

(1934?)

O. Wilde

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*avec les sentiments
les plus respectueux
Maximilien Rudwin*

MAXIMILIEN RUDWIN
HOTEL ALBERT
NEW YORK CITY.

In 1933 the French writer, André Gide, published from materials that had in part appeared elsewhere, his biographical narrative, *Si le Grain ne Meurt* which, though one of his most warmly human works, loosed upon him a nest of hornets for some sections it contained on Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas. The incidents he recounts had taken place in Algiers where with Wilde, Douglas and some Arab boys, he became party to such exploits as were to make the name of Wilde synonymous with corruption after the disastrous trials of 1895. In his candid account Gide spares no one, least of all himself, and paints, incidentally, two of the most brilliant, if unflattering, portraits of Wilde and Douglas contained in the vast museum that has grown up about them. Wilde's, and more, Douglas's faithful rose up in arms. Lord Alfred himself was approached for comment. Calling the account "a clumsy fabrication of lies founded on a small substratum of truth" and Gide himself "a dull, fifth-rate writer, a despicable cad and a treacherous scoundrel," Lord Alfred salves his hurt without, however, making an adequate rejoinder. Mr. Brasol, with obvious commendation, prints the letter in full. He does more. Directly under it he writes that Robert Ross, on the contrary, "cheerfully conferred his benediction upon Gide's foul inventions, when he addressed to him these lines: 'I am delighted that you have reprinted your brilliant souvenirs of Oscar Wilde. I have told many friends, since your study first appeared in *L'Ermitage*, that it was not only the best account of Oscar Wilde at the different stages of his career, but the only true and accurate impression of him that I have ever read.'"

Mr. Brasol
Wilde

The juxtaposition of Lord Alfred's letter of 1933 and of Ross's note to Gide is eloquent. There is one little detail, however, that the author omits. In quoting the words of Ross, Wilde's "dearest Robbie," the man who received the pariah out of Reading Gaol and devotedly nursed him during his last days, Mr. Brasol fails to mention that they were dated March 21, 1910, and that therefore they could not be applied to the expanded material of *Si le Grain ne Meurt*.

Despite the best intentions in the world, Mr. Brasol has added only another stone to the mound under which Oscar Wilde lies buried.