

old Scotchman, a "Gentleman of the Press," indeed).

"There's a pretty how-d'-ye-do with Oscar Wilde," said Mr. Henderson. "He threatens to have the life of the man who wrote about his lecture. He knows who it is, so you had better go and see him. I only know he's mad! See him and then see me—he threatens actions, demands damages, and God knows what. See him at once!"

I dashed up to Wilde's chambers, Tite Street, Chelsea, in a hansom cab. (If you go to "make it right" with a man who feels himself injured, show him that you haste to make the amende honorable). The white door, with



OSCAR WILDE

a beaten copper panel—sun flowers—was opened by Wilde himself. He glared at me as though he would murder me.

Never mind the interview. As old Phil. Astley said, "We will cut the cackle and come to the 'osses." "I meant that to be my lecture for the coming season," said Oscar. "You have anticipated me. Damnably slyness to take notes in the crown of your hat—had I seen you taking notes I should have forbidden publication."

"But I did not intend to publish your lecture, until suddenly asked for a 'good' article. I never put pencil to paper—I wrote entirely from memory," I said.

"It's a lie," thundered Wilde. "I don't talk like Buggins the buttermilk—platitudes—my

language cannot be carried away like this," and he waved the paper.

"You are suffering from a sense of injury," I said. "I forgive you—and you will apologize. I wrote but two columns of your lecture—listen." And, putting my hands behind my back, I walked up and down the room—giving period after period, passage after passage of his wonderful address, passages I had not written.

His anger vanished as if by magic. He almost embraced me. "My God!" said he, "if that is the impression my lecture has made on an intelligent man, it will make the hit of the season. Come out to lunch and—talk."

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The next time I saw Oscar Wilde he was one of a little literary gathering in Southwark. Mr. Justin Huntley McCarthy lectured on "Poetry." He is dead. John Augustus O'Shea (the poet) was there. Herr Meyer Lutz, Chef d'Orchestra of the Gaiety; John Hollingshead and others were there. That gathering are all dead but—me. In the discussion which followed the lecture Oscar quoted from Hafiz, the Persian poet, these lines:

Upon my mother's knee, a new-born child,
Weeping I sat—while all around me smiled;
God grant that, sinking into death's long sleep,
Calm may I smile—while all around me weep.

* * *

I saw Oscar Wilde once more. With gray face, trembling lips and hands, and swollen eyes, he was being taken "down" from the dock to penal servitude.

Postscript

Since I have been in Canada some enterprising publisher dug up my report of Oscar Wilde's lecture, published it as a little brochure at five shillings. He "sold out," and I can not get a copy for love or money. If anybody will get me one I shall be grateful. I have heard of the little booklet—I have not seen it, but a friend saw a copy in Seattle.

