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O. W.

**THE READING  
LAMP**

**OSCAR WILDE. In Memoriam (Reminiscences). De Profundis. By Andre Gide. Translated from the French by Bernard Frechtman. Publishers: Philosophical Library, New York.**

One of the essays in this book was written in 1901 and the other in 1905. They were published together in 1910 in France. Andre Gide's interest in Oscar Wilde and his works, however, was not of 20th century origin. As early as 1892 the 22-year-old Gide wrote in his Journal, "Wilde has done me, I think, nothing but harm." He was referring to the intellectual influence of the brilliant writer.

"Wilde," Gide wrote in recollection of the period when Wilde was at the peak of his success, "clever at duping the makers of worldly celebrity, knew how to project, beyond his real character, an amusing phantom which he played most spiritedly. \* \* \* Wilde did not converse: he narrated. \* \* \* He knew French admirably, but he pretended to hunt about a bit for the words which he wanted to keep waiting. \* \* \* As his first concern was to amuse, many of those who thought they knew him knew only the jester in him."

M. Gide was one of Wilde's most vigorous defenders when the latter fell into disgrace and experienced prosecution, an experience from which he never recovered. M. Gide was not one of those content to base the defense and apology merely on Wilde's literary works. The Frenchman had promoted admiration for the man as well as the artist.

Wilde viewed in this manner is an interesting subject in these pages. These "personal memories" are important as revelations of aspects of M. Gide's mind as well as contributions to the mass of information about Oscar Wilde.