

OSCAR WILDE

Plays, Prose Writings
& Poems



1858

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AN EVERYMAN PAPERBACK

OSCAR WILDE'S
PLAYS, PROSE WRITINGS,
AND POEMS

INTRODUCTION BY
HESKETH PEARSON



LONDON J. M. DENT & SONS LTD
NEW YORK E. P. DUTTON & CO INC

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Frequently the choice for television and radio plays—recently the B.B.C. devoted their efforts to a wholesale Wilde revival—and the one name associated with the word "charm" in connection with the theatre, Oscar Wilde probably means more to a great many people than any other writer of his generation. But Wilde's dramatic writing is only one aspect of an extraordinary man who swayed society with his pen and tongue—he was one of London's most brilliant talkers, a jester, a poet, a novelist, a philosopher and a stoic. This volume gives a four-dimensional view of his genius. Here is Wilde's finest novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in which Lord Henry contains more than a superficial resemblance to himself; here is his entertaining dialogue, *The Critic as Artist*, which touches on many a serious aspect of art with a flight of fancy as light as thistledown; here the bubbling farce, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (no English farce has rivalled this stream of epigram and conceit); his satirical play, *Lady Windermere's Fan*; and the best example of Wilde the talker turned prose-writer, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*. For good measure there is *The Letter to Robert Ross*, and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, both written after Wilde's prison experiences.

Cover drawing by Lynton Lamb

AN EVERYMAN PAPERBACK PUBLISHED BY
J. M. DENT & SONS LTD, BEDFORD ST, LONDON, W.C.2
E. P. DUTTON & CO. INC., NEW YORK, U.S.A.