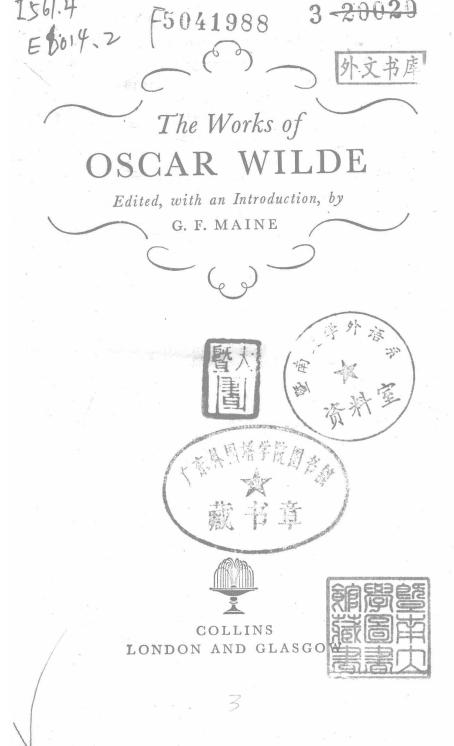


# The Works of OSCAR WILDE





OSCAR WILDE From the painting by Toulouse-Lautrec, 1895.



GENERAL EDITOR : G. F. MAINE

NEW COLLECTED EDITION, 1948

REPRINTED, 1949

,, 1952

,, 1953

Printed in Great Britain by COLLINS CLEAR-TYPE PRESS

此为试读, 需要完整PDF请访问: www.e

: www.ertongbook.c

#### INTRODUCTION

SCAR FINGALL O'FLAHERTIE WILLS WILDE was born in Dublin on October 15th, 1856. He was the second son of Dr. William (afterwards Sir William) Wilde (1799-1869), who graduated brilliantly and, by the time he was forty, had won international fame as an Eye and Ear surgeon. His mother was Jane Francisca Speranza Elgee (1826-96), the daughter of an Archdeacon, and for many years her salon was the most famous in Dublin. In 1864 she published a volume of poems under the pseudonym "Speranza," and many other works followed under her own name. She also took an interest in politics and wrote political articles and manifestos for *The Nation*, the journal of the "Young Ireland" party.

Frank Harris (1856-1931) once remarked to Herbert Gorman: "Oscar Wilde's greatest play was his own life. It was a five act tragedy with Greek implications and he was its most ardent spectator." Already in act one there were evidences of his perverse and scattered genius. When he was ten years old he joined his elder brother at Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, and it soon became evident that his tastes and habits differed from those of the other boys. He loved solitude, disliked all forms of exercise, and found escape from the duller parts of the curriculum in Poetry and the Greek classics. But his studies did not suffer. On the contrary, throughout the whole of his academic career his friends never ceased to exclaim that Wilde, who never seemed to do any work, achieved high academic distinctions.

In October, 1871, he won an entrance scholarship to Trinity College, Dublin, where he remained for three years and took many prizes, including the Berkeley Gold Medal for proficiency in Greek. In 1874 he won a scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford, and there spent four of the happiest years of his life. He became an apostle of the "Aesthetic Movement" which stemmed from Keats and the Pre-Raphaelites and embraced the theories of Pater, Whistler and certain of their contemporaries—a kind of open rebellion against the tastes of the majority and the conventional mannerisms of the art and letters of the times. At Oxford, Wilde was a debonair and popular figure, esteemed for his unconventionality and high spirits, his generous nature and his sparkling conversation. True, his effeminate habits and way of life so incensed a faction of his fellow undergraduates that they felt impelled to wreck his rooms and duck him in the Cherwell-an incident which gave them cause hurriedly to revise their too flippant assessment of his character.

In 1876 he took a First Class both in classical Moderations and Literae Humaniores and visited Italy where he was received in audicace by the Pope. In 1877 he went to Greece in company with Professor Mahaffy, one of his former tutors at Trinity College, and the following year saw the climax of his early brilliance when he won the Newdigate prize with his poem Ravenna.

Act Two commences with Wilde in the rôle of the dilettante, the brilliant conversationalist who became the rage of Londón society, the iconoclast who denounced old gospels with fanatical vigour. We see him, in 1881, as the model for Archibald Grosvenor in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *Patience*, which packed the Savoy with hilarious and appreciative audiences; the young man with the sunflower, knee breeches and long hair who had just published his first volume of

poems; the butt of jokes in Punch.

The scene changes to Wilde of the American tour, who, when he arrived in New York in 1882 in the full bloom and vigour of his twenty-sixth year, told the customs officers that he had nothing to declare but his genius. In the milieu of the New World his ebullience knew no bounds. There he gave full expression to his gay and whimsical personality. The tour, which was effectively stage-managed and publicised, was a triumph of showmanship in which Wilde, as sole performer, was constantly in the limelight, and whatever the rôle, filled it with elegance and distinction. Wilde in Chicago, arrayed in mouse-grey knickerbockers with stockings to match and a gorgeous velvet doublet with flowered sleeves and cambric ruffs, lecturing on the esthetic movement; Wilde in Leadville discoursing with the redshirted miners on the secret of Botticelli, descending the Matchless silver mine, "graceful even in a bucket," to open with a silver drill a new lode named in his honour "The Oscar," and remarking that the miners "in their artless, untutored fashion" had asked him to accept the drill as a memento of the occasion instead of offering him shares in the Oscar lode! Wilde at work on his play The Duchess of Padua which he hoped the famous actress Mary Anderson would produce. It was performed some years later in Germany, and also in New York under the title of Guido Ferranti, but proved a complete failure.

He returned to England at the end of the year, spent some three months in Paris, where he met many of the great figures of the time, among them Mallarmé, Verlaine, Zola, Paul Bourget, Victor Hugo, Degas and Pissaro, and sailed for New York in July, 1883, to attend the first performance of his play *Vera*. Back in London in the autumn, lack of money forced him to tour the English provinces lecturing on "The House Beautiful," and in May, 1884, he married Constance Lloyd, the wealthy daughter of a Dublin barrister and settled in

Chelsea. They had two sons, Cyril, born in 1885, and Vivian, born in 1886. Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and The Canterville Ghost appeared in 1887, when, too, Wilde became editor of the Woman's World, an appointment which he held for two years. 1888 saw the publication of The Happy Prince and Other Tales, a volume of fairy tales in the manner of Hans Christian Andersen, which gives perennial delight to children.

Act Three opens with the sham and glitter of London society in the Yellow Nineties, a period which to us seems as remote as that of Oueen Anne: remote because of modifications wrought by social legislation, and still more because of our changed outlook on life, the result of a gradually developing psychological awareness which now finds expression in almost every sphere of creative activity.

The closing years of the nineteenth century saw Wilde's emergence as a writer of prominence. The brilliant dialogues on The Critic as Artist, and his sole novel The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890); Lady Windermere's Fan and the one act tragedy Salomé (1892), for which the Lord Chamberlain refused a licence in Great Britain but which was printed in French in 1893 and produced by Sarah Bernhardt in Paris in 1896; A Woman of No Importance (1893); the long lyric The Sphinx (1894); An Ideal Husband and his masterpiece The Importance of Being Earnest (1895), all had their origin during this period.

Wilde said that he "put his genius into his living and his talent into his writing," but even if his contemporaries paid generous tribute to his brilliance as playwright and conversationalist, they were not wholly unaware of the malign influences which shaped his conduct and led to his plunge and downfall in 1895. On at least two occasions he might have avoided the abyss that yawned before him, but he was perhaps too vain, too much the artist, to turn and flee from the stage. If he was egocentric he was also consistent; even when confronted by a hostile and jeering audience he followed the dramaturgic rules. Later he was to write, "To regret one's own experience is to arrest" one's own development. To deny one's own experience is to put a lie into the lips of one's own life. It is no less than a denial of the soul." But the worshipper of beauty, who had turned away from sorrow and suffering of all kinds as modes of imperfection, had still to learn that pain is the indispensable condition of the highest beauty of all.

The last two acts of the drama portray the ordeal of his trial at the Old Bailey where he was sentenced in May, 1895, to imprisonment with hard labour for two years, his subsequent ostracism from London society, the rapid dissolution of his health and fortune, and his death

in Paris on November 30th, 1900, at the age of forty-four.

The years in prison were, for one of Wilde's sensitivity, grim and

salutary, and in the beginning they promised only a vista of despair. Now the actor had no audience, and only when he surrendered himself to her administrations could solitude, the great chastener, teach him by stages of bitter resentment, tolerance and remorse, how to come to terms with reality. "Prison life," he wrote, "makes one see people and things as they really are. That is why it turns one to stone. It is the people outside who are deceived by the illusions of life in constant motion. They revolve with life and contribute to its unreality. We who are immobile both see and know."

Wilde fervently believed in the sovereign power of his art. need not remind you," he wrote, "that mere expression is to an artist the supreme and only mode of life. It is by utterance that we live." Now in the strange hermitage to which fate had consigned him he realised that "the value of art is not beauty, but right action"; that life knows no intervals between what has been and what is to come. Life is now.

From the post-trial period come Wilde's powerful Ballad of Reading Gaol (1898), every line of which bears its own guarantee of sincerity, and the long introspective letter from prison (1897), a portion of which was published by his friend and executor Robert Ross as De Profundis in 1905. The original manuscript of this, his apologia and article of faith, is still kept under lock and key in the British Museum, and the suppressed portion of the published work appears only in two prohibitively limited editions printed in 1912 and may not be published until 1960.\* In De Profundis the artist laid bare his soul. In the years of triumph he had succeeded in building a breakwater of order and elegance against the sordid tides of life, but there was no bulwark against the powerful current of the tides within, and when the flood came it overwhelmed and stunned him. But out of the depths to which he had sunk, or from the heights towards which he was rising, Wilde, who had said that metaphysics interested him very little and morality not at all, proclaimed this startling gospel: sin and suffering are beautiful, holy things and modes of perfection. Nay more, he afforded in his own person the most striking illustration of it, and so brought into intimate and living union the successive and the eternal aspects of truth.

Some would have it that although De Profundis is incomparably more sincere than any of his earlier works, it contains some passages which bear evidences of artifice and affectation; but in essence it is untainted, and in all literature there is no passage more poignant than that with which De Profundis ends. "Society, as we have constituted it, will have no place for me, has none to offer; but Nature, whose sweet rains fall on unjust and just alike, will have clefts in the rocks

<sup>\*</sup> See footnote to page 10

where I may hide, and secret valleys in whose silence I may weep undisturbed. She will hang the night with stars so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my footprints so that none may track me to my hurt. She will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole."

Thus, in brief retrospect, the life drama of Oscar, the son of Sir William and Lady Wilde of Dublin. But it is not enough to parade the individual against the backdrop of his period and to treat of his actions objectively as if they were mere incidents in an eternal rehearsal for a play that is never produced. Life is the play, and men and women are the players. Nor shall we find the answer to the riddle of Wilde's coruscating and brittle personality in Lady Windermere or Algernon Moncrieff or Dorian Gray or Salomé or the Sphinx or The Murderer in the Ballad, for these are but projections of the real man.

Wilde devised his own flamboyant method of becoming famous, and, too, his no less individualistic way of becoming infamous, and if he and "the smaller natures and the meaner minds" with whom he chose to associate in society behaved in what they conceived to be the manner appropriate to their period history, we should remember that for them life was like that; they were caught up in a social merry-go-round the pace of which could neither be slowed down nor stopped nibustrabus bus mobely mid inquore gunous and an

For the rest, may not we of a later generation view with more tolerance and understanding than his contemporaries Wilde's abnormal propensities? To-day we are concerned less with what the individual does and more with why he behaves as he does, and we bring to his delinquencies the tolerance of a wiser and more comprehensive judgment. The whole drama of his life is now familiar to us, but he had to act it out scene by scene without rehearsals and with no opportunities of amending the script. His early brilliance was justified in years fruitful of great social and literary achievements, but soon his life became fraught with the threat of disaster, and it was destined to end in suffering and bitter disillusionment.

Whatever his faults, he was not lacking in courage, and having run the gauntlet of a hostile public he manfully faced the music and learned from that shattering experience how to resolve his own dissonances. Even on his death-bed he could remark with his old whimsicality to his devoted friend Robert Ross when champagne was

served to him: "I am dying beyond my means."

Wilde, behind the magnificence of his façade, his pose as esthete and sentimentalist, was neither dull nor indolent; he had a brilliant mind and literary gifts of no common order. There are those who aver that "the comedies amuse but do not move us, that the poems are 'Swinburne and water,' the essays hollow, the novel faux bon; that the Ballad bears too much evidence of the artificer, and that Salomé is little more than a pastiche of erotic psalmody," but Wilde's contribution to the literature of his time is not to be dismissed thus lightly.

By all means let us think of him as a great romantic individualist, a master of the epigram, the erotic personality who became the model for those languid young men of Wildean character who might be heard to remark of the reigning society beauty that when she buried her third husband her hair turned quite gold with grief; but we shall do both Wilde and ourselves a disservice if we belittle his achievement as a literary artist and underestimate his influence upon world literature. The tragedy of his life was his trial for perversion with all its horrid accompaniments; the tragedy of his posthumous fame is that he is still thought of as a criminal more often than he is read as a critic and artist.

If it be true that in his youth Wilde's thirst for knowledge was animated by his desire to acquire intellectual brilliance which would serve his vanity by giving sparkle to his speech and writings; that when grown to years of manhood, more ravening and insatiable hungers overcame the will and strove to cripple his genius; it is also true that suffering brought him wisdom and understanding so that he could write: "There is not a single degradation of the body which I must not try and make into a spiritualising of the soul." Surely, in spite of the sordid end to the drama, there is in that resolution evidence of deep spiritual awareness, and we may ring down the curtain on a sentence from Wilde's own credo: "Still I believe that at the beginning God made a world for each separate man, and in that world which is within us we should seek to live."

G. F. MAINE

Note: De Profundis, the first complete and accurate version of Epistola: in Carcere et Vinculis, the last prose work in English, with an introduction by Vyvyan Holland, was published by special arrangement in 1950.

## 5041988

### CONTENTS

Stories

	PAGE
The Picture of Dorian Gray	17
Lord Arthur Savile's Crime	168
The Canterville Ghost	193
The Sphinx Without a Secret	215
The Model Millionaire	219
A HOUSE OF POMEGRANATES	
The Young King	224
The Birthday of the Infanta	234
The Fisherman and His Soul	248
The Star-Child	273
graph and the second companies of the second companies of the second contract of the second	V Trans
The Happy Prince	285
The Nightingale and the Rose	292
The Selfish Giant was said on good and said out guirant a	
The Devoted Friend	301
The Remarkable Rocket	310
Plays	
The Importance of Being Earnest	321
Lady Windermere's Fan	370
A Woman of No Importance	416
An Ideal Husband	467
Salomé	537
The Duchess of Padua	561
Vera, or The Nihilists	632
A Florentine Tragedy	674
La Sainte Courtisane	686
Poems	
1 oems	
ELEUTHERIA	
Hélas	693
Sonnet to Liberty	693

	IAGE
Ave Imperatrix	694
To Milton	697
Louis Napoleon	698
Sonnet on the Massacre of the Chris	
Quantum Mutata	and the second s
Libertatis Sacra Fames	699
	699
Theoretikos	700
The Garden of Eros	The state of the s
The Garden of Eros	701
	a a final property of the prop
ROSA MYS	TICA
Requiescat	9. 1
	709
Sonnet on Approaching Italy	7.10
San Miniato	garatan managara
Ave Maria Gratia Plena	711
Italia	1111 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Sonnet Written in Holy Week at Ge	enoa 712
Rome Unvisited	712
Urbs Sacra Æterna	714
Sonnet on Hearing the Dies Iræ Sung	
Easter Day	
E Tenebris	715
	715
Vita Nuova	716
Madonna Mia	716
The New Helen	717 . Languariance of Being live
TTI D 1 CT	Lady-Windows Fan
The Burden of Itys	720
MINDELO	M F D C
WIND FLO	The Duchess of Pashur
Impression du Matin	entities de la Transport
Magdalen Walks	730
Athanasia	730
	731
Serenade	733
Endymion	734
La Bella Donna Della Mia Mente	735
Chanson	736
Classes idea	
Charmides	vandlil of face 737

#### FLOWERS OF GOLD

		2101
Impressions		755
The Grave of Keats		756
Theocritus		756
In the Gold Room		757
Ballade de Marguerite		758
The Dole of the King's Daughter		760
Amor Intellectualis		761
Santa Decca		76 I
A Vision		762
Impression de Voyage		762
The Grave of Shelley		763
By the Arno		763
TWDDEGGLONG DE THÉ	â T. D. E.	
IMPRESSIONS DE THÉ	AIRE	
Fabien dei Franchi		765
Phèdre		765
Portia		766
Queen Henrietta Maria		766
Camma courses.		767
Panthea		768
A TOWN TO WAR WOULD WANTED	DNE	
THE FOURTH MOVEM	ENT	
Impression: Le Réveillon		773
At Verona		773
Apologia		774
Quia Multum Amavi		775
Silentium Amoris		775
Her Voice		776
My Voice	s 5 % *	776
Tædium Vitæ		777
TT - 111-42- 11		nnΩ
The Harlot's House		778
Humanitad		780
$\Gamma\Lambda\Upsilon K\Upsilon IIIKPO\Sigma EP\Omega\Sigma$		791
From Spring Days to Winter		793
Αἴλινον, αἴλινον εἰπε, τὸ δ'εῦ νικάτω		794

	2.	AGE
Canzonet		797
Symphony in Yellow		798
In the Forest		798
To My Wife		799
To L. L.		799
Désespoir		801
Pan		802
Ravenna		804
The Sphinx		812
The Ballad of Reading Gaol		822
Poems in Prose		
The Artist		843
The Doer of Good		843
The Disciple		84:4
The Master		845
The House of Judgment		845
The Teacher of Wisdom		847
Essays and Letters		
De Profundis		853
Four Letters from Reading Prison		889
Two Letters to the Daily Chronicle		897
		-91
INTENTIONS		
The Decay of Lying		909
Pen, Pencil and Poison		932
The Critic as Artist		948
The Truth of Masks		999
The Soul of Man Under Socialism	1	8101
The Rise of Historical Criticism	-	1044
The Portrait of Mr. W. H.	8	1089
Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young		1113
Chronological Table		1115





此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.