

Oscar Wilde

"Oscar Wilde" by Andre Gide; translated from the French by Bernard Frechtman; Philosophical Library, \$2.75.

This slim book of 50 pages is the first authorized American translation of Gide's personal memories concerning Oscar Wilde, the Irish poet and playwright. Gide was one of the men of letters who went to Wilde's aid when that unfortunate writer encountered tragedy. While some of the writers attempted to defend the poet through his works, Gide attempted to show that the man was admirable.

These personal sketches were written at the turn of the century and are presented here in their original form. Frechtman, in his translator's note, includes two quotations from Gide's journal, the first of which is dated January 1, 1892 when Gide was 22 years old: It reads: "Wilde has done me, I think, nothing but harm. With him, I had forgotten how to think. I had more varied emotions, but I could no longer order them; I was particularly unable to follow the deductions of others. A few thoughts, occasionally; but my clumsiness in handling them made me abandon them. I am now resuming with difficulty, though with great delight, my history of philosophy, where I am studying the problem of language (which I shall resume with Muller and Renan."

The second quotation is dated June 29, 1913 and reads:

— "Certainly, in my little book on Wilde, I appeared rather unfair toward his work and I pooch-pooched it too casually, I mean before having known it well enough. I admire, as I think back on it, the good grace with which Wilde listened to me when, in Algiers, I passed judgment upon his plays (quite impertinently, as it seems to me now). No impatience in the tone of his reply, and not even a protest; it was then that he was led to say to me, 'I have put all my genius into my life; I have put only my talent into my works.' I should be curious to know whether he has ever uttered this remark to anyone else.

"I do hope later on to be able to come back to the matter and tell everything which I dared not say at first. I would also like to explain Wilde's work in my own way, particularly his plays—whose chief interest lies between the lines."