale green Thames
Lies like a rod of rippled jade.

a slight enough thing, but full of interest and spirit. Your man who loses himself in verse based on legendary lore or mysticism, understands and enjoys that. It means something to him. For the same reason Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol* interests and excites, almost like an adventure story, combining simplicity

and beauty in a way that is altogether satisfying. Mark how a concrete image is called up by a short descriptive passage.

I walked, with other souls in pain,
Within another ring,
And was wondering if the man had done
A great or little thing,
When a voice behind me whispered low,
"That fellow's got to swing."

And mark the dramatic appeal of this:

A prison wall was round us both,
Two outcast men we were:
The world had thrust us from its heart,
And God from out His care:
And the iron gin that waits for Sin
Had caught us in its snare.

And twice a day he smoked his pipe,
And drank his quart of beer;
His soul was resolute, and held
No hiding-place for fear;
He often said that he was glad
The hangman's hands were near.

But why he said so strange a thing
No warder dared to ask:
For he to whom a watcher's doom
Is given as his task,
Must set a lock upon his lips,
And make his face a mask.

He gets very close there to the heart of the common man, as close as James Stephens indeed, with his *What Tomas an Buile Said in a Pub*.

The truth of the matter is that under pain, the artificial Wilde vanished and his poetry became something other than pretence and artifice. I say that, because Douglas has told us that up to the time of his imprisonment, Wilde had "held that style was everything, and feeling nothing; that poetry should be removed as well from material actuality as from the actuality of the spirit, and that no great poet had ever in his greatest moments been other than sincere." (Page 209, Oscar Wilde and Myself.) And of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, Douglas writes, "(in it) we have a sustained poem of sublimated actuality and of a breadth and sweep and poignancy such as had never before been attained in this line. The emotional appeal is . . . quite legitimate and . . . the established tradition as to what is fitting and comely in a poem of this nature is not outraged or transgressed"

Another great poem grew out of his prison life. I refer to the long letter, made into a book by Mr. Ross and entitled *De Profundis*, for a poem, a prose poem, it is. It would be better to mention in this place that *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* was not composed until Wilde had left prison. *De Profundis*, however, was written within stone walls. In another place quotation has been made of Blunt's Diaries in which Ross is quoted as having said that it is impossible to tell how much of *De Profundis* is sincere repentance, and how much the result of self pity. Be that as it may, it is very certain that the spirit of the man was bitter in his solitude, that his egoism fell away from him at times. But it is absurd to expect that punishment and imprisonment and disgrace could change the man himself. If he had that feminine soul, he had it. It was part of him, and he could not get away from it, prison or no prison. But he could know in his own heart that he was not as he should have liked to be, that his life's ideal was other than his life's path. In other words, he realized, as we all realize, that while his eyes were fixed on the stars, his feet were firmly planted in the mud, and for that fact he was very sorry indeed. Not only sorry, but rebellious that things were as they were, and, as Wilde said, the mood of rebellion closes up the channels of the soul, and shuts out the air of heaven. The mood rebellious and the mood penitential cannot sit side by side in the same heart. Penitence presupposes submission and gratitude for gifts bestowed, and Wilde felt no gratitude to the fates that had at his birth, dropped into his veins the one drop of black blood which colored his life. Destiny is omnipotent, and destiny had given Wilde the feminine soul. Doubtless, had Wilde been what he wished to be, in his better moments, he would have sat with august divinities. But neither Wilde, nor you, nor I, have it in our powers to command the winds that would waft us to the Islands of the Blest.

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LIFE AND LETTERS

E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS, EDITOR

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What Napoleon Thought Himself

(The following paragraphs from "The Maxims of Napoleon" are in the Pocket Series.)

I am the State! Whose throne?—a bit of wood covered with velvet. I am I alone am here the representative of the people. Even if I had a public—people wash their faces at home. France has more than I of France.

I was born and created myself. I am conscious of no work I can get through. From my first career, I always commanded myself.

A man like me is always a god or a devil.

Nothing has been more simple to me than my elevation. It was owing to the peculiar circumstances of the times, and because I fought successfully against the enemies of my country. What is most extraordinary, and unparalleled in history, is that I rose from being a private person to the astonishing height of power I possessed, without having committed a single crime to obtain it.

Presence of mind after midnight is so complete with me, that if I am awakened by sudden circumstances, I am wide awake; I get up, so that no

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We guarantee satisfaction, or your money back. No one can say that we have ever failed to make this guarantee good, without any quibbling whatever.

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If you have money to invest or expect to have money to invest soon, better send us a postal to-day.

Our booklet on investments and speculations is worth a hundred dollars for the sound advice and general information it contains, if we are to believe several hundred people who have written us to that effect, after reading it.

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Chas. Moore, President and Manager, Utah-California Exploration Company, Park City, Utah

Note:—The best of references given on request. We prefer to give as references those who have known us intimately and dealt with us for 20 years. Hundreds of good references can be given—banks, individuals, mercantile houses, supply houses, etc. We welcome the most searching investigation.

If we could only get people to investigate properly, this small block of stock would be snapped up in no time.

Continued from page 2

of setting up a kind of god of social ambition, of domination, telling the young that with this, that and the other quality encouraged, great will be the material reward. The governmentship of the state, the presidency of the country, we have insisted, would be the goal within the reach of everyone, the height to which all should aspire, the prize within each grasp. That, of course, is pernicious nonsense, and not only nonsense but senseless social ambition. The stupidity of it may best be realized by imagining an employer inept enough to tell his hands that each of them, by being punctual and accurate, would have the management of the concern within his grasp. Apart from the untruthfulness of that because of the possibility of several developing the required qualities to the same degree, consider the foolishness. For, it is perfectly obvious that a manager of, we will say, a scrap iron business, having discovered a good man at the handles of the electric hoist, would certainly keep that man in his position and not advance him through the auditing department and so on the road to the management. No wise manager would spoil an excellent hoist man to make an indifferent bookkeeper. To do that would be a step towards disintegration. In other words, every one in authority in the business world aims at the development of the individual and not to the inculcation of social ambition. Nationally, the same idea should be pursued on the ground that "where self-culture has ceased to be the ideal, the intellectual standard is instantly lowered." In a passage in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* we find the same idea:

The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly—that is what each of us is here for. People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self. Of course they are charitable. They feed the hungry, and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked.

Without individual self-development, insists Wilde, a society, a nation, must become an empty thing, a thing all front, like a Scandinavian troll. In the play *A Woman of No Importance* Wilde, emphasizing the point, puts a searing speech into the mouth of his character Hester Worsley:

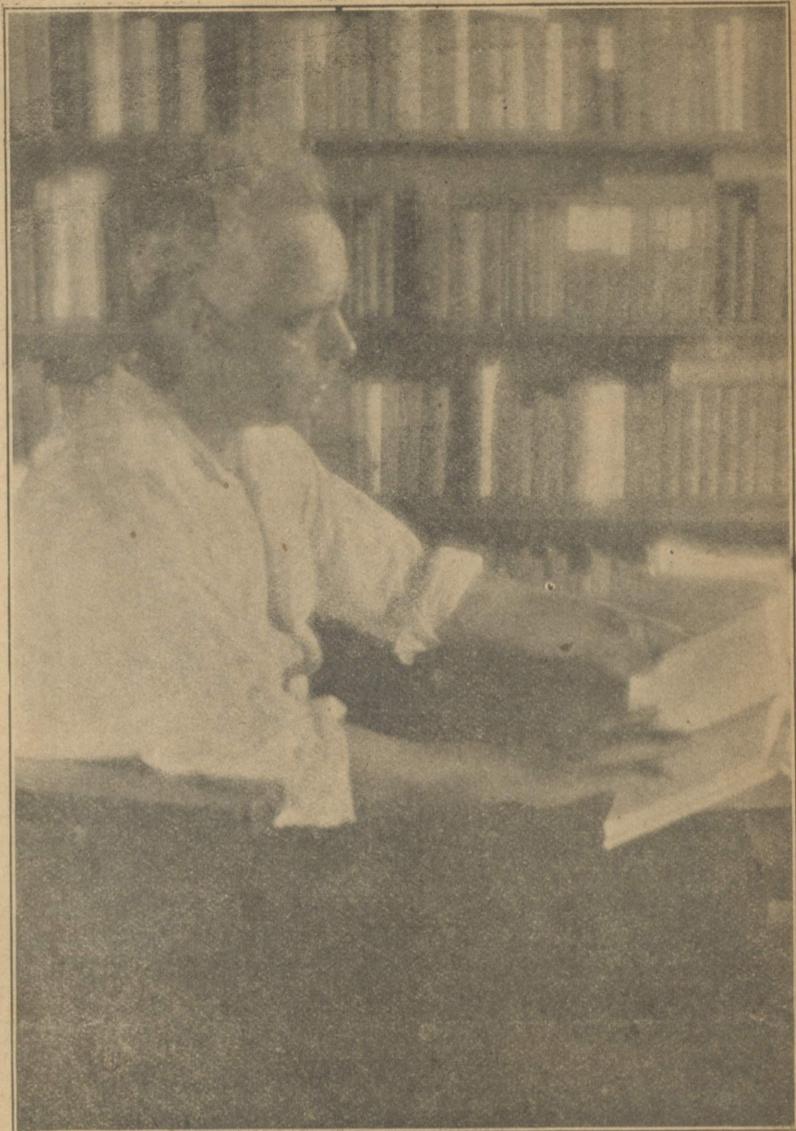
You rich people in England, you don't know how you are living. How could you know? You shut out from your society the gentle and the good. You laugh at the simple and the pure. Living, as you all do, on others and by them, you sneer at self-sacrifice, and if you throw bread to the poor, it is merely to keep them quiet for a season. With all your pomp and wealth and art you don't know how to live—you don't even know that. You love the beauty that you can see and touch and handle, the beauty that you can destroy, and do destroy, but of the unseen beauty of life, of the unseen beauty of a higher life, you know nothing. You have lost life's secret. Oh, your English society seems to me shallow, selfish, foolish. It has blinded its eyes, and stopped its ears. It lies like a leper in purple. It sits like a dread thing smeared with gold. It is all wrong, all wrong.

Yes, there was a spirit of contradiction in Oscar Wilde and he delighted in awakening opposition, but looked at properly we find much that is inexorably logical beneath what seems to be tricky humor. He made his hearers writhe while they smiled, and the writhing was salutary.

As I have said, Wilde's writings are tinged with Baudelaire, a man of strong convictions and with a very definite attitude to art and to life, who has been made a symbol of perversity and decadence. But let that pass for the time. Granted that Charles Baudelaire had made excursions into strange dream lands by way of the opium and hashish door, it is not for us to damn any more than to deify. What engages us at this moment is Baudelaire's poetic creed and its influence upon Oscar Wilde. Baldly translated, I give the Baudelairean poetic creed thus: "Poetry . . . poetry has no other aim than itself; it cannot have any other aim, and no poem will be so great, so noble, so truly worthy of the name of poem, as that which will have been written only for the pleasure of writing a poem. I do not wish to say—be it understood—that poetry may not ennoble morals, that its final result may not be to raise men above vulgar interests. That would evidently be an absurdity. I say that, if the poet has pursued a moral aim, he has diminished his poetical power, and it is not imprudent to wager that his work will be bad. Poetry cannot, under pain of death or degradation, assimilate itself to science or to morals. It has not truth for its object, it has only itself."

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that

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Herewith is a new picture of Charles J. Finger, whose essays in *Life and Letters* are attracting wide attention. Mr. Finger is a careful worker and a gifted artist. He is a sculptor in words. His studies of Napoleon, Oscar Wilde, Thoreau, Addison and many others are now in the Pocket Series, where they are meeting happy responses from discriminating readers. Mr. Finger is putting his finest efforts into the work he is doing for the Haldeman-Julius institution. He and a number of other writers are helping to make Girard, Kans., the literary capital of the United States. This, of course, is an extreme thing to say, but we think there is enough solid achievement behind this statement to enable it to stand unchallenged.

this does not mean that there is a predilection for things immoral, a delight in depravity and in ugliness. It simply means what should be a self evident truth, a truth accepted by all reasonable men; that art runs its course independently of morality just as it runs independently of science or of political economy; that wise men do not look for a moral lesson in works of art, should, indeed, accept poetry just as they accept music. Who, hearing a Beethoven sonata, would search for the lesson in it? Who so foolish as to seek a moral sentiment in Rubinstein's *Kammenoi-Ostrow*? Wilde's way of stating his artistic creed was very similar to Baudelaire's. Thus:

Science is out of the reach of morals, for her eyes are fixed upon eternal truths. Art is out of the reach of morals, for her eyes are fixed upon things beautiful and immortal and ever-changing. To morals belong the lower and less intellectual spheres.

I wrote, a few paragraphs back, that Baudelaire had become a kind of symbol. A word of explanation is due. Just as Hogarth chose to picture a side of life which others of his time were either too blind, or too squeamish, or too cowardly, or too conventional minded to attempt, pictures that showed the beast in man, the human being as Yahoo and Struldbrug, pictures a man debauched, dissipated, degraded and filthy, so has Baudelaire sung of the unwholesome things which are part of our artificial life—of vice, and crime, and corruption. Very engagingly too he dabbles in things, esoteric and diabolical. Take that little prose poem, *The Generous Player*—a tale in which

the chief character sells his soul to the devil on condition that he shall be free from boredom for the remainder of his days, but, after the compact is made, begins to doubt with horror whether his satanic majesty will keep his word. So, to reassure himself, he prays in semi-slumber: "My God; Lord my God! Let it be that the Devil keep his word." It is a queer tale and there are others akin to it, but each must read for himself, must try to understand the peculiar attraction for, not only the diabolical, but the loathsome, the morbid, the criminal and the lewd had for the Frenchman. Of course, the more Baudelaire was attacked for his supposed immorality the more extravagant he became. Still, he was a great poet and a master of the word.

Unfortunately, somehow, we are inclined to overlook the fact that it is not Frenchmen alone who have pictured the horrible. We forget Morrison with his *Tales of Mean Streets*, Caradoc Evans with his stories of sordid poverty and crime in the Welsh hill-country, Thomas Burke and his dock-land sketches. But pass all that. Enamored of Baudelaire, Wilde's work became affected just as Swinburne's work was by the same influence, and, in another branch of art, Aubrey Beardsley's. But let us not overlook the fact that there is everywhere manifested a vast interest in the odd and the bizarre, in the occult and the fantastic. That peculiar interest accounts for the popularity of others besides those whose names I have mentioned; Poe, for instance, and Ambrose Bierce, and Zola, and Gautier and

Important Notice!

Thousands of subscriptions to Life and Letters will expire with this issue. Unless renewals are received at once many readers will miss the September issue of Life and Letters. This August issue rounds out an entire year of 12 issues and if you are among those who subscribed in time to get the first issue of Life and Letters then you must renew NOW if you want to begin the second year of the magazine. Should you fail to renew in time, your name will be removed from the subscription list because we do not intend to carry subscriptions which are not paid for in advance. If you are in doubt as to when your subscription expires then be sure to examine the yellow address label pasted either on the magazine or on the wrapper, should your magazine happen to come to you in an individual wrapper. Note the very first line. If it says "Aug 1923" it means that your subscription expires with the present issue of Life and Letters. If it says "Sept 1923" it means it will expire with the next issue. In either case renew at once—TODAY—in order to make certain the fact that you are to miss no numbers of this magazine. There is an additional reason why you should renew now. On July 30, 1923, the subscription price of Life and Letters will go to \$1 per year in the U. S. (\$1.50 in Canada and Foreign). The old price of 50c will hold good until then for U. S. subscribers. By renewing now you save 50 cents. Should you fail to act promptly you will miss issues of the magazine and then have to subscribe at the dollar rate. If you act on the suggestion after July 30, 1923, please do not fail to remit at the dollar rate. If you send us only 50 cents after July 30, 1923, we will extend your subscription only 6 months, but by sending in your renewal now—before July 30—your 50 cents will extend it for an entire year—12 great issues of Life and Letters, the magazine without a peer in its class.

RENEWAL BLANK FOR LIFE AND LETTERS

Life and Letters, Girard, Kansas

Enclosed find 50 cents which is payment in full for a year's renewal to Life and Letters. This is being mailed before July 30, 1923. (If you are sending in a renewal after July 30, then remit \$1, because that is to be the regular subscription price.)

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Important Note to Foreign and Canadian Readers: The present subscription price in Canada and Foreign is \$1 per year. Remit that sum if you want to renew before July 30. After July 30, remit \$1.50, which is to be the Foreign and Canadian rate.

Dumas and the Revolution

[A hitherto unpublished letter by the elder Alexander Dumas has been printed in La Revue Mondiale. The letter, which is addressed to Mme. Desbordes-Valmore, has more than the ordinary interest attaching to Dumas's letters, since it refers to the fighting in Paris in 1830. It is as follows:]

August 5, 1830.

Madame,—

The first rifle shots of our gallant Parisians went off just as I sat down to reply to your charming letter. To say to you that I shall always keep it, is useless. To express to you the admiration which I have for your talent would be to fall into those usual praises to which you are accustomed.

I was counting on going to Algiers, Madame, when this fine revolution of ours broke out. I was going to go by way of Lyon and there to give you by word of mouth all the information that you could desire about Christine and the costumes of her suite. I was promising myself great happiness in telling you all that I have in my mind. There is in the expression of the eyes and the tone of the voice a truth and a warmth which

carry belief with them, and then you would have to believe me. My voyage is delayed—I cannot quit Paris at such a time. It is much finer than anything I'd go abroad to see, but I will get you some costumes. As for the arrangement of the prologue, that is the easiest thing in the world. A poet of Lyon will take it upon himself to explain in ten verses that the queen has fallen into the water and has been fished out by Steinberg.

What I am about to say, Madame, is so full of poetry and drama that there are moments when I think of giving up forever writing a single word. What can one do after what has been done? What drama in the theatre can equal the drama in the street? What hero of the Middle Ages will equal the last citizen of our suburbs?

To come back to Christine, which is rather trifling in the midst of all this, Mme. Firmin, in starting for Switzerland, has taken upon herself to send you a second copy. She is going by way of Lyon on her return, if she is not there already; she will tell you again, Madame, how many

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times I have talked to her of you, and with what respect and enthusiasm I pronounce your name.

I ask permission, Madame, when I go to Lyon to repeat to you all that I was going to say. I have wanted to talk to you for a long time and to continue it always.

I have the honor to be, Madame, your very humble and obedient servant,

A. Dumas.

It is harder to be poor without murmuring than to be rich without arrogance.

When heaven rears a man he grows very fat: when men rear one he is but skin and bone.

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HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY,
GIRARD, KANSAS

Nelson Antrim Crawford, head of the department of journalism at the Kansas State Agricultural College, Manhattan, Kans., is in charge of the poetry department of the University in Print, which is another way of saying the Pocket Series. He edited No. 298, which is entitled "Today's Poetry," an anthology of the new verse. This is an excellent collection and is meeting with a warm welcome. We have manuscripts from Mr. Crawford as follows: "Poems of John Keats" and "Poems of William Morris," both edited with introduction and notes. His selections are of the very best. Mr. Crawford plans to do for us a series under the heading of poetry. He was born in Miller, S. Dak., May 4, 1888. He took his B.A. at the State University of Iowa and his M.A. at the University of Kansas. He is unmarried. From 1906 to 1909 he was engaged in daily newspaper work. He has been head of the department of journalism at Manhattan since 1914. He is president of the Kansas Author's Club. He has written many critical articles for The New Republic, The Nation, Poetry, etc. In 1920 he won the Kansas poetry prize.



NELSON ANTRIM CRAWFORD

The First Number of "Know Thyself" is on the Press--Second Number is Now in Preparation

As we write this announcement on July 10, our mechanical department is at work closing the forms on the first number of KNOW THYSELF, the latest magazine issued by the Haldeman-Julius institution. By July 15 the first number will be in the mails, and we are sure that the readers will respond most enthusiastically to this initial number. This magazine, KNOW THYSELF, contains thirty-two pages, with a cover of blue cardboard stock. The Editor of KNOW THYSELF, William J. Fielding, has put some of his very best efforts into this first issue. In addition to editorials, book reviews, many short articles, pictures, etc., it will contain important articles, such as the following: "Raising the Dead by Modern Science," "The Secret of Autosuggestion," "Why We Love," "Psycho-Analysis—The Searchlight on Mind and Soul," "Glands—The Super-Regulators of Personality," "The Morality of Birth Control," etc. The managing editor of KNOW THYSELF, E. Haldeman-Julius, has written especially for the first number an article entitled "Culture and the Workers." In all, KNOW THYSELF will have a wonderful beginning. But it is only a beginning. As the first issue goes to press, we are in receipt of a letter from Mr. William J. Fielding, Editor of KNOW THYSELF, in which he says:

"I have the second issue of KNOW THYSELF well under way, which in every respect will be equal to the initial number, if, indeed, it does not surpass it in the matter of content.

"I have been most fortunate in obtaining several interviews with Count Alfred Korzybski, a noted Polish scientist, mathematician and engineer, who is internationally known through his achievements in mathematical science. Count Korzybski's outstanding accomplishment is in discovering and formulating certain natural laws relating to the nature of man, which promise to revolutionize world thought in every field of activity, and to profoundly influence the future of the human race.

"Count Korzybski, in these interviews, has outlined to me the nature of his discoveries and formulations, and in the article which I am preparing, the reader will perceive that astounding possibilities are bound up in the principle set forth. This estimate of Korzybski's work is not merely a personal judgment, but is the consensus of opinion of some of the most eminent thinkers living. Professor Cassius J. Keyser, of Columbia University, for instance, one of the three great mathematical philosophers of the world—a peer of Bertrand Russell—in speaking of Count Korzybski's work states that: 'Spiritually it is great and mighty—great in its enterprise, in its achievements, in the implications of its central thought, and mighty in its significance for the future welfare of men, women and children everywhere throughout the world.'

"Dr. Walter N. Polakov, the industrial engineer and author, has ranked Korzybski's contribution to human knowledge with that of Aristotle, whose Organum was the guiding instrument in shaping the thought of mankind for two thousand years; and with that of Francis Bacon, whose Novum Organum, three hundred years ago, became the basis upon which the creation of modern science was made possible. My article on Korzybski will be illustrated by several notable pictures, two of which were painted and drawn by Lady Korzybski, who is a distinguished artist."

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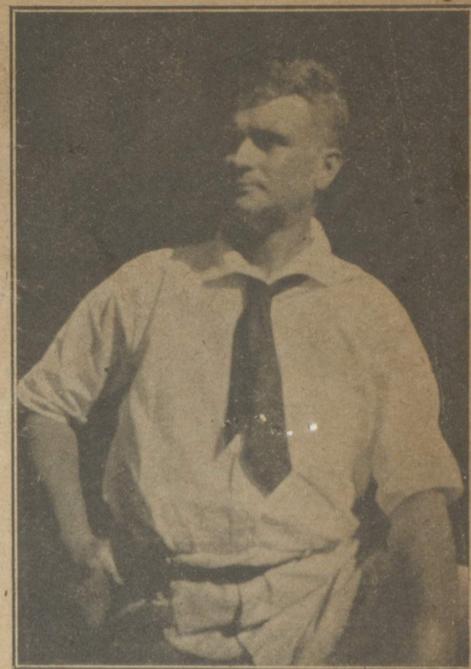
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Mr. James Bishop Thomas is the latest writer to join the ranks of the Pocket Series group of authors. We have just received from Mr. Thomas a manuscript entitled "A Guide to Kant," which the editor of the series has read with great interest and pleasure. It will do a great deal of good. Mr. Thomas handles his material splendidly. His style is pleasing throughout. He is soon to deliver another manuscript, entitled "A Guide to Bergson." He writes that Bergson is his favorite philosopher in modern times, as Plato is his favorite among the ancients. He will also do Swedenborg. Mr. Thomas was born in Petaluma, Calif., March 21, 1871. He has studied in Europe, at the University of Berlin and Halle, where he received his Ph.D. in 1901. He lives at 10 Winter Street, Plymouth, Mass. Mr. Thomas takes the view that philosophy must be co-ordinated with biography if it is to be "put over" or understood at all.



JAMES BISHOP THOMAS.

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1886

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OPENING OF THE NEW THEATRE AT OXFORD

Topics of the Week

HOME RULE AND IMPERIAL UNITY.—There is a largish island lying to the westward of Great Britain, called Ireland. Concerning this island, although he has been busy hacking down several of its "upas-trees" during the last seventeen years, the omniscient Mr. Gladstone knows so little that he is now humbly seeking information about it from various quarters. Among those who have replied to his circular are the Irish Roman Catholic Bishops, who assert as their belief that Home Rule may be granted without trenching on the supremacy of the Crown or the unity of the Empire. On the contrary, the Ulster Loyalists enthusiastically endorse Lord Randolph Churchill's declaration, that such a town as Belfast will never submit itself to the domination of a Parliament in Dublin. Now, is it possible in any way to reconcile these discordant sentiments? Every elector in Great Britain ought to weigh the matter seriously, for there can be little doubt that before long Mr. Gladstone will propound some scheme of Home Rule which, in order to satisfy his Parnellite allies, must be hedged round with merely illusory securities. And Mr. Gladstone will probably get his own way. Some of the Whigs may secede, and the House of Lords will find Home Rule a nauseous dose to swallow; but the majority of the electorate still believe in Mr. Gladstone, in spite of his many and grievous blunders. They are, moreover, rather ignorant and apathetic about Irish affairs, they know that Ireland has been a thorn in our flesh for ages past, and they think that scarcely any change can be a change for the worse. Suppose then that a genuine scheme of Home Rule is conceded, will civil war follow, as Lord Randolph threatens? Few judicious persons will venture to speak dogmatically on such a point, but good reasons can be given for anticipating a more hopeful result. Power at once brings a sense of responsibility, and, with an independent Parliament, Irish electors would not always vote for the submissive nominees of a dictator. Then, if creed-differences can be left in abeyance, the Loyalists in the North will receive cordial aid from propertied Roman Catholics all over the country, and not only from men of property, but from thousands of humble persons who are now smarting under the despotism of the National League. Lord Randolph Churchill has been accused of stirring up strife, but he said nothing in his speech at Belfast to stimulate religious animosity; on the contrary, he invoked the aid of Roman Catholic Loyalists. That the Nationalists are disquieted by his visit is proved by the fact that one of their newspapers published a gross perversion of part of his Belfast address.

PROCEDURE.—There can be no doubt that Mr. Gladstone acted wisely in resolving that the question of Procedure should be submitted to a Select Committee. The subject is extremely complicated, and the House of Commons could hardly arrive at a proper decision unless the scheme to be submitted to it were thoroughly discussed beforehand by representatives of both parties. The Conservatives and the Liberals are now agreed that reform is necessary, and it is fortunate that the plan which the Committee will have to consider is one devised by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord Randolph Churchill. The principal proposal included in the Tory Resolutions is that the work of the House of Commons shall henceforth begin early in the afternoon, and that it shall not be continued after half-past twelve o'clock. It has been objected that this would be inconvenient for Ministers, for business men, and for practising barristers. So far as Ministers are concerned, it may be questioned whether they would find much difficulty in complying with the new arrangement; for if they were always able to get home soon after midnight, they might easily be in their offices at a comparatively early hour. Practising barristers and men of business would undoubtedly be put to some inconvenience; but that argument ought not to carry much weight. Under existing conditions the work of the country cannot be properly done, and members of Parliament must somehow contrive to reconcile the claims of public duty with their private interests. In the Resolutions as they stand, it is proposed that at half-past twelve the Speaker shall adjourn the House "without putting any question until the next sitting day." If this suggestion were adopted, obstruction would be as easy as it has ever been; and we may assume that it will in some way be modified. The difficulty might be overcome by arranging that half-an-hour before the rising the Speaker should propose that "the question be now put." If the proposal were rejected, the debate would continue; if it were accepted, the question would at once be put, and the debate closed. This excellent method was originally indicated by the *Times*, and it seems to have been accepted by Lord Hartington, who will act as Chairman of the Select Committee.

THE ANNEXATION OF BURMA.—Mr. Gladstone seems to have quite put aside his former whim for reversing the policy of his predecessors in office. It may be that when he followed that course in 1880, personal antipathy to Lord Beaconsfield had more to do with the matter than any lofty conception of purified statesmanship. On Monday night

Mr. Richard reminded him of those glorious doings, and expressed the deepest regret that he had not followed the same course by reversing the Burmese policy of the late Government. But there is no personal antipathy—rather the contrary, in fact—between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury, nor even if there were would Parliament be easily influenced to hand back the Burmese to the tender mercies of Theebaw. All the same, it counts for something to have the emphatic assurance of Lord Kimberley that the Kingdom of Ava will permanently remain a portion of the British Empire. This being settled, we can now proceed to develop the potentialities of unbounded prosperity which are said to exist in our latest acquisition. So far it has cost us very little—only 300,000*l.*—and the Indian Secretary believes that in the course of a few years it will not only pay its way, but begin to hand over a surplus to the Calcutta treasury. British Burma has done so for many years, and if Upper Burma be possessed of half the intrinsic wealth reported by travellers, it ought to make a very remunerative return for our trifling expenditure. As regards the question raised by Mr. Hunter's amendment—that is, whether the English or the Indian Exchequer should defray the cost of the operations—it all depends upon whether England or India was the more interested in stopping foreign intrigue at Mandalay. On that head there cannot be much doubt. India would have been directly menaced had French influence established itself on the Irrawaddy, and in order to guard against the danger she must have resorted to much the same costly precautions as her Government has lately had to undertake on the North-Western frontier.

HOME SECRETARIES AND POLICEMEN.—To an actor, who complained of an unfavourable newspaper notice, Mrs. Garrick said: "You should write your own criticisms, David always did." Mr. Childers has adopted the ingenious lady's recommendation: he has acted as one of the judges in a case where he himself was on trial, for, as regards public opinion, he really stood in the prisoners' dock quite as much as Sir Edmund Henderson. Every one who has looked into the matter knows that in the management of the Police Sir Edmund had not the same free hand as his predecessor, Sir Richard Mayne. Sir Richard was practically the absolute ruler of his blue-coated army, but gradually the Home Office assumed more and more control, and, therefore, when such an emergency as Loot-Monday crops up, it cannot calmly wash its hands, and say: "I at least have done no wrong." Yet this is the tune which pervades the successive "numbers" of the Childers-cum-Wolsley Cantata. The Police Boss catches it hotly. He stood in plain clothes for hours in Trafalgar Square, where his subs were unable to find him; he sent verbal messages which were misreported; there were no mounted men on duty; and he had made up his mind that the mob would go back the way it came. All this sounds very reprehensible as matters chanced to turn out, but, supposing the affair had gone off quietly, nine men out of ten would have pronounced Sir Edmund's arrangements to be most judicious. Nothing, however, succeeds worse than ill-success. Nevertheless, if blame is to be awarded at all, is it fair to exonerate Mr. Childers and punish Colonel Henderson? The fact is, as we said a fortnight ago, that the whole affair was a surprise. These out-of-door meetings have usually been so orderly that it has been the cue of the Police (taking their instructions from the Home Office) to interfere and to make themselves visible as little as possible. Then it should be remembered that London is so big, and people live in such isolation from their neighbours, that a riot may be going on within a couple of hundred yards of a man's door, and yet his first knowledge of it may be gathered from the papers. As for the urgent need of reform in the Police Force, it is rather curious that two such bustling guardians of the public peace as Messrs. Harcourt and Cross never discovered these lamentable shortcomings.

PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.—On Wednesday last Mr. Spensley asked for leave to introduce a Bill "to restore the ancient and constitutional practice of the payment of members." This proposal excites considerable interest among working-class politicians, and we are likely to hear a good deal about it in the near future. That there is something to be said for it few persons who have considered the subject would be inclined to dispute. In the first place, Members of Parliament do much hard work, and, if no other consideration had to be taken into account, it would be only fair that they should be remunerated for their labour. Again, it is generally felt that in a Parliament representing Democratic constituencies there should be a considerable proportion of members belonging to the wage-earning classes of the community. It may not be true that they alone understand the wants and aspirations of "the people," but about matters in which they and their fellows are directly interested they certainly speak with authority. Obviously, however, working men cannot enter the House of Commons unless they receive a salary; and those who think they should be paid insist that the burden ought to fall upon the nation, not upon the voters who elect them, because the services they are expected to render are national services. So far as they go, these arguments are perfectly sound, and it is not impossible that, in the end, their validity may be generally admitted. The only strong argument on the other side is that the payment of members means the existence of

a large and clamorous class of professional politicians. That has been proved by the experience of France and the United States, and sober citizens in those countries are not of opinion that the results have been particularly satisfactory.

HARD ON THE POOR.—We trust that Mr. Childers spoke by the book when affirming that the metropolitan magistrates "as a rule" make every allowance for extenuating circumstances when adjudicating on School Board summonses. This declaration of opinion was, however, no answer to the question put to him. Mr. Jennings wanted to know whether certain poor women had been imprisoned for not sending their children to school, on account of illness, poverty, and want of proper clothes. Is that the fact, or is it not? If it be, we are entirely of Mr. Jennings's opinion that a more merciful administration of the law is needed just at present. It is hard enough for the poor to keep the wolf from the door, without imposing on them the additional responsibility of seeing that their children attend school punctually, neatly dressed, nicely washed, and with their school-pence in their hands. Sir James Ingham considers, Mr. Childers states, that "the judicious and kindly treatment of the poor by the magistrates enables the School Board to carry out its policy quietly, and without creating violent opposition." That, no doubt, is a good thing—for the School Board. But just now, when the cry of human distress is rising higher and higher, the public feel more concern for the physical sufferings of the poor than for the educational requirements of their half-starved offspring. There is a time for all things, and, in our view, the present moment is not suitable for sending people to prison on account of trifling infractions of the Educational Acts. Sir James Ingham thinks that "any relaxation of the system would certainly be a great mistake." With all possible deference to the chief metropolitan magistrate, we regard it as a still graver blunder to relax the moral systems of human beings by making gaol-birds of them for no worse offence than poverty.

WANT OF EMPLOYMENT, OVER-EMPLOYMENT, AND EMIGRATION.—It is all very well to abuse the Socialists, and call them mischievous creatures, but their wild and revolutionary doctrines will gain more and more adherents unless we can remedy some of the more pressing ills in our social state. There must be something wrong in a state of society where a large number of persons are overworked (many of them being paid very inadequate wages) and another large number of persons, anxious to work, are starving for want of employment. The most potent and effectual remedy for these evils is one which we have ventured to recommend before, but which is unfortunately very difficult of adoption. It is that every one of us should practise the precept, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." A good many people do honestly strive, though more or less imperfectly, to carry out this precept, and it is because they do so that the world is not such a cruel, hateful, and unbearable place as it would otherwise be. But it is vain to hope that the sum of individual effort will ever achieve much in this direction, and therefore other palliatives must be sought for. One of the most important of these is emigration. The problem here is easy enough, it only concerns a question of cost, which will be ultimately, though indirectly, repaid. The Colonies are longing for something of which we have a surplus, that is, human labour. If we would consent to bridge the ocean by free passages, thousands would cross the herring-pond; they would benefit themselves, they would enrich the Colonies by their labour, and they would spend a large part of their earnings in the home market. Think of the millions which our rulers have squandered during the last few years in massacring some thousands of black people in the Soudan, with whom they had no just cause of quarrel. Surely, we might spare one million a year in helping people to emigrate, and we regret to note that Mr. Chamberlain looks coldly on any such proposal.

PROSPECTS OF PEACE.—The prospects of peace in South-Eastern Europe are now more favourable than they have been for some time. Russia, indeed, still declines to sanction the union of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, but it is understood that her objections would be overcome if the proposed alliance between the Sultan and Prince Alexander were abandoned. There is no very important reason why that scheme should not be given up, for a written agreement is not necessary to the common action of Bulgaria and the Porte, should common action ever be considered desirable. Fortunately the way to a satisfactory settlement of this question has been smoothed by the sudden manifestation of pacific intentions on the part of Servia. Whether the Servians ever seriously meant to renew the war in which they gained so little credit it is impossible to say; but at any rate they are now willing to accept peace on reasonable terms, and all the world commends them for having begun, even at the eleventh hour, to show some signs of prudence and self-control. The Greeks will not, perhaps, submit to the inevitable with quite so good a grace; but they also apparently recognise that the time has not yet come for the assertion of their supposed rights. Lord Rosebery has firmly maintained the policy of Mr. Gladstone, and Greece could not but see that if Liberal England was against her it was hopeless to look elsewhere for encouragement. That peace in those

really salient or epic points in the history, and the towns all resembled each other in the sameness of their constant rebellions, suppressions, and intrigues.

The Rhine is pre-eminently a river of romance, and it is a mistake to expect the world, at this late day, to discard its cherished legends. The changing hordes who have ruled and fallen in these districts are responsible for the stories which have arisen; and the legends are, for the most part, of a better quality than the history. Mr. Baring-Gould has dissociated his view of the Rhine from Romance, although he admits that "there is no point that is looked at with greater interest by the traveller than the Lorelei." He means the Lorelei-felsen, for in the next line he denies the existence of the lady, saying that she was a phantasy of Heine's own. He appends a translation of the famous poem, which, although it keeps it to the original, only proves again that Heine is untranslatable. It begins poorly:

I know not the why and the wherefore
That I so mournful be;

It ends vilely:

Methinks that the waters are swelling
To drown him, soon as caught;
Ay, that is the work of enchantment,
By fairest Lorelei wrought.

That is what we are given in place of:

Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen
Am Ende, Schiffer und Kahn;
Und Das hat mit ihrem Singen
Die Lorelei gethan.

Too much word-painting has been perpetrated about the Rhine; but Mr. Baring-Gould need not have been so completely frightened away from it as he has been. He tells us practically nothing of the look of things; he refrains from a single word of colour. The Rhine in every mood is full of magic. From the moment when, at Bonn, one looks up the river and sees the Siebengebirge rising from the flat in soft blue beauty, till Andernach is reached at the mouth of the gorge, towards Coblenz, after miles of wooded heights, with their ruins cutting the sky-line with blocks of silver-grey between the blue and the green, there is never a moment when light and shadow, no less than outline, are not shifting. Sunlight and shower are both beautiful; the most impressive sight of all is to look back from Andernach, and see a thunder-storm gather among the hills. Yellow-black clouds lower, a white mist fills the chasms; then the heavens open, and a sheet of violet fire pours down on the jagged dark mountains, while the thunder and the echoes keep up a rolling mutter. From Coblenz, again, up to Mainz, the scenery is marvellous, the reflections of the sheer heights in the water giving a lovely sense of unreality. Coming down the left bank at night, by the homeward-bound Constantinople express, if it be moonlight, there is glorious repayment for any one who cares to face the discomfort of the little seats in the corridor. The greater number of the passengers go to bed, shut their windows, pull the shade over the light, and settle down for a comfortable sleep. But on a clear moonlit night the sight from the windows is almost unearthly. At one moment, a rock and its crown of ruins are absolutely black, rising from a silver river to a sapphire sky; the next, as the river turns, the height and its castle are a silver, ghostly grey, with an inky flood at their feet, and black mystery behind them. This goes on as far as Coblenz, and, with interruptions, to Bonn. It is worth while staying awake, even after bidding a silver Drachenfels good-bye, to see Cologne Cathedral rising against the translucent blue dusk that comes before dawn.

Mr. Baring-Gould makes up for his dates by giving us some verses on the Wine-Growing district, written by a German in English. Here is one of them:

The Blochsmount is a renowned stronghold,
And produces only windy Lamentations,
There the Devil and Satellites, is ever told,
Expectorate their weirdly incantations.

The illustrations to the book are charming. There are many photographs, and not a few of them are excellent, particularly one of Cologne by moonlight. Of the eight coloured pictures, the *Ehrenbreitstein* is very poetic, and Mr. Baring-Gould has been careful to supplement it by a practical photograph of the fortress. The *Schloss Ehrenburg* is also successful. The only defect of the book is its stitching.

SWINBLAKE: A PROPHETIC BOOK, WITH HOME ZARATHRUSTS

EVERY student of Blake has read or must read Mr. Swinburne's extraordinary essay ("William Blake: a critical study." New ed. Chatto & Windus), which it would be idle at this time of day to criticise. Much has been discovered and more is likely to be discovered about Blake since 1866. The interest of the book, for us, is chiefly reflex. *And does not the great mouth laugh at a gift?* if scheduled in an examination paper with the irritating question "from what author does this quotation come?" would probably elicit the reply, Swinburne; but it occurs in one of Blake's prophetic books.

How fascinated Blake would have been with Mr. Swinburne if by some exquisite accident he had lived *after* him. We should have had, I fancy, another Prophetic Book—something of this kind:

"Swinburne roars and shakes the world's literature—The English Press, and a good many contemporaries—Tennyson palls, Browning is found—Only a brownie—The mountains divide, the Press is unanimous—Aylwin is born—On a perilous path, on the cliff of immortality—I met Theodormon—He seemed sad: I said why are you sad—Are you writing the long promised life—Of Dante Gabriel Rossetti?—He sighed and said No, not that—Not that my child—I consigned the task to William Michael—Pre-Raphaelite memoirs are cheap to-day—You can have them for a sextet or an octave:—I brightened and said 'Then you are writing a sonnet?'—He shook his head and said it was symbolical—For six and eight pence!—A golden rule: Never lend only George Borrow—

A new century had begun and I asked Theodormon what he was doing on that path, and where Swinburne was? Beneath us yawned the gulf of oblivion. 'Be careful young man not to tumble over; are you a poet or a biographer?' I explained that I was merely a tourist. He gave a sigh of relief. 'I have an appointment here with my only disciple Mr. Höwlglass. If you are not careful he may write an appreciation of you.' 'My dear Theodormon if you will show me how to reach Swinburne I will help you.' 'I swear by the most sacred of all oaths, by Aylwin, you shall see Swinburne.' Just then we saw a young man coming along the path with a Kodak and a pink evening paper. He seemed pleased to see me and said: 'May I appreciate you?' I gave the young man a push and he fell right over the cliff. Theodormon threw down after him a heavy looking book which alighting on his skull smashed it. 'My preserver,' he cried, 'you shall see what you like, you shall do what you like, except write my biography. Swinburne is close at hand though he occasionally wanders. His permanent address is the Peaks, Parnassus. Perhaps you would like to pay some other calls as well.' I assented.

We came to a printing house and found William Morris reverting to type and transmitting art to the middle classes. 'The great Tragedy of Topsy's life,' said Theodormon, 'is that he converted the middle classes to art and socialism, but he never touched the unbending Tories of the proletariat or the smart set. You would have thought on homeopathic principles that Cretonne would appeal to Cretins.' 'Vale, Vale,' cried Charles Ricketts from the interior. I was rather vexed as I wanted to ask Ricketts his opinions about various things and people and to see his wonderful collection. Shannon,

however, presented me with a lithograph, and a copy of "Memorable Fancies" by C. R.

How sweet I roamed from school to school,
But I attached myself to none;
I simply sat upon my Dial,
And watched the other artists' fun.

Will Rothenstein can guard the faith,
Safe in the Academic fold;
'Twas very wise of William Strang,
What need have I for Chantrey's gold?

Let the old masters be my share,
And let them fall on B.B.'s corn;
Let the *Uffizi* take to Steer,
What do I care for Herbert Horne?

Or the stately Holmes of England,
Whose glories never fade;
The Constable of Burlington,
Who holds the Oxford Slade.

It's Titian here and Titian there,
And come to have a look;
But "thank of course Giorgione,"
With Mr. Herbert Cook.

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

After turning round a rather sharp corner I began to ask Theodormon if John Addington Symonds was anywhere to be found. He smiled and said: 'I know why you are asking. Of course he is here, but we don't see much of him. He published at the Kelmscott the other day 'An Ode to a Grecian Urning.' The proceeds of the sale went to the Arts and Crafts Ebbing Guild, but the issue of 'Aretino's Bosom and other Poems' has been postponed.' We now reached a graceful Renaissance building covered with blossoms; on each side of the door were two blue-breathed gondoliers smoking calamus. Theodormon hurried on, whispering: 'that is where he lives. If you want to see Swinburne you had better make haste as it is getting late and I want you to inspect the Castalian spring.' The walking became very rough just here; it was really climbing. Suddenly I became aware of dense smoke emerging with a rumbling sound from an overhanging rock. 'I had no idea that Parnassus was volcanic now,' I remarked. 'No more had we,' said Theodormon, 'it is quite a recent eruption due to the Celtic movement. The rock you see, however, is not a real rock but a sham rock. Mr. George Moore has been turned out of the cave recently and is hovering about the entrance.'

Looming through the smoke, which hung like a veil of white muslin between us, I was able to trace the silhouette of that engaging countenance which Edouard Manet and many manet others have immortalised. 'Go away,' he said, 'I do not want to speak to you.' 'Come, come, Mr. Moore,' I rejoined, 'will you not grant a few words to a really warm admirer?'—but he had faded away. Then a large hand came out of the cavern and handed me a piece of paper, and a deep voice with a slight brogue said: 'If you see mi darlin' Gosse give this to him.' The paper contained these verses:

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

We had now arrived at the edge of a thick wood. A finger-post pointed to the Castalian spring, and a notice-board indicated *Trespassers will be prosecuted. The lease to be disposed of: apply to G. K. Chesterton.*

Soon we came to an open space in which was situated a large, rather dilapidated marble tank. I noticed that the water did not reach further than the bathers' stomachs. Theodormon anticipated my surprise. 'Yes, we have had to depress the level of the water during the last few years out of compliment to some of the bathers and there have been a good many drowning fatalities of a very depress-

ing description.' 'You don't mean to say,' I replied, 'Richard le Gallienne?' 'Hush! Hush! he was rescued.' 'Stephen Phillips?' I asked anxiously. 'Well, he couldn't swim, of course, but he floated: you see he had the Sidnēy Colvin lifebelt on and that is always a great assistance.' 'Not,' I almost shrieked, 'my favourite poet the author of 'Lord' a Muzzy don't you fret. Missed we De Wet. Missed we De Wet?' Theodormon became very grave. 'We do not know any of their names,' he said, 'I will show you presently the Morgue. Perhaps you will be able to identify some of your friends. The Coroner has refused to open an inquest until Mr. John Lane can attend and give his evidence.' I saw the Poet Laureate trying very hard to swim on his back while Professor Tyrrell and Mr. W. H. Mallock were shouting directions from the other side. Mr. Lewis Morris had given up the attempt and was sitting down on the marble floor so that the water would at least come up to his neck. Gazing disconsolately into the pellucid shallows I saw the revered and much-loved figures of Mr. Andrew Lang, Mr. Austin Dobson and Mr. Edmund Gosse. 'Going for a dip?' said Theodormon. 'Thanks, we don't care about paddling,' Mr. Lang retorted.

'I hope it is not *always* so shallow,' I said to my guide. 'Oh no, we have a new water-supply, but as the spring is in the nature of a public place, we won't turn on the fresh water until people have learnt to appreciate what is good. That handsome little marble structure which you see at the end of the garden is really the *new* Castalian Spring. At all events, that is where all the miracles take place. The old bath is terribly out of repair in spite of plumbing. We then inspected a very neat little apartment mosaiced with gold. Round the walls were attractive drinking-fountains and on each was written the name of the new water, I mean the new poet. Some of them I recognised. Laurence Binyon, E. A. Housman, Sturge Moore, Santayana, Arthur Symonds, Francis Thompson, Arthur Lyon Raile, William Watson, and the author of the ballad of Perkin Warbeck. 'You see we have the very latest,' said Theodormon, 'provided it is always the best. I am sorry to say that some of the taps don't give a constant supply, but that is because the machinery wants oiling. The Howlglass oil is rather rancid and only clogs the wheels. Try some Binyon,' said my guide, filling a gold cup on which was wrought by some cunning craftsman the death of Adam and the martyrdom of the blessed Christina. I found it excellent and refreshing and observed that it was cheering to come across the excellence of sincerity and strength at a comparatively new source. . . .

Mr. Swinburne was seated in an arbour of roses clothed in a gold dalmatic, a birthday gift from his British Peers. Their names were embroidered in pearls on the border. I asked permission to read my address:

There beats no heart by Cam or Isis
(Where tides of poets ebb and flow),
But guards Dolores as a crisis
Of long ago.

A crisis bringing fire and wonder,
A gift of some dim Eastern Mage,
A firework still smouldering under
The feet of middle age.

For you could love and hate and tell us
Of almost everything,
You made our older poets jealous,
For you alone could sing.

In truth it was your splendid praise
Which made us wake
To glories hidden in some phrase
Of William Blake.

No boy who sows his metric salads,
His tamer oats,
But always steals from Swinburne's ballads
His stronger notes.

'Do you play golf?' said Mr. Swinburne, handing me two little spheres such as are used in the royal game.

And I heard no more; for I received a blow—whether delivered by Mr. Swinburne or the ungrateful Theodormon I do not know, but I found myself falling down the gulf of oblivion, and suddenly with a dull thud I landed on the mangled remains of Howlglass. The softness of his head had really preserved me from what might have been a severe shock, because the distance from Parnassus to Fleet Street, as you know, is considerable and the escalade might have been more serious. I reached my rooms in Half Moon Street, however, having seen only one star with just a faint nostalgia for the realms into which for one brief day I was privileged to peep."

ROBERT ROSS.

A LITERARY CAUSERIE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS IN MODERN EDITIONS OF THE CLASSICS

THE study of classics has now many assailants. It is not long since the present writer had a discussion on the subject with a retired Colonel who had a son at Harrow—"not readin' Greek and all that rot, mind you—modern side, English literature, you know what I mean. You should hear that boy recitin'—Oh something about Herminius and a bridge, by Scott, I think." But the branch of study so widely, though not always intelligently, assailed was never more fruitful in its results and never more ably and intelligently taught than it is at present. These piping times of papyri have illustrated the fact that the modern school of classics can bring to bear on the emendation of manuscripts a skill comparable with that of Bentley and Porson, Stephens and the Scaligers. The British school has had its full share in the restoration of "The Constitution of Athens" and—especially—the Odes of Bacchylides, which gave scope for that sympathy with poetic style which is greatly fostered by the practice of Greek and Latin Verse composition.

How luxuriously the schoolboy of to-day is equipped, as compared with those who were beginning Greek and Latin more than half a century ago! Then we had not even a fairly good dictionary, and the way of learning was made rough for the student—the rougher the better. Greek lexicons did not condescend to give meanings in English, and in many cases the word could not be reached at all save *via* some "root" real or imaginary. Where were the well printed school-books with cuts or engravings illustrating ancient life in all its aspects? Half the little elegances of composing which we had to find out for ourselves are now rules set forth in numberless excellent guides to composition, and are as stereotyped as the paradigms of accidence. Our rude forefathers made no attempt to point out the æsthetic value of the classical writers or even to suggest that they had any value of that kind. When the practice was abandoned of rendering them into bad Latin prose—it was called an *ordo*, and *ροδοάκτιλος* was *quæ roseos digitos habet*—our editors began to essay an occasional English translation. But they despised any attempt to reproduce the spirit of the original. Like Hamlet's "statists" they thought it "a baseness to write fair." The late F. A. Paley was a great scholar and a beautiful composer in Greek and Latin. But he was resolute not to vulgarise the classics by bringing his taste and elegance to bear on his English versions. When the Eumenides are on the track of their quarry, Orestes, and one of the "Awful Goddesses" is galled by their fruitless chase, which she feels like a stroke of the cruel doomsman's lash—humiliating as well as painful—the thought thus emerges in Paley's note:

I feel (there is present for me to feel) the severe, very severe, chill (smart) of a hostile public executioner, a version which suggests that at times, when not hostile, the public executioner might be a pleasant and genial fellow.

In a note on another passage he cheerfully remarks:

It makes little difference whether we translate "heart-surge of bile" or "bile-surge of heart,"

as if either could be accepted as English for the fine phrase *καρδίας κλυδάνιου χολής*, which, indeed, is hardly translatable, though no doubt Jebb would have devised a rendering both accurate and poetical. Books like Jebb's Sophocles, Verrall's *Choephora* and *Septem contra Thebas* of Aeschylus and Myers's Pindar show what a revolution has taken place in this direction during the last forty years. The prose writers have fared equally well. Jowett's Plato and Thucydides, Butcher's "Poetics" and Welldon's "Politics" of Aristotle, as well as some recent versions of Tacitus, show how cultivable was the untilled field. One very dexterous rendering of an epigrammatic sentence in a Thucydidean speech occurs to me (I quote from memory, having no books here, and I forget the name of the translator):

Οι εὐπρεπῶς ἀδικοὶ ἐλθόντες εὐλόγως ἀπρακτοὶ ἀπίστων.

Those who have invaded us with very good reasons for doing wrong shall leave us with very good reasons for doing nothing.

Thucydides affords a fruitful field for ingenuity, and so do Aristotle, Plato and Aristophanes; but the despair of the translator is Tacitus. I mean that, though Church and Brodribb are good and G. Ramsay is better, some expressions cannot be Englished. In a passage in the "Histories" Tacitus speaks of two tribes on the opposite banks of a river which were constantly engaged in internecine war with each other, the river which divided them seeming rather to bring them together in a deadly grapple. His words are: *uno amne discretis conexum odium*. The best attempt I have seen is: "the river which separated them was but a bridge for their hatred"; but this is not quite satisfactory. It is easier to get near to *eo immittior quia toleraverat* and *odisse quem laeseris*, but it is hard to reproduce in English the tone and colour. It is easier in French, and we have not yet produced an English Louandre. *Tamquam* is often very pregnant, as in *metu tamquam alias partis fovissent*, "fear arising from the consciousness of being regarded as adherents of the wrong side." Now and then we meet an expression which is even shorter in English than in Latin, as, "that worst bane of sincerity, self-interest," *pessimum veri adfectus venenum, sua cuique utilitas*. There is a stroke worthy of Tacitus in the first book of the "Histories" which is generally mistranslated, *fingebat et metum quo magis concupisceret*. This does not mean "he pretended to fear, to whet his desires," which is nonsense; but "he worked himself into a state of alarm." We have here a Virgilian use of *fingere* (*te quoque dignum finge deo*), and it has long been recognised that Tacitus is saturated with the diction of Virgil; compare the Virgilian *rapuitque in fomite flammam* with the Tacitean *spem conceplam acris in diem rapiebat*, "he fanned every day to a brighter flame the spark of hope once lit"; *di nobis meliora!* (*Georgics*) with *meliora constantius postulando*, "with strangely earnest cries of God forbid it." *Cruda ac viridis senectus* in the *Agricola* and *belli commercia* in the *Histories* will at once suggest Virgilian parallels.

Sophocles is, perhaps, the most elusive of the Greek writers, as Tacitus and Virgil are of the Latin. Jebb's Sophocles is a complete triumph, Conington's prose version brings us nearest to the *Aeneid*, and we are getting nearer to Tacitus. When I think of the editions in which I studied the ancient masterpieces for the first time, I cannot but envy the schoolboys of to-day. We were taught to imitate the style of the provincial daily Press, mouthing "the valiant Gyas and the no less intrepid Cloanthus"; and Agamemnon in *Il. ii.* was made to say that if the Greek invading force were divided into companies of ten and each company were to choose a Trojan cupbearer, many companies "would lack one to act towards them in that capacity" (*δευοιάρω οἰνοχόω*).

R. Y. TYRRELL.

[Next week's Causerie will be "Creative Criticism," by John Brett Vincent.]

NUGÆ SCRIPTORIS

[Under the above general title a Series of Brief Papers will appear in successive numbers of the ACADEMY. They will be "short studies on great subjects"; jottings by the way, rather than essays by an expert. Some will be mere suggestions on miscellaneous topics, from varied points of view; others will contain a more ample discussion of one or two questions of contemporary interest.]

III. ON THE MAKING OF BOOKS. A PUBLISHING SYNDICATE

AT no previous time probably in the history of literary production has it been so difficult for the authors of really good books to find publishers willing to issue them. The late Leslie Stephen once said to the writer that he believed every book that deserved to live, did live, that authors as a rule got all the recognition they deserved, that it was a far commoner thing for worthless books to succeed than for good ones to fail; and a famous donor to libraries has lately said that in his experience all books that ought to appear easily find publishers.

But many persons have a different tale to tell. That worthless books are issued by the hundred, or the thousand, is notorious; and it is their success that crowds out, or crushes aside, the worthier ones. There are probably too many publishers nowadays, and they look—almost of necessity—to what will pay them best. If there is a demand for inferior books, there will certainly be a supply of them in the market. But it is also true that although there is an abundant supply of admirable Literature—historical, biographical, artistic, scientific, poetical, religious—the demand is less than it used to be; and the publishers cannot be induced to issue these works except at the risk of the writer, or unless he undertakes to pay for publication. There are scores of admirable books already written and ready for issue, works which would be real contributions to literature—which are now locked up, and locked out, because no firms will risk their publication.

Before indicating one means by which the difficulty might be overcome, a statement of what seems a just arrangement between author and publisher may be made. We have to take into account the respective shares of the two—the author, and the publisher—in the production of the result. The publisher has to provide, and must be paid for his labour in providing: (1) the paper; (2) the printing; (3) the binding; (4) the illustrating, when necessary; (5) the issuing, or distributing; (6) the advertising; (7) postal outlays; (8) the storing of the volumes. The author's expenses include (1) those of investigation and research; (2) of presenting the results in manuscript, composing the book, and writing it out; (3) secretarial outlays, dictation, typewriting, etc.; (4) revision of proofs; (5) postal outlays. All these expenses at least, on both sides, ought to be met, before any profits are divisible. But when the cost of production is met, the publisher and author may agree either (1) to divide the profits equally; or (2) the publisher to pay the author a definite sum in fulfilment of all his rights and claims, so that the former has exclusive profit in all subsequent editions, or a smaller sum for the first edition and a larger one for every subsequent issue of the book; or (3) the publisher may agree to pay the author a specified royalty on all copies of every edition, anywhere sold, while the copyright lasts. There is nothing in all this that is not known to every author, and publisher.

But although there are probably far more writers now than there ever were before—doubtless one result of the spread of education far and wide—and more books written on all subjects by every kind of writer, it is increasingly difficult for authors to plant their works satisfactorily.

The longevity of books is much shorter than it used to be. Interest in the very best of them fades much more rapidly; and if the publisher has to consider how many can be disposed of rapidly, and what will sell most quickly, he must often give the preference to what is inferior in merit, and set aside books of greater intrinsic value that are not so popular. The fashion of the hour will then determine the output. Demand will regulate supply, and works of intrinsic and enduring worth will be passed over, that is to say, they will not find a publisher. How is this situation to be met and dealt with? As the trivial newspaper filled with vulgar advertisements, and repulsive pictures, is sold by the hundred thousand, while the circulation of those written by experts and full of wisdom, printed decorously and with refinement, diminishes day by day; so the meretricious lists of volumes written by the half-educated are in demand, while books by the learned and original cannot find a place in any market. How is the difficulty to be met?

This, however, is an age of great public beneficence, in which large fortunes are spent in philanthropies of various kinds, in which millionaires found Universities, endow Public Libraries, create Scholarships for research, etc. etc. It has been suggested that a Syndicate should be formed to help in the issue of Books, which cannot find a publisher through the customary channels; not to subsidise their writers, but merely to float the books in the literary market, to give them the chance of being known, in the hope that if their work is really good, and approves itself to unbiased critics, the authors will be able to make satisfactory arrangements in the future. At present most publishers employ paid readers of the manuscripts sent to them for approval. These readers doubtless do much good (and often weary) work in going over what is submitted to their judgment. But they must often fall into a groove, and do their work conventionally. Their advice is frequently based on what they think will bring in an immediate and large return. It is natural, nay inevitable, that they should have the interest of the firm that employs them primarily in view; and they perhaps cannot judge quite dispassionately, in the interests of Literature and its permanent needs, or the merits of the literary claimant.

It is this fact that has led to the suggestion that a Syndicate might be formed by some wealthy man who has the benefit of Literature, Science, and Art before him, to select the best books for publication, on subjects that do not readily find the ordinary firms willing to risk their issue; books of learning, of research, and originality, for which there is little or no demand. The radical idea of the scheme is that the demand for it should not invariably determine the supply of a book, but that there should be some way of launching volumes which do not readily find publishers through the ordinary channels of production. It is thought that the experiment might be made by a Syndicate elected thus. The leading Universities of the country might each elect a delegate, the Royal Society, the British Museum, the Royal Academy, and the Minister of Education might do the same: and it would be the duty of the Syndicate to select the books to be issued by this method. There may be difficulties in the way. It is easy to foresee some of them. But the present state of affairs is an unhappy one; and if any person is found willing to subscribe funds to make the experiment, the lovers of the best Literature will rejoice, our Libraries will benefit, while the reading Public will be the gainers in many directions. The experiment is certainly worth making, and it may be mentioned that it commended itself to the late Mr. Cecil Rhodes; and, had he lived, he would probably have tried to realise it.

SPECTATOR AB EXTRA.

GOLF JOTTINGS.

GREAT is Mr. Ball and great is his work seems to be the lesson inculcated upon us by what happened at St. Andrews last week. Verily, too, he had need of all his greatness ere he was finally "pedestalled in triumph."

From time to time during the trying ordeal Mr. Ball had to draw on all the resources of his golfing armour, and never perhaps during his long and splendid career were his tenacity of purpose, his versatility, and his powers of concentration, utterly regardless of gallery or surroundings, more plainly in evidence. I left this grim fighter in last week's notes at the end of the fifth round. In the seventh he was fortunate enough to catch Mr. Andrew on one of his bad days, and as Mr. Ball, on the other hand, was playing splendidly he had very little trouble in passing into the semi-final. In this, however, he was face to face with a very much more serious task, as for a long time it became a moot question whether Mr. Guy Campbell would not succeed in stopping his victorious march. Splendidly, indeed, did the younger man struggle, but experience eventually told its tale, and Mr. Ball was once again in an amateur final. In this Mr. Ball had to meet the man whose putting had astounded old golfers, and had carried the minds of on-lookers "Travis-wards."

Unfortunately, the day was as bad as even our notoriously bad climate could make it, a hurricane of wind and perpetual rain taxing to the utmost the skill and staying powers of both men. In the face of both Mr. Palmer's brilliancy on the green was, to a large extent, neutralised, whilst it is not too much to say that Mr. Ball's very wide experience and vaster knowledge of the game gave him considerable advantage under such trying conditions. In the morning he wound up with a two hole advantage, and in the afternoon his superiority was undoubted. To many, therefore, it was no surprise when the end came, and Mr. Ball had won his sixth championship, and, curiously enough, his first at St. Andrews. The runner-up gave, all things considered, a wonderful display throughout. In his early days Mr. Palmer was a great cyclist, and as he only started golf comparatively a few years ago, his work is all the more astounding. Many a time and oft have I referred to the Hands-worth crack in these columns, but I hardly thought I should this year find myself writing of him as a finalist in such an event. To his putting—better it would not be easy to find—he owed much, and some fine day he may do even better than he did last week. Certain it is that the experience of last week will do Mr. Palmer a lot of good. The other pair of semi-finalists undoubtedly "gave their running." Up to the time he met Mr. Palmer the Carnoustie golfer had won his matches in decisive fashion, and had his opponent in that semi-final faltered at all he would undoubtedly have gone down before this fine player. To Mr. Campbell also, a more than ordinarily large measure of credit is due. Often when I have seen at Sunningdale and seen him playing round after round with Jack White have I thought that such persistent zeal would one day cause him to take very high rank. Like a good judge, Mr. Campbell realised that nothing makes for success at golf like playing on a first class course, and with a first-class player. It is true he just missed his mark, but it can hardly be doubted that the new champion was more than delighted when he had finally got rid of his little opponent. Mr. Campbell has still years of good golf before him, and he has no need to feel down-hearted that he did not add to his late victory at St. Andrews another and more important one last week. He possesses one all-important factor towards success at such a game as golf, the grand faculty of taking pains, and one may be certain that the intense and stubborn devotion to a single end which he has displayed in the past will, if possible, be increased in the future. With these few remarks I must leave this great amateur event, and pass on to others of smaller importance.

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exciting game was the by two such well-known Girdlestone, neither of However, Mr. Watt proposed to Dr. Howarth, the thread, and so when the "medicine men," were one to the good. the rescue of his side defeating Dr. Webb. to either side, Dr. H. Mr. Venables and Mr. ing Dr. Law. The K drifting easily from or having given up the seems inclined to pay the links. Perhaps to wish him is that he sh same mark in his golf shoe. In the foursom was close and severe, just squeezed home in by one point.

Only once a year do turn out to play for day last. After all t after his somewhat bit Ball in the fifth rou Hutchison packed up was justified in his act Travelling seems to h the Coldstreamer, wh good a total as 76, ar made a good bid for however, the soldier f a double event, as the as 85-7-78. Aft H. E. du C. Norris. 95-14-81. The latt Ranelagh, and thoug between the two co greens, Sir James se some ease to his char

The form of a go and Hove Club is w Sergeant is not, and, be added that it doe the handicappers eith field to ribbons and "walking over." W total on his card as 8 relinquish hope and Sergeant will now r hands of the committe adjusting his handicap they are face to face with a considerable amount of difficulty. How well he was "in" may be gathered from the statement that his nearest opponent, Mr. H. H. Sams (11), although doing himself every justice, was as many as five strokes behind. Mr. C. W. Dilke was third with so good a total as 81-4-77.

The Chartered Surveyors' Golfing Society managed to put a good side into the field on Saturday when opposing the London Solicitors' Golfing Society. Their leader, Mr. S. J. Chesterton, gave a foretaste of what was to follow by a defeat of such a player as Mr. Cyril Plummer, against whom he scored 1½ points to nothing. His followers continued the good work, and when the profit and loss account had been made out it was found that the total of the latest society to be sprung upon us had mounted up to 4½. Against this total the men of the law were able to oppose 3½. It has to be noted, however, that the two Chestertons—Mr. S. J. and Mr. F. S.—subscribed between them 2½ points, so they certainly kept their books in splendid order. In the foursomes history repeated itself, as the two brothers, coupled with Mr. Garvitt and Mr. Southern respectively, were wholly answerable for the total of 2½ points. Messrs. Carver

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handicappers. Mr. E. Morton, who won the Junior Medal, was practically a back-marker, as his handicap of 11 shows. A one-hole victory rewarded his stout opposition to the "Colonel." At Acton the fine cup, presented by the president, Lord George Hamilton, was won by Mr. O. S. Horn, 169-10-159, whilst the Barlow Cup went to Mr. E. O. Darrell, 165-8-157. The "Bogey" Foursome was won by Mr. Hall and Mr. Wyand with a loss of two holes. Mr. Darrell was once again in evidence, as his fine 80-5-75 on the first day won him, as it should have done, the prize. The handicap prizes on the last day of the meeting went to Mr. Horn, 80-5-75, and Mr. H. Hickson, 86-14-82, whilst the scratch prize was captured by Mr. J. D. Fordyce with 79. As usual, the meeting was a great success. "NIEBLICK."

Miss May Sutton gave a good account of herself in her match with Miss Eastlake Smith, in the ladies' singles, at Leicester. The latter began well, but was quite out-played and out-stayed by her American opponent. Brooks, the Australian, also showed fine form, easily beating Dr. Eaves. G. W. Hillyard and R. F. Doherty did well in the gentlemen's doubles.



Martha (Miss Carlotta Addison). Jane, a neighbour (Miss Lydia Rachel).
Jane: "Ah! You're a good sort, Martha!"

Monica (Miss Dagmar Wiehe). The Squire (Mr. Holman Clark).
Monica easily persuades her father to let her marry the curate.

"MARTHA PLAYS THE FAIRY," BY KEBLE HOWARD, AT THE HAYMARKET THEATRE.

This one-act play, which precedes "My Wife," at the Haymarket Theatre, tells how Martha, Monica, and the curate successfully unite to break down the squire's objections to his daughter's marriage with the young clergyman by playing on the father's fears and vanity.

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The annual match between Barristers and Doctors took place at Ashford Manor on Saturday, in stormy weather, both sides being strongly represented, and a very close and

exciting game was the result. The teams were headed by two such well-known players as Mr. Darwin and Dr. Girdlestone, neither of whom could succeed in scoring. However, Mr. Watt got into a winning vein when opposed to Dr. Howarth, but his followers failed to pick up the thread, and so when half the games had been decided the "medicine men," thanks to Drs. Simson and Vassie were one to the good. Mr. Mossop, however, came to the rescue of his side, and made matters all square by defeating Dr. Webb. Only one more gain was registered to either side, Dr. Hawkins winning his match against Mr. Venables and Mr. Montagu Shearman, K.C., defeating Dr. Law. The K.C. is another instance of a man drifting easily from one branch of sport to another, and having given up the running path, Mr. Shearman now seems inclined to pay an equal amount of attention to the links. Perhaps the best thing I may venture to wish him is that he should in process of time make the same mark in his golf boot that he did in his running shoe. In the foursomes, as in the singles, the fighting was close and severe, and though the men of the Law just squeezed home in front, their success was only gained by one point.

Only once a year do the members of the Prince's Club turn out to play for prizes, the day chosen being Saturday last. After all the excitement of St. Andrews, and after his somewhat bitter experience at the hands of Mr. Ball in the fifth round of the Championship, Captain Hutchison packed up his traps and came south. That he was justified in his action is very clear from what follows. Travelling seems to have had no ill-effect on the game of the Coldstreamer, who won the Scratch Prize with so good a total as 76, and though penalised up to the hilt, made a good bid for the Handicap Prize also. In this, however, the soldier found Mr. C. Gordon Mills a bar to a double event, as the latter produced such sound figures as 85-7-78. After this in due order came Mr. H. E. du C. Norris, 84-3-81, and Sir James Heath, 95-14-81. The latter plays a good deal of his golf at Ranelagh, and though there may not be much in common between the two courses, except the quality of the greens, Sir James seems to have adapted himself with some ease to his change of surroundings.

The form of a good many members of the Brighton and Hove Club is well known to me. That of Mr. A. R. Sergeant is not, and, judging from the figures, it might be added that it does not seem to be very well known to the handicappers either. Last Saturday he fairly cut his field to ribbons and was to all intents and purposes "walking over." When a man comes in with such a total on his card as 85-12-71 the rest of the field must relinquish hope and accept the inevitable. That Mr. Sergeant will now meet with drastic treatment at the hands of the committee goes without saying, though in re-adjusting his handicap they are face to face with a considerable amount of difficulty. How well he was "in" may be gathered from the statement that his nearest opponent, Mr. H. H. Sams (11), although doing himself every justice, was as many as five strokes behind. Mr. C. W. Dilke was third with so good a total as 81-4-77.

The Chartered Surveyors' Golfing Society managed to put a good side into the field on Saturday when opposing the London Solicitors' Golfing Society. Their leader, Mr. S. J. Chesterton, gave a foretaste of what was to follow by a defeat of such a player as Mr. Cyril Plummer, against whom he scored 1½ points to nothing. His followers continued the good work, and when the profit and loss account had been made out it was found that the total of the latest society to be sprung upon us had mounted up to 4½. Against this total the men of the law were able to oppose 3½. It has to be noted, however, that the two Chestertons—Mr. S. J. and Mr. F. S.—subscribed between them 2½ points, so they certainly kept their books in splendid order. In the foursomes history repeated itself, as the two brothers, coupled with Mr. Garvitt and Mr. Southern respectively, were wholly answerable for the total of 2½ points. Messrs. Carver

and White (14) were the only pair to score for the opposition. Mr. Carver, unless I greatly err, has made his mark at cricket as well as at golf.

One of the most notable performances last Saturday was that of Mr. J. H. Crispe on the fine course of the Northwood Club. So phenomenal, indeed, was his work that it may have come as a surprise to himself, as well as to the committee, of the latter fact there can be little doubt. Northwood is a course which takes a good deal of knowing, and does not certainly belong to the "galloping order," and I am under the impression that no amateur has beaten the record set up by Mr. Hayman, though his splendid 1/2 was cut by Mr. Crispe's net total last week. What a pity that the winner could not have saved his magnificent 78-7-71 for an occasion of greater importance, for I assume he will never have such a chance again. Whilst this was happening at Northwood, the London Scottish members were playing for the James Gow Memorial Challenge Cup and Gold Memento at Wimbledon. This gave Mr. R. J. St. Quintin a chance of which he was not slow to avail himself, and he succeeded in bringing off a nice little double event, which he would, I am sure, keenly appreciate. In the big event he had to his credit such figures as 92-16-76, which also put him at the top of the Junior Medal Class. The Senior Medal went the way of a man entirely engrossed by the game, as, indeed, he is by anything in the way of sport which he happens to take up. Before he became a golfer Mr. Warner played cricket and football, and, though he never achieved any great measure of success, there was no mistake about his keenness. I am given to understand that Mr. Warner uses some patent grip to his clubs by which he swears and which he claims has improved his game to the extent of two or three strokes. The "grip" was certainly reflected in such figures as 82-4-78, perfectly sound and good as they are.

Both at Hythe and Sheringham there were dead-heats for the medals, and so the committees at both places must congratulate themselves, though it seems as if the handicapping at the former place was of rather the "flattering" order. As a proof of this let me state that Mr. A. Cameron and Mr. J. R. Phillips had on their cards such figures as 79-6-73 and 83-10-73. The junior winner produced a more reasonable score, as he was credited with 100-20-80. At Sheringham the honours were divided between Mr. A. Mallinson and Mr. F. D. Bennett, who had on their cards 90-7-83. It is satisfactory to find that the Richmond medal winners more than held their own against "Bogey" last Saturday. The senior leader, Mr. E. H. Maxwell surely deserves high commendation for capturing three holes from such an opponent when handicapped on the six mark. His feat, indeed, is by no means easy of accomplishment, and a stern view may be taken of it by the handicappers. Mr. E. Morton, who won the Junior Medal, was practically a back-marker, as his handicap of 11 shows. A one-hole victory rewarded his stout opposition to the "Colonel." At Acton the fine cup, presented by the president, Lord George Hamilton, was won by Mr. O. S. Horn, 169-10-159, whilst the Barlow Cup went to Mr. E. O. Darrell, 165-8-157. The "Bogey" Foursome was won by Mr. Hall and Mr. Wyand with a loss of two holes. Mr. Darrell was once again in evidence, as his fine 80-5-75 on the first day won him, as it should have done, the prize. The handicap prizes on the last day of the meeting went to Mr. Horn, 80-5-75, and Mr. H. Hickson, 96-14-82, whilst the scratch prize was captured by Mr. J. D. Fordyce with 79. As usual, the meeting was a great success. "NIBLICK."

Miss May Sutton gave a good account of herself in her match with Miss Eastlake Smith, in the ladies' singles, at Leicester. The latter began well, but was quite outplayed and out-stayed by her American opponent. Brooks, the Australian, also showed fine form, easily beating Dr. Eaves. G. W. Hillyard and R. F. Doherty did well in the gentlemen's doubles.



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Jane: "Ah! You're a good sort, Martha!"

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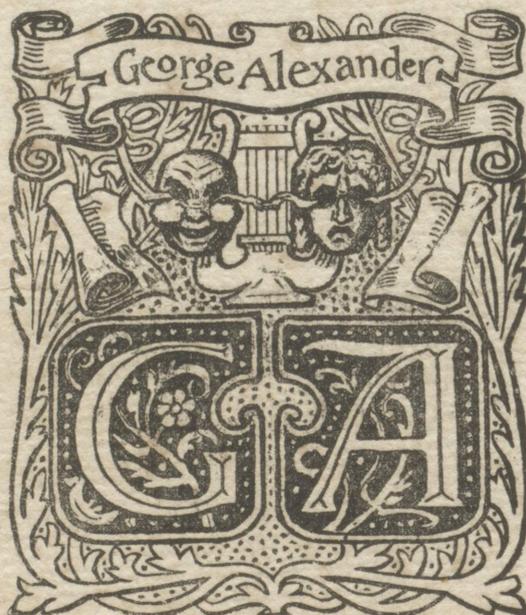
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Cecily Cardew	... (John Worthing's Ward)	... Miss ROSALIE TOLLER
Miss Prism	... (her Governess)	... Miss ALICE BEET

Time - - The Present.

Act I. ... Algernon Moncrieffe's Rooms in Piccadilly
 Act II. ... The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton
 Act III. ... Morning-Room at the Manor House, Woolton

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Programme of Music.

SELECTION	"Havana"	Stuart
OVERTURE	"Nell Gwyn"	German
BALLET	"Queen of Spades"	Mario Costa
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Act I.	-	Algernon Moncrieffe's Rooms in Piccadilly (H. P. Hall)
Act II.	-	The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton (H. P. Hall)
Act III.	-	Morning-Room at the Manor House, Woolton (Walter Hann)

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Sir Harry Collingwood	Mr. HERBERT WARING
Edward Fairburne	Mr. ARTHUR ROYSTON
Sybil March	Miss ELLIOTT PAGE

Scene - A Room in Sir Harry Collingwood's House.

Time - The Present.

Programme of Music.

MARCH	" Cannon "	Gung'l
MAZURKA	" La Trigune "	Louis Ganne
VALSE	" Enfin Seuls "	A. M. Fechner
CANZONETTA		B. Godard
VALSE.	" Acclamations "	E. Waldtenfel
OVERTURE	" Raymond "	A. Thomas
DANSE	" Glave "	L. Gregh
1ST MAZURKA		L. Gregh
WALTZ	" Summer Time "	Ed. Hesse

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The Picture of Dorian Gray

FEW novels in any language are half so well known as the solitary and diversely appreciated masterpiece issued under the above title. It was not until 1890 that Oscar Wilde sent forth his bizarre little bantling to the world for the greater wonderment of men. Much arching of eyebrows was there when it appeared, and low mutterings of perplexity mingled with surprise. The book was needed. It filled a gap; appealed to a literary aristocracy. No such work existed in any known speech. There is a strangeness of colour that attracts running through the story, and a certain passionate suggestiveness that appeals to the imagination, whilst gleams of unwonted light flicker curiously through the natural gloom of the subject, calling into being mysterious forms of thought that like another Frankenstein take on deathless individuality.

Wilde showed himself a true prophet when he foretold that his story would create a sensation. Though it occupied no more than a hundred pages in a monthly periodical, it was reviewed as fully as any *chef d'œuvre* of a leading novelist. If the Puritans and the Philistines, pretending to sniff out veiled improprieties in its paradoxes, were shocked, it is only fair to add that the connoisseur and the artist, heartsick as they were with the humdrum yarns of old-maids' tea-parties and the eternal twaddle anent the curate's love affairs, were delighted with its sheer originality. That such a master of prose and scholarship as Pater should have written in terms of commendation of "Dorian Gray," is sufficient to prove how free from offence the story really is. In the original version of the story one passage struck Pater as being indefinite and likely to suggest evil to evil minds. This paragraph Wilde elaborated, but he refused to suppress a single sentence of what he had written. "No artist is consciously wrong," he declared, and answering an attack that had appeared in the *St. James's Gazette*, on his book, he wrote the following letter (June 26th, 1890):—

Oscar Wilde's Reply to his Critics.

"In your issue of to-day you state that my brief letter published in your columns is the 'best reply' I can make to your article upon 'Dorian Gray.' This is not so. I do not propose to discuss fully the matter here, but I feel bound to say that your article contains the most unjustifiable attack that has been made upon any man of letters for many years.

"The writer of it, who is quite incapable of concealing his personal malice, and so in some measure destroys the effect he wishes to produce, seems not to have the slightest idea of the temper in which a work of art should be approached. To say that such a book as mine should be 'chucked into the fire' is silly. That is what one does with newspapers.

"Of the value of pseudo-ethical criticism in dealing with artistic work I have spoken already. But as your writer has ventured into the perilous grounds of literary criticism I ask you to allow me, in fairness not merely to myself, but to all men to whom literature is a fine art, to say a few words about his critical method.

"He begins by assailing me with much ridiculous virulence because the chief personages in my story are puppies. They *are* puppies. Does he think that literature went to the dogs when Thackeray wrote about puppydom? I think that puppies are extremely interesting from an artistic as well as from a psychological point of view.

"They seem to me to be certainly far more interesting than prigs; and I am of opinion that Lord Henry Wotton is an excellent corrective of the tedious ideal shadowed forth in the semi-theological novels of our age

"He then makes vague and fearful insinuations about my grammar and my erudition. Now, as regards grammar, I hold that, in prose at any rate, correctness should always be subordinate to artistic effect and musical cadence; and any peculiarities of syntax that may occur in 'Dorian Gray' are deliberately intended, and are introduced to show the value of the artistic theory in question. Your writer gives no instance of any such peculiarity. This I regret, because I do not think that any such instances occur.

"As regards erudition, it is always difficult, even for the most modest of us, to remember that other people do not know quite as much as one does one's self. I myself frankly admit I cannot imagine how a casual reference to Suetonius and Petronius Arbiter can be construed into evidence of a desire to impress an unoffending and ill-educated public by an assumption of superior knowledge. I should fancy that the most ordinary of scholars is perfectly well acquainted with the 'Lives of the Cæsars,' and with the 'Satyricon.'

"The 'Lives of the Cæsars,' at any rate, forms part of the curriculum at Oxford for those who take the Honour School of 'Literæ Humaniores'; and as for the 'Satyricon' it is popular even among pass-men, though I suppose they are obliged to read it in translations.

"The writer of the article then suggests that I, in common with that great and noble artist, Count Tolstoi, take pleasure in a subject because it is dangerous. About such a suggestion there is this to be said. Romantic art deals with the exception and with the individual. Good people, belonging as they do to the normal, and so, commonplace type, are artistically uninteresting.

"Bad people are, from the point of view of art, fascinating studies. They represent colour, variety and strangeness. Good people exasperate one's reason; bad people stir one's imagination. Your critic, if I must give him so honourable a title, states that the people in my story have no counterpart in life; that they are, to use his vigorous if somewhat vulgar phrase, 'mere catch-penny revelations of the non-existent.' Quite so.

"If they existed they would not be worth writing about. The function of the artist is to invent, not to chronicle. There are no such people. If there were I would not write about them. Life by its realism is always spoiling the subject-matter of art.

"The superior pleasure in literature is to realise the non-existent.

"And, finally, let me say this. You have reproduced, in a journalistic form, the comedy of 'Much Ado about Nothing,' and have, of course, spoilt it in your reproduction.

"The poor public, hearing from an authority so high as your own, that this is a wicked book that should be coerced, and suppressed by a Tory Government, will, no doubt, rush to it and read it. But, alas, they will find that it is a story with a moral. And the moral is this: All excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its own punishment.

"The painter, Basil Hallward, worshipping physical beauty far too much, as most painters do, dies by the hand of one in whose soul he has created a monstrous and absurd vanity. Dorian Gray, having led a life of mere sensation and pleasure, tries to kill conscience, and at that moment kills himself. Lord Henry Wotton seeks to be merely the spectator of life. He finds that those who reject the battle are more deeply wounded than those who take part in it.

"Yes, there is a terrible moral in 'Dorian Gray'—a moral which the prurient will not be able to find in it, but it will be revealed to all whose minds are healthy. Is this an artistic error? I fear it is. It is the only error in the book."

Bitter, Anonymous Reviews.

Very bitter indeed were some of the reviews of Wilde's masterpiece, and obviously prejudiced into the bargain. When "Dorian Gray" appeared in "Lippincott's Magazine," some anonymous reviewer ("The Daily Chronicle," June 30, 1890) seized the occasion to make a savage onslaught on the book, personal animus and wild hysteria being dominant. That cheap rhetorical device, "alliteration's artful aid," was largely used, and such phrases as "dulness and dirt," "leprous literature of the French decadents" are frequent. The nameless genius further ranted on about the "corruption of a fresh, fair, and golden youth which might be fascinating but for its effeminate frivolity, its studied insincerity, its theatrical cynicism, its tawdry mysticism, its flippant philosophisings, and the contaminating trail of garish vulgarity which is over all Mr. Wilde's Wardour-street æstheticism and obtrusively cheap scholarship."

The adjectives are piled on with a vengeance, and the unknown penny-a-liner's moustache-gnawing wrath is with difficulty concealed in the last couple of lines. Not finding his outbreak sufficiently violent he next goes for the "moral" of the work in this way:—"Man is half angel and half ape, and Mr. Wilde's book has no real use if it be not to inculcate the 'moral' that when you feel yourself becoming too angelic you cannot do better than rush out and make a beast of yourself." There is a lot more about "the holy impulses of human nature," "barriers between Humanity and Animalism," "Mr. Wilde's airy levity and fluent impudence," "the paralytic patricians of the Lower Empire," and "Dorian Gray's cool, calculating, conscienceless character," too tedious and tawdry to recall, and betraying the immature conceptions of some literary fledgling who had been favoured with a spare stool in an obscure corner of

the "Chronicle's" office. Oscar Wilde, instead of horsewhipping this ill-mannered youngster or, more terrible still, treating his juvenile balderdash with silent contempt, penned a rejoinder remarkable for its dignity and restraint. Too long to reproduce here in full, we give the following extract:—

Oscar Wilde on "the Moral."

"As for what the moral is, your critic states that it is this: that when a man feels himself becoming 'too angelic' he should rush out and make a 'beast of himself.' I cannot say that I consider this a moral. The real moral of the story is that all excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its punishment, and this moral is so far artistically and deliberately suppressed that it does not enunciate its law as a general principle, but realises itself purely in the lives of individuals, and so becomes simply a dramatic element in a work of art, and not the object of the work of art itself."

Judged from a Higher Standpoint.

Other writers envisaged "Dorian Gray" from a higher standpoint, as may be seen by the following from "Light,"—a Spiritualistic Review (July 12, 1890).

"Mr. Oscar Wilde has created a new character in fiction, one likely to absorb public attention with a similar weird fascination to that produced by the renowned Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; and with a more lasting and beneficial moral effect than had Mr. Stevenson's surprising creation. A deeply conceived psychological study, upon entirely new lines, enriched by the stored wealth of a mind which has spared no pains in the pursuit of sensuous beauty, and which has, to all appearance, revelled in deepest draughts from that sparkling and alluring fountain. But what a spiritual lesson has he drawn therefrom—a lesson graphically and powerfully set forth in the fascinating pages which present to us the life of Dorian Gray. A modern Narcissus, enamoured of his own beauty, which proves a lure to draw him down into the deepest hells of sensual indulgence, from whence he sinks into a still deeper abyss of crime. . . . There is in this book a wonderful spiritual insight into the inner life of the human being, arising, in all probability, from that intuition we all more or less possess; a sort of flash of truth upon the mind, which is not known at the moment to be really true, but is supposed to be the mere weaving of a graceful prolific fancy. A similar power lay at the back of Stevenson's creation of Dr. Jekyll, casting upon the tale so powerful a spiritual light, that all readers were held by the spell of its enchantment. The same feeling of being under a spell fills the reader of 'The Picture of Dorian Gray.' The same subtle, spiritual effect of the *aura of evil* flows out from the book—especially at those moments when Dorian is contemplating the image of his soul's corruption—not, in this instance, that the evil so powerfully felt poisons the mind as poor Dorian was poisoned for life by his French novel; but one gets a feeling of painful horror, and sickening disgust, it is not easy to shake off. One seems to have glanced momentarily into the deepest abysses of hell, and to have drawn back totally sickened by a subtle effluvium.

"The lesson taught by Mr. Oscar Wilde's powerful story is of the highest spiritual import, and if it can be, not *believed* merely, but accepted as a literal fact, a mysterious verity in the life of a human being, that the invisible soul within the body, that alone which lives after death, is deformed, bestialised, and even murdered by a life of persistent evil, it ought to have the most beneficial effect upon society."

Walter Pater on "Dorian Gray."

Pater, whom Oscar Wilde pronounced to be, "on the whole, the most perfect master of English prose now creating amongst us," wrote ("The Bookman," November, 1891) an interesting article on "Dorian Gray," from which we extract the following:—

"We need only emphasise once more, the skill, the real subtlety of art, the ease and fluidity withal of one telling a story by word of mouth, with which the consciousness of the supernatural is introduced into, and maintained amid, the elaborately conventional, sophisticated, disabused world Mr. Wilde depicts so cleverly, so mercilessly. The special fascination of the piece is, of course, just there—at that point of contrast. Mr. Wilde's work may fairly claim to go with that of Edgar Poe, and with some good French work of the same kind, done, probably, in more or less conscious imitation of it."

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