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Book to be read in
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2d Tragedy of Wilde's Career Told

The tragedy of Oscar Wilde was a double one. There was his trial, the two years at hard labor, and his death in poverty and disgrace. And there was the other one, which Wilde himself once expressed in:

"Surely there was a time I might have tried

"The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance

"Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God."

It is the second one with which Andre Gide is chiefly concerned in his book OSCAR WILDE (Philosophical Library, \$2.75, Bernard Frechtman, translator).

The book comprises two essays written by Gide more than 40 years ago. As other writings, they show Wilde at the height of his popularity; as Sebastian Melmoth, the exile; and as the spiritually broken man who haunted the shadows of the Paris cafes where once he had been the star.

What is different in this book is the picture of the man who never could put into written words either the genius of his intellect or the marvelous understanding of his heart.

Wilde told Gide: "I have put all my genius into my life; I have put only my talent into my works." It was his tragedy and ours.

Gide believes Wilde went deliberately back to England, actually courting the disaster which overtook him. Perhaps he did so, hoping that a broken heart would enable him to put his genius into his books. The thought makes a re-reading of the BALLAD OF READING GAOL an even more poignant experience.

—By MAXWELL RIDDLE