Oscar Wilde Revalued
Small, Ian

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UNTIL very recently virtually the only area of study where Wilde had been at all adequately served was in his letters. Sir Rupert Hart–Davis produced his excellent and knowledgeable edition of *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* in 1962. Its collection of over a thousand items supplemented and succeeded all other earlier collections of the correspondence (such as those by More Adey, details of which are in Fletcher and Stokes [1976], 61). Hart–Davis’s edition contains an immense amount of contextualizing information: it is a work of biography in itself and an essential tool for any scholar or student of Wilde. Indeed it is possible to date the beginning of serious scholarly attention to Wilde from the date of its publication. *Selected Letters of Oscar Wilde* (1979), also edited by Hart–Davis, reprints material from that collection, sometimes in an emended form. In 1985 Hart–Davis supplemented his collected edition with *More Letters of Oscar Wilde*, a further 164 letters taken, he reports, from a total of over two hundred identified since the publication of his first collection. Those he left out he claimed were merely “trivial notes, always undated, often to unidentifiable correspondents”–a claim which is in fact slightly misleading.

There is a significant number of unpublished Wilde letters at the HRHRC. These may have been overlooked by Hart–Davis, or they may have been rejected on the basis of being trivial. Actually they have several kinds of significance. Some add very minor points of information to the biography: an undated letter, for example, to
George Ives clearly demonstrates that he was well acquainted with Wilde's subterfuges—"I have said I am going to Cambridge to see you—but I am really going to see the young Domitian," Wilde writes. Other letters, however, provide interesting information about the mundane aspects of Wilde's life, the day-to-day negotiations undertaken as a matter of course by an aspiring dramatist in the late nineteenth century. In addition, there is a very important letter to an unnamed correspondent, but perhaps John Morley, about the corrected proofs of "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" (for details, see below).

Nevertheless Hart-Davis's last collection prints letters taken from every phase of Wilde's career and includes, in the 1880s, correspondents such as Lady Gregory, Walter Hamilton and Herbert Horne. Particularly interesting are those written during the 1890s. In them, our knowledge of Wilde's concern for money and his transactions with his publishers and theatre managers is usefully supplemented. There are, for example, two long letters to George Alexander concerning details of the staging of Lady Windermere's Fan and a letter to Beerbohm Tree about the rights over, and the royalties from, A Woman of No Importance, which adds to the information about the financial returns of performances of the play that may be gathered from the Beerbohm Tree Collection at the University of Bristol.

The letters of this period to and from publishers provide evidence of how closely Wilde followed commercial transactions and all business matters. Those letters from prison and from the Continent flesh out our knowledge of the final years. Since then other letters have been published: Richard Harmond and G. A. Cevasco (1987) print a previously unpublished letter of Wilde held at the Theodore Roosevelt Association which he wrote soon after his arrival in New York in January 1882. More recently, John Spalding Catton (1989) identifies two further letters.

Letter writing is, of course, a process which involves at least two parties. In this respect, letters to Wilde have tended to be neglected by editors and scholars alike. In the annotation to both of his collections Hart-Davis does in fact print extracts from some letters to Wilde, but generally speaking there is no equivalent of Richard J. Finneran's collection of letters to W. B. Yeats. The HRHRC has particularly strong holdings of letters to Wilde which have been
largely unexamined. They can be divided into two broad categories: those which are part of a sequence and which therefore allow us to make sense of an otherwise enigmatic letter from Wilde; and those from acquaintances, but more usually business connections, which point to, and give useful hints about, missing parts of Wilde’s correspondence. In both cases the letters at the HRHRC provide small but significant details of the biography.

Further correspondence which bears some interest for students of Wilde is printed by Mary Hyde in *Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas: A Correspondence* (1982), a volume which contains copious reference to Bosie’s views of his relationship with Wilde, recollected in letters to Shaw from 1931, when Douglas was 60, up to 1944. More recently, David B. Eakin (1987) discusses Wilde’s own correspondence with Douglas.

The selection of letters which follows is by necessity only a sample of the archive material. It is intended to indicate the range of evidence available to the interested scholar. A comprehensive edition of the unpublished letters to and from Wilde, with full textual apparatus and explanatory annotation, is clearly beyond the scope and remit of this book. For example, Lady Wilde’s letters to Oscar would fill a volume by themselves. For reasons of space, therefore, a few letters to Wilde have been abbreviated, and annotation has been confined to bibliographical information.
Uncollected Letters

ANS to Mr Byrne
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L B995. [1876?].

Magdalen College
Oxford

Mr Byrne,

I am very glad to hear you have let the House. All the Rents &c are
to be paid to me direct. And I am responsible for everything. Whatever
is due to you for letting the house and the valuation you will please
deduct from the rent.

Oscar F.W. Wilde

ANS to Charles Leland
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L L537. [1878–80].

St Stephen’s Club
Westminster

Dear Mr Leland,

Will you give me the pleasure of dining with me on Thursday at 8
o’clock en garçon. I want to have a talk with you on many subjects.

Sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde

13 Salisbury St
Strand

ALS to Mrs Hunt
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L H942 [bound]. Oscar Wilde letters to Mrs Hunt 1880–87.
Letter 3 [post-marked 15 July 1880].
Dear Mrs Hunt,

It is so good of you asking me. I am engaged to a lot of places that afternoon and evening but I shall come to you certainly. I am so sorry you are all going away.

Yours sincerely

Oscar Wilde

[Letter 8]

Dear Mrs Hunt,

I am really very unlucky, and am always engaged when you are good enough to ask me. The loss is mine on this as on other occasions.

Very sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde.

ALS to Miss Boughton

Location: Clark Library.

W6721L B758. [1881].

Dear Miss Boughton,

I shall be very happy to come to you on Sunday evening if I can get away from a very aesthetic dinner party to which I am engaged. Perhaps you will not mind my coming a little late. Lilies and languors and all!

Very sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde

This letter is not for publication
ALS To an unknown correspondent
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L U58. [Dec. 1881?].

9 Charles Street
Grosvenor Square

Dear Harold,

Will you come and lunch with me at St. Stephen’s Club tomorrow (Wednesday) at 2 o’c. It’s only
[1] 9 minutes from the city. Or will you come here at 5 o’clock to tea.
[2] Lunch will suit me better
[3] Tell me by telegram where to find you and I will go down to city as I want a [illegible word] rug. I go to U.S. on Friday.

Ever yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS To an unknown correspondent
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L U58. [188-?].

Dear Miss Romolu[?] [illegible word]

Allow me to congratulate you on your great success as a reciter. Those who have heard you once, always desire to hear you a second time, and I have no doubt that you have a fine career before you. You seem to me to have all the qualifications necessary for the recitation of poetry and for its dramatic presentation.

Believe me
Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde.

ALS to Mr Young
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L Y68. [188-?].
Dear Mr Young,

I am so sorry that I cannot go to the theatre tomorrow night after all: I find we have an old engagement to dine out.

I hope however you will come and see me before you go away.

Yours very sincerely
Oscar Wilde

ALS To an unknown correspondent

Location: Clark Library.
W6721L US8. [188-?].

Albemarle-Club
13 Albemarle-Street-W
16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Frank,

On Friday with pleasure at 7.30. But is not the Continental dreary for dinner? Why not that lovely place in King Street, St James’—“Willis’s restaurant”—I go there daily, but you have to engage a table beforehand. If you have not tried it, pray do—I know you will like it. It has an excellent chef, and has the advantage of being terribly extravagant.

You must tell me all about Spain. Your letter from there charmed me: no, you must tell me all about yourself—You are much more interesting to me than even Spain is.

Ever yours,
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Richard D'Oyly Carte

Location: HRHRC MS Wilde, O; Letters [1882].

Arlington Hotel
Washington
Dear Carte

You see the unpleasant results of leaving me without a manager—Please don't let it occur again for both our sakes! Morse should be always with me: Thanks

Oscar Wilde

LS to Joseph Marshall Stoddart
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.
[There is a stamped receipt on the letter: "J.M. Stoddart / Oct / 21/ 1882 / Philadelphia"; also on the letter, in a hand not Wilde's, is: "answrld J.E.B. Oct. 23 '82"].

[19/20 Oct 1882]
Philadelphia

Dear Mr Stoddard [sic],

I hope you will not forget to send me all the reviews of Mr. Rodd's poems—I hear the "Critic" had one and the Times.

Very truly yours
Oscar Wilde
1267 Broadway

ALS to Mr Seaver
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L S442. [1882].

Dear Mr Seaver,

Thank you for your most courteous letter. It would have given me great pleasure to dine with you next week, but I leave on Monday for Philadelphia.

On my return to New York however I hope to avail myself of your hospitable invitation.

Believe me
Dear Mr Seaver
Very truly yours
Oscar Wilde

ACS to Mrs Dion Boucicault
Location: Clark Library.
46 West 28th Street

Dear Mrs Boucicault,

Thank you very much for your card. I hope you have received your tickets. After Monday I will be freer and should be only too delighted to see you again, and call on you if you allow me.

Believe me
Very sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS To an unknown correspondent
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L U58. 28 April 1883.

Avril 28
‘83

Monsieur,

Je desire tant voir le jour de vermissage à votre salon que j'ose vous faire souvenir de la promesse que vous m'avez si courtoisement fait de m'envoyer une carte d'entrée.

Agrérez, Monsieur, l'assurance de mes sentiments les plus distinguées, et de l'admiration infinie que j'ai pour vos œuvres.

Oscar Wilde
Hotel Voltaire
Quai Voltaire.
ACS to [George Webb?] Appleton

Location: Clark Library. 
W6721L A649. [1884?]. 

Dear Mr Appleton,

I fear I will not be able to lecture out of town next season, or much in town either, as I am very busy. I will however lecture at Bournemouth in April not October.

Sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde

ANS to Mrs Humphrey

Location: Clark Library. 
W6721L H926. [188-?]. 

Dear Mrs Humphrey

Will you call in. Do you understand?

Sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde

ACS To an unknown correspondent

Location: Clark Library. 
W6721L U58. [1880-95?].

"Sur les sujets modernes, faisons des vers antiques"

Oscar Wilde

ANS to Gleeson White

Location: Clark Library. 
W6721L W584. [188-?].
Dear Mr Gleeson White,

I send you a few leaflets about my little book—your pleasant article on the Kakemono I hope to use in January.

Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Frances Forbes–Robertson
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L H3238. [1885–95].

16 Tite Street
New Travellers Club,
Piccadilly-W

My Dear Frankie,

How unkind of you to be at Mrs Palmer’s and not tell me! Why did you do this? I suppose you are right about the Convent Parlour. But we must meet somewhere. Could you and Eric, if he is in town, come to lunch next week somewhere?

I want so much to see again the two wonderful rebels, the two dear friends.

Ever yours
Oscar

ANS to an unknown correspondent
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L U58. [1885–95]. [Mourning stationary].

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Leader,

I enclose the communication you are expecting. Will you write your usual clever pen words and send it to Mrs Humphrey?

Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde
ALS to an unknown correspondent
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L US8. [1885–1891].

Dear Sichel,

You may put me down as one of your contributors. I am in the middle of an article that I will be able to send you this month, I am glad Time is such a success.

Truly yours
Oscar Wilde

ANS to Hugh Bryans
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L B9151. [27 May 1878; dated by postmark on envelope].

Dear Hugh,

Lunch here—1.30 not Berkley.

Yours
Oscar

ANS to Mrs De La Rue
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L D3392. [1885–95].

Dear Mrs De La Rue,

My wife is very sorry she is unable to accept your kind invitation, as her Doctor will not let her dine out for some weeks more, but I will be very happy to come myself.
Believe me
Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Luther Munday
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L M965. [1885–95].
16 Tite Street
Chelsea

Dear Munday,

I have received no notice about my subscription. How much is it? If you will let me know, I will send it.

Any Wednesday afternoon you are in Chelsea pray come in and see us at tea time.

Yours sincerely,
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Mr Dighton
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L D574. [1885–95].
16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Mr Dighton,

Would you kindly give me the address of Lady Virginia Sandars and of Lady Constance Howard. Miss Corelli’s story is very powerful indeed.

Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Lady Lindsay
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L L748. [1884–95].
Dear Lady Lindsay,

My wife and I hope to have the pleasure of coming to tea tomorrow, but I am very busy and may be detained. I have never seen the sanctum, in which you write, I feel sure, your charming poems. And hope to visit it, if not tomorrow, on some other day.

Believe me
Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Percy Horne
Location: Clark Library.
Uncatalogued Wilde MS. [1886 Aug 14].

I fear I have to go out tonight—but I hope to see you soon.
Your poems are most charming, and your choice of epithets exquisite and felicitous. You combine very perfectly simplicity and strangeness.
I have no doubt you will do very lovely work.

Oscar Wilde

ALS to G. H. Kersley
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L K411. [4 Aug. 1886; dated from postmark on envelope].

Dear Mr Kersley,

I send you a line from Whitman. I hope you will see him and admire him.
Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Mrs Charlotte Riddell
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters [c. 1887].

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Mrs. Riddell,

Will you allow me to add your name to the list of contributors to a monthly magazine I have been asked to edit for Messrs Cassell and Co. the publishers.

I am anxious to make the magazine the recognised organ through which women of culture and position will express their views, and to which they will contribute.

Miss Thackeray, Miss Mulock, Lady Portsmouth, Lady Archibald Campbell, Miss Olive Schreiner, Mrs. Fawcett, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Mrs. Pfeiffer, and others have promised to write, and a short story or article from your pen would add a charm to the magazine.

The magazine will be an illustrated monthly, and the first number will appear under my editorship in November.

I send this to the care of your publishers, as I am sorry to say I cannot remember your exact address.

Hoping you will allow me to count you among my contributors,

I remain
Very truly yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Mrs Ewing
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L E956. [Oct. 1887].

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW
Dear Mrs Ewing,

It will give me very great pleasure if you will write something for the Woman's World. The first number, which appears on Wednesday, will show you the lines on which I propose to conduct the magazine.

I do not propose to have much poetry, if any, but a short prose-article from your pen would I am sure be very attractive.

Is there any French man of letters you would like to write on? Any one you knew, or know, personally. Personal reminiscences are always interesting.

The article should be about 3000 words in length.

Mamma was so sorry to have missed you yesterday but she came with me to see a production of Coppée's 'Le Passant'. The translation was very mediocre, so you missed little by not being [sic] seeing it.

When you have decided on a subject pray let me know, and I will let no one else touch it.

With kind regards to your husband. Believe me

Very sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Emily Thursfield
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L T543. [1887].

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Mrs Thursfield,

Will you allow me to add your name to the list of contributors to a monthly magazine I have been asked to edit from Messers. Cassell & Co. the publishers. I am anxious to make the magazine the recognised organ through which women of cultured position will express their views, and to which they will contribute.

Miss Thackeray, Lady Portsmouth, Lady Meath, Mrs Fawcett, Mrs Jeune, Lady Pollock, Mrs Jacob Bright, Mrs Charles Maclaren, Lady Archibald Campbell, Miss Mulock, and many others have promised to write, and I should esteem it a great favour to add your name to the list.
I propose to have articles of about 5000 words in length: would you care to do an article on Pit Women, with illustrations, or would you prefer a literary subject?

I should like you to select your own topic. Do you care for writing monographs? I want one on Mrs Siddons—but perhaps you would prefer something else.

Pray give my kind regards to Mr Thursfield

& Believe me

Truly yours

Oscar Wilde

ANS to Arthur Fish
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L F532. [1888?].

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Mr Fish,

I have not been at all well, and cannot get my notes done. Can you manage to put in something else. I will be down tomorrow.

Sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde

ALS to Marie Singleton [Violet Vane]
Location: Clark Library.
[28 Apr. 1888; dated from postmark, but it is not clear whether letters are bound with the correct envelopes. Cf. Hart-Davis who gives different dates for letters he prints from this collection.]

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Mrs Singleton

I will hope to find you at home on Sunday afternoon. I think your article a great success—_the_ thing on our Stuarts.
Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Marie Singleton [Violet Vane]
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L S617. [c. 4 Aug. 1888].

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Mrs Singleton,

I have looked high and low for "L'Immortel," but alas! I fear I have left it at Chambers. I am so sorry.

Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

AL to Mrs van de Velde
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L V244. 5 Apr. 1888. [Not in Wilde's hand.]

Woman's World
La Belle Suavage Ludgate Hill
London April 5 1888

Dear Mrs Van de Velde

I have so many manuscripts on hand that I have been unable to publish your story and I am afraid that I can hardly fix any definite date for its appearance. If you care to still leave it with me I will do my best with it. If not I will return it to you.

Yours very faithfully
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Robert Ross
Location: Clark Library.
[ca. 1888].
My Dear Bobbie,

The kitten is quite lovely—it does not look white, indeed it looks a sort of tortoise-shell colour, or a grey barred[?] with velvety dark [illegible word] but as you said it was white I have given orders that it is always to be spoken of as the “white kitten”—the children are enchanted with it, and sit, one on each side of its basket, worshiping—It seems pensive—perhaps it is thinking of some dim rose-garden in Persia, and wondering why it is kept in this chill England.

I hope you are enjoying yourself at Cambridge—whatever people may say against Cambridge, it is certainly the best preparatory school for Oxford that I know.

After this insult I had better stop.

Yours ever
Oscar Wilde.

ALS to Marie Singleton
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L S617. [1888].

Dear Mrs Singleton,

I will come tomorrow at 4.30 with great pleasure. I think the article will cause immense excitement.

Yours very sincerely,
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Rowland Edmund Prothero [Baron Ernle]
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L E715. [22 Aug. 1890].
Dear Mr Prothero,

I have sent back revised proof to printers, but find a slip. Will you kindly alter it for me. Page 20. Line 3 from bottom. For “second-rate” read “commonplace.”

Faithfully yours

Oscar Wilde

[On verso, but not in Wilde’s hand: “Oscar Wilde—22 Aug 1890 has revd. his proof corrected.”]

ALS to unidentified correspondent

[Probably John Morley, the editor of Fortnightly Review.]
Location: HRHRC; MS Morley, C.D. Misc. Oscar Wilde.

Dear Sir,

There is an error of setting in my article, which pray correct at once, if possible.

The passage (p 307) on morbidity, beginning “Perhaps however” and ending with “King Lear” must be transferred to page 308 and put after “healthy work of art.” 17 lines from bottom.

It occurs rightly between lines 18 and 17 from bottom—of course as a separate complete paragraph, as it now stands.

Kindly see to this, as it is out of place at present.

Truly yours

Oscar Wilde

ALS to unknown correspondent [Arthur Clifton]

Location: Clark Library.
W6721L C639. [28 Jan. 1891; date from postmark on envelope].
My Dear Arthur,

The new last line 'Paradise' is charming. 'Vice' does not do—as it is a word tainted in its signification with moral censure—vitium: which is faulty.

The evening was charming. I enjoyed it all.

Ever yours

Oscar

ALS to Mrs Gertrude Kellie

Location: Clark Library.

Dear Mrs Kellie,

I enclose you a note for the acting-manager of the St James'. Any evening you bring it he will do his best to give you best seating.

With kind regards to your husband—that charming singer and poet.

Believe me
Sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde

ALS to an unknown correspondent

Location: Clark Library.

Dear Sir,

I write in haste to ask your printer to let me have a proof of my poems: if the proofs reach me on Sunday morning I can have them in London on Monday morning. It is too dangerous always to allow poems to appear without a proof.
Yours sincerely
Oscar Wilde

Hotel Voltaire
Quai Voltaire
Paris

ALS to Walter Severn
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L S498. [2 July 1892; date from postmark on envelope].

My dear Walter,

I was so sorry I could not go to you the other day, but I was engaged. Of course, you must come to my play. The early part of next week, on any matinee will be safest for good seating.

Ever yours
Oscar

Please bring enclosed when you go to theatre.

ALS to G.H. Ellnanger
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L E475. [27 May 1893; date from postmark on envelope].

Dear Sir,

It will give me pleasure to meet you, if you will call on me, at 10 St James Place, S W on Friday next at 12 o’clock.

Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde
ALS to an unknown correspondent
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L U58. [1893?].

The Hotel Albermarle
Picadilly
London

My Dear Gilbert,

If you can, come to supper—but if you are ill don’t mind. I am so sorry you are not well.

Always yours
Oscar

ALS to Percy Osborne
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L O81. [1893].

The Cottage
Goring-on-Thames

Dear Percy Osborne,

Enclosed is just returned to me. I was so sorry you did not come over here, and send you this old letter merely to show you that your charming letter was not unregarded.

Let me know where you are, and what you are doing.

Ever yours
Oscar Wilde

MS to Stanhope Ward
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L W2633. [19 Apr. 1893].

Hotel Albermarle
Picadilly, London

Mr Oscar Wilde begs to thank Mr Stanhope Ward for his graceful and interesting gift.

April 15
OW
AN to Charles Kains–Jackson
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L K135. [6 Nov. 1893]. Telegram.

St James St. SW.
Reply paid.
C Kains Jackson, Woodruffe House, Chiswick Mall.

Can you come and see me here tomorrow at eleven wish to consult you professionally on Salomé business.

Oscar Wilde
10 St James Place SW

[On verso:] Reply that C K–J will keep appointment

ANS to Charles Kains–Jackson
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L K135. 10 Nov. 1893. [Not in Wilde's hand.]

10 & 11 St James's Place
SW
10 Nov. 1893

Dear Mr Kains–Jackson,

Could you come here tomorrow (Saturday) at 12 o'clock? I have been very unlucky today in my attempts to find you.

Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

AN to C. Kains–Jackson
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L K135. 10 Nov. 1893. Telegram.

Telegram C Kains–Jackson
St James's Street SW 6.00
Reply paid Charles Kains-Jackson.
Woodruffe House Chiswick Mall.

Can you be here at 9.15 tonight very important Oscar Wilde 10 St James Place Please wire reply to 16 Tite Street Chelsea

|On verso:| Absent at author's club HKJ

**AN to C. Kains-Jackson**

Location: Clark Library.
W6721L K135. 10 Nov. 1893b. Telegram.

Telegram C. Kains-Jackson,
St James's Street S W. 1.40

Reply paid C. Kains-Jackson.
88 Chancery Lane EC.

Can you see me at three o'clock this afternoon if so will come down Oscar Wilde please answer to Willis Restaurant King Street

**ALS to Mr Cartwright**

Location: Clark Library.
W6721L C329. [1894].

Dear Mr Cartwright

Will you kindly send me my fees for "Lady Windermere's Fan" in Australia: I hear from Brough and Boucicault that they have been forwarded to you.

I hope you have a part in this new play worthy of your distinguished powers of concentration and colour as an actor.

Sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde
ANS to Mrs Patrick Campbell
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L C189 1894.
[10 line presentation inscription from OW to Mrs Patrick Campbell, dated London, '94 and on flyleaf extracted from unidentified volume.]

Mrs Patrick Campbell
in admiration
of her incomparable
art and her
incomparable personality
from
Oscar
Wilde
London
'94

ALS to George Ives
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L I95. [1894?].

10 & 11 St James's Place
SW

So sorry you could not come to luncheon: will you dine at the Savoy on Sunday at 8 o'clock. Alfred Douglas and Egbert Sebright are coming.

Do come
Yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Aubrey Fitzgerald
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L F553. [1894, date from postmark and covering letter from recipient].
Dear Mr Fitzgerald,

My cast for my new play is complete. Otherwise, it would have given me great pleasure to have had you in it.

Should you care to come and see me, I will be at home on Friday at 11.30.

I remember your mother quite well: she used to come to our house in Dublin years.

Yours sincerely,
Oscar Wilde

ANS to G. H. Kersley

My dear Kersley,

Kleon might do till we get something better. I dine out tomorrow—but come on Tuesday morning and see me.

Yours
Oscar

ALS to Bram Stoker

Dear Bram,

Can you come at 12 o’clock? Or if that is too early at 2? I was sorry to miss you.
Sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ANS to unidentified correspondent
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, Oj Letters.

Dear Sir,

This is my autograph.

Oscar Wilde

Sept 94

ANS to Maurice Gilbert
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L G4655. [1898–1900].
[Recto]
For Mr Maurice Gilbert
Mr Sebastian Melmoth

[Verso]
Dear Maurice,

Come to the Café de Rohan. I have waited in till 12 o’clock. We shall breakfast at the Restaurant Lyonnais—Rue de l’Echelle.
ACS to Maurice Gilbert
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L G4655. 2 Apr. [1900].

Dear Maurice,

Arrived at Palermo this morning. Hope you are well.

April 2

OW

ALS to Miss Curtis
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L C978. [189-?].

Lyric Club

Dear Miss Curtis,

With great pleasure. Any matinee you like; bring enclosed with you.

Sincerely yours

Oscar Wilde

ACS to Claire de Pratz
Location: Clark Library.
W6721L D424. [26 Feb. 1900].

Telegraphe

Mlle Claire de Pratz
11 Avenue des Chaddeux [?]
[Unintelligible word]
Paris

Many thanks—but I am not at all well. Indeed I write from my bed. Otherwise it wd have been charming to have had tea with you.

Sincerely

Oscar Wilde
Undated Letters

ALS to Emily Thursfield
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.
Raven Hotel
Shrewsbury.

Dear Mrs. Thursfield,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation of which I will be most happy to avail myself on Friday next: I go to Middlesboro' on Thursday but will return to Newcastle on Friday morning and make my way to Tynemouth.

I look forward very much to seeing you again and, with kind regards to your husband,

I remain
Most truly yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to unidentified recipient—"Doctor"
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.
9 Charles St.
Grosvenor Squ[are]

My Dear Doctor,

With much pleasure—supper after my lecture—that will suit me best—I will come down by 5.30 from St. Pancras—as before: Getting in that is at 5.30 so as to have some time before I lecture—

The invitation of the Club has not yet come. I will formally answer it when it does—with you in the chair it should be most pleasant.

With kind regards to your wife,

Believe me
Very sincerely
Oscar Wilde
ALS to unidentified correspondent—“Edith”
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.

My Dear Edith,

I am so overwhelmed with work I fear I cannot join the chorus of your nightingales, but you have my best wishes for your new magazine. All the editors I know have been old and horrid, so a young and charming editor is an era in literature.

I congratulate you.

Your affectionate cousin

Oscar Wilde

ALS to Oscar Browning
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.

Woman’s World,
Cassell and Company Limited,
La Belle Sauvage,
Ludgate Hill, EC
London 188

Dear O.B.

Certainly: pillage the Americans who are rich, and get your £40. I wd not dream of claiming the prior right.

En revanche—do me the article on the Women Benefactors of Cambridge.—

The Saturday was silly—Give my love to Bobbie—who never writes to me.

Yours

Oscar

ALS to Mr. Morgan
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW
Dear Mr Morgan,

I have lent your MS to a friend whose opinion I was anxious to have about [sic] but will return it to you in a couple of days. I see you have a true literary touch as well as a feeling for the best things in art. Your style however seems to me sometimes wanting in reserve, balance, and sobriety—qualities essential to the best prose. These are things that are only attained by long practice. I fear that as it stands it will require revision before it is ready for publication. But you certainly have the artistic faculty.

Very sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde

ALS to Mrs Humphrey
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Dear Mrs Humphrey,

I know of no cleverer pen than yours, so I send you enclosed. Will you communicate with Mr. Leader?

Yours truly
Oscar Wilde

ALS to George Ives
Location: HRHRC; MS Wilde, O; Letters.
[Envelope addressed to: George Ives Esq / New Traveller's Club].

New Travellers Club
Picadilly. W

Dear George,

I am charmed to see you are at the Albany—I am off to the country till Monday: I have said I am going to Cambridge to see you—but I am really going to see the young Domitian, who has taken to poetry!

Next week let us meet
Of course I am coming! How could one refuse an invitation from one who is a poem and a poet in one, an exquisite combination of perfection and personality which are the keynotes of modern art.

It was horrid of me not to answer before—but a nice letter is like a sunbeam and should not be treated as an epistle needing a reply. Besides your invitations are commanding: I look forward to meeting Proteus very much—his sonnets are the cameos of the decadence.

Very sincerely yours
Oscar Wilde
Typed Copies of Letters
Clark Library

The following letters are taken from a collection of typed copies held at the Clark Library. They therefore have no provenance; but as known manuscripts corroborate the texts of some letters (as with the third letter to Alexander), there seems little reason to doubt their authenticity.

TL. 4 pages to an unknown correspondent [c. 1887]

16 Tite Street
Chelsea SW

Madam,

Will you allow me to add your name to the list of contributors to a magazine I have been asked to edit? The magazine in question is published by Messrs. Cassell & Co., and I am anxious to make it the recognized organ through which women of culture and position will express their views. Lady Dorothy Neville, Lady Archibald Campbell, Lady Pollack, Mrs Francis Jeune, Mrs Henry Fawcett, Lady Ferguson, Miss Thackeray and others have offered to write for it, and I should be very pleased if you would do something; either an article or a short story. I should prefer an article, but a short story about eight pages would also prove attractive. The honorarium for the writers is a pound a page, and the page something larger than a page of the "Nineteenth Century." The magazine will appear in October. Hoping that you will contribute to the magazine, I have the honour to remain,

Yours truly,
Oscar Wilde
TL to J. M. Stoddart [n.d.–1882?]

[...] some where and some time—I am not sure where or when[.]

Also I send you an extract from a letter of Swinburne’s which I have just received from him about our grand Walt.—“As sincerely can I say that I shall be freshly obliged to you if you will—should occasion arise—assure him of in my name, that I have by no manner of means relaxed my admiration of his noblest works—such parts, above all, of his writings, as treat of the noblest subjects material and spiritual with which poets can deal. I have always thought it and believe it will be hereafter generally thought, his highest and surely most enviable distinction that he never speaks so well as when he speaks of great matters—Liberty, for instance, and Death.”

TL to George Alexander [mid–February 1892]

As printed in Letters, 308–09. The copy in the Clark Library has preceding two lines:

The Hotel Albemarle
Picadilly, London.

Dear Alexander,

I am still in bed by my doctor’s orders or wd. have come down to rehearsal, but will be there to-night for certain.

TL to Leonard Smithers [n.d.]

Hotel d’Alsace
Rue des Beaux Arts
Paris
Sunday

Dear Smithers,

The play has arrived—it really looks quite splendid; I am greatly pleased with it.

I suppose there have been absolutely no reviews? It really is too stupid and too bad. Nor have I seen the fascinating advertisements I should have liked.
I could not remember—did not indeed know—how Mrs Brown-Potter (No. 2)—yours—spells her real name. When you are next in Paris you must bring me a copy to sign for her.

Would you, if you can, ask Arthur Clifton what has become of my Irish property. I was in hopes that my Trustees would withdraw their claim—or come to some terms with me. The place should fetch £3000 if sold—and if I paid 7/6 in the pound there would be over £2000 for me. Something surely could be settled—I am face to face with death and starvation.

Thanks for your promise to let me have something this week.

Yrs

Oscar Wilde

TL to Leonard Smithers [n.d.]

Hotel d'Alsace
Rue des Beaux Arts
Paris

Dear Smithers,

Reggie Turner—2 Clements Inn—tells me he has not yet received his copy of the play—Surely I signed one? I remember it distinctly.

I hope to hear from you to-morrow on financial matters—

Yrs

Oscar

TL to Ernest Dowson [11 June 1897]

Dieppe,
Monday: 11 Juin 97

Dear Ernest,

I must see you: So I propose to breakfast at St. Martin l'Eglise tomorrow at 11.30 and you must come: take a voiture and be there. I want to have a poet to talk to, as I have had lots of bad news since you left me. Do try, like a good chap, to be there, and wear a blue tie. I want to be consoled.

Sebastian Melmoth
Dear Ernest,

Thank you very much for your nice letter—my poem is finished at last—and is now with Smithers. I have added a good deal to it.

What you owe me is between £18 and £20—whichever you choose—I am thinking of telegraphing to you to wire it, or as much as you can afford, through Cook’s Agency. They wire money like angels—and cheques and P.O. orders are difficult to cash. If I can find the money I will—for at present I am quite penniless—and Smithers has not behaved well to me at all—I wanted a paltry £20 in advance for my poem—secure on its sale and the American rights—and for three weeks he has put me off with silly promises—never realised of course—I feel it, because when he offered me the entire profits in a moment of dramatic generosity I refused to take his offer and insisted on his sharing half. Also I have refused an offer from "The Musician" to publish the poem as I felt that previous publication of the poem would spoil Smithers’ edition. So I made all these sacrifices and at the end he refuses a petty sum in advance. Smithers is personally charming, but at present I simply am furious with him and intend to remain so—till he sends me the money.

I am delighted to hear you finished your novel and are writing stories. I have begun today the tragedy in one-act I told you about at Berneval with the passages about clothes in it. I find the architecture of art difficult now, it requires sustained effort but I must do it.

The Neapolitan papers have turned out to be worst form of American journalism. They fill columns with me and write interviews of a fictitious character. I wish the world would let me alone and really I thought that at Naples I should be at peace. I dare say they will tire of this nonsense soon.

I hope you will do a good thing with “Aphrodite” and that when you make lots of money, you will be able to find time to come to Naples—which I know you would like. The museum is full as you know of lovely Greek bronzes—the only bother is that they all walk...
about the town at night. However one gets delicately accustomed to that—and there are compensations.

Yours
Oscar Wilde

TL to Ernest Dowson [n.d.]

Cafe Suisse
Dieppe [1897]
Wednesday 6:30

Dear Ernest,

I write a little line, whose only excuse is its entire illegibility, to tell you how charming you are (at Berneval) and how much I like your friend and mine, the dear Achille. He is a most noble and splendid fellow, and I feel happy to have his esteem and friendship.

Tonight I am going to read your poems—your lovely lyrics—words with wings you write always—it is an exquisite gift—and fortunately rare in an age whose prose is more poetic than its poetry. Do come soon and see me.

The youthful costermonger returns on Friday with the price of a pony and cart in his pocket. I have given him a costume idea, but I hope he will survive it—the effects up to this, are not so promising as I could wish. But he means well.

His calling you Ernest was awful. It is the effect of vegetables on the mind.

I am now going to write poetry, as soon as the “coster” leaves us. Poor fellow, I hope he will be all right.

You and Achille and Achille’s friend and I must all be at Berneval together. I am making arrangements.

Give to Achille my sincere friendship, you have it, and other things, always.

S.M.
TL to an unknown correspondent [n.d.]  

Clumber  
Nr Worksop  

Dear Henriette,  

I was a little annoyed with you for repeating to Alice something Mamma had said to you. It gave Mamma a great deal of bother. However, that is long ago. We are too old friends to quarrel.  

Constance and I must come some Saturday evening to see your mother.  

Yours faithfully  
Oscar Wilde  

---  

TL to George Alexander [July 1894?]  

[The text is a fuller version of that printed by A.E.W. Mason and subsequently in Letters, p. 359.]  

16 Tite Street  
SW  

My dear Aleck,  

Thanks for your letter. There really is nothing more to tell you about the comedy beyond what I said already. I mean that the real charm of the play, if it is to have charm, must be in the dialogue. The plot is slight, but, I think, adequate.  

Act I. Evening party. 10 p.m.  

Lord Alfred Rufford's rooms in Mayfair. Arrives from country Bertram Ashton his friend: a man of 25 or 30 years of age: his great friend.  

Rufford asks him about his life. He tells him that he has a ward, etc. very young and pretty. That in the country he has to be serious, etc. that he comes to town to enjoy himself, and has invented a fictitious younger brother of the name of George—to whom all his misdeeds are put down. Rufford is deeply interested about the ward.  

Guests arrive: the Duchess of Selby and her daughter, Lady Maud Rufford, with whom the guardian is in love—fin-de-siecle talk, a lot of guests—the guardian proposes to Lady Maud on his knees—enter Duchess—
Lady Maud. "Mamma, this is no place for you."

Scene: Duchess enquires for her son Lord Alfred Rufford: servant comes in with note to say that Lord Alfred has been suddenly called away to the country. Lady Maud vows eternal

[f. 2:]

fidelity to the guardian whom she only knows under the name of George Ashton.

[P.S. The disclosure of the guardian of his double life is occasioned by Lord Alfred saying to him "You left your handkerchief here the last time you were up" (or cigarette case). The guardian takes it—the Lord A. says but "why, dear George, is it marked Bertram—who is Bertram Ashton?" Guardian discloses plot.

Act II

The guardian's home—pretty cottage. Mabel Harbord, his ward, and her governess, Miss Prism, Governess of course dragon of propriety. Talk about the profligate George: maid comes in to say "Mr George Ashton."—governess protests against his admission. Mabel insists. Enter Lord Alfred. Falls in love with ward at once. He is reproached with his bad life, etc. Expresses great repentance. They go to garden.

Enter guardian: Mabel comes in: "I have a great surprise for you—your brother is here"—Guardian, of course, denies having a brother. Mabel says "You cannot disown your own brother, what ever he has done." Finally Lord Alfred arrested for debts contracted by guardian: guardian delighted: Mabel, however, makes him forgive his brother and pay up. Guardian looks over bills and scolds Lord Alfred for profligacy.

[f. 3:]

Miss Prism backs the guardian up. Guardian then orders his brother out of the house. Mabel intercedes, and brother remains. Miss Prism has designs on the guardian—matrimonial—she is 40 at least—his consternation.
Act III

Mabel and the false brother. He proposes, and is accepted.

When Mabel is alone, Lady Maud, who only knows the guardian under the name of George, arrives alone. She tells Mabel she is engaged to Maud—scene naturally. Mabel retires. Enter George, he kisses his sister naturally. Enter Mabel and sees them. Explanations, of course. Mabel breaks off the match on the ground that there is nothing to reform in George: she only consented to marry him because she thought he was bad and wanted guidance—He promises to be a bad husband—so as to give her an opportunity of making him a better man; she is a little mollified.

Enter guardian: he is reproached also by Lady Maud for his respectable life in the country: a J.P.: a county-councillor: a churchwarden: a philanthropist: a good example. He appeals to his life in London: she is mollified on the condition that he never lives in the country: the country is demoralising: it makes you respectable. “The simple fare at the Savoy; the quiet life in Piccadilly: the solitude of Mayfair is what you need, etc.”

[f. 4:]

Enter Duchess in pursuit of her daughter—objects to both matches. Miss Prism, who had in early days been governess to the Duchess, sets it all right, without intending to do so—everything ends happily.

Result  Curtain
Author called
Cigarette called
Manager called
Royalties for a year for author

Manager credited with writing the play. He consoles himself with bags of red gold.
Fireworks

Of course this scenario is open to alterations: the third act, after entrance of Duchess, will have to be elaborated: also the local doctor, or clergyman, must be brought in, in the play, for Prism.

Well, I think an amusing thing with lots of fun and wit might be made. If you think so, too, and care to have the refusal of it—do let me know—and send me £150. If, when the play is finished, you think it too slight—not serious enough—of course you can have the £150 back—I want to go away and write it—and it could be ready in October, as I

[f. 5:]

have nothing else to do—and Palmer is anxious to have a play from me for the States “with no real interest”—just a comedy.

In the meanwhile, my dear Aleck, I am so pressed for money, that I don’t know what to do. Of course I am extravagant, but a great deal of my worries comes from the fact that I have had for three years to keep up two establishments—my dear Mother’s as well as my own—like many Irish ladies she never gets her jointure paid—small though it is—and naturally it falls on me—this is of course quite private but for these years I have had two houses on my shoulders—and of course, am extravagant besides—you have always been a good wise friend to me—so think what you can do.

Kind regards to Mrs. Aleck.

Ever,

OSCAR
As I indicated in chapter one, we have very little information about letters to Wilde, yet many of the main research libraries have a large number of such letters waiting to be explored by critics. The most important is a lengthy correspondence from Lady Wilde to Oscar, dating from 1876, when Wilde left Dublin, to Lady Wilde's death in 1896. The letters are full, and Wilde carefully preserved them. They are now at the Clark Library.

Other unpublished letters to Wilde will prove valuable in two distinct ways. At their most prosaic, they will clarify details of known facts about the biography. So there are letters to Wilde, usually from unidentified correspondents, the principal value of which lies in their relation to certain letters by Wilde which have already been published. In some cases they simply allow that correspondence to be dated. On other occasions, they reveal letters hitherto published individually to be seen as part of a larger sequence. So, for example, an unidentified letter at the HRHRC adds a fuller context to one of Wilde's published letters, which in its turn allows his correspondent to be identified as the minor nineteenth-century poet and anti-colonialist, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt.

The letter from Wilde (which Rupert Hart-Davis prints) is as follows:

[1 July 1883] 9 Charles Street

Dear Mr Blunt,

It will give me great pleasure to come down to you on Saturday week, and look at your horses, and talk about sonnets.

Please present my compliments to Lady Anne, and believe me most truly yours

Oscar Wilde
There is an extant corresponding letter which is clearly the invitation to which Wilde's letter is the reply (the text is below). Seeing both halves of the correspondence allows the identity of Scawen Blunt and the date of his letter to be established; it also dots a small "i" in the biography of Wilde. A snippet of information such as this, taken in isolation, is of course of no great importance; but collectively such fragments allow the full dimensions of Wilde's social acquaintance to be glimpsed.

The kind of insights which such snippets provide is better illustrated by another unpublished letter in the HRHRC collection—from Robert Buchanan to Wilde:

My dear Oscar Wilde,

I ought to have thanked you thus for your present of *Dorian Gray*, but I was hoping to return the compliment by sending you a work of my own: this I shall do in a very few days. You are quite right as to our divergence, which is temperamental. I cannot accept yours as a serious criticism of life. You seem to me like a holiday maker throwing pebbles into the sea, or viewing the great ocean from under the awning of a bathing machine. I quite see, however, that this is only your "fun," & that your very indolence of gaiety is paradoxical, like your utterances.

Buchanan was a controversial figure who had made a reputation as a virulent critic of most of the values Wilde stood for. To discover Wilde initiating a friendly exchange of books and letters with Buchanan is therefore interesting. Of course, attempts by Wilde to curry favour with potential reviewers by sending them complimentary copies of his work was not unusual. Rather it is the reputation of Buchanan which makes this letter noteworthy.

Twenty years earlier Buchanan had become notorious for his vituperative journalism attacking what he saw as a vicious and degenerate trend in contemporary literature. The targets of his invective on that occasion were Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Swinburne in particular, and the embryonic Aesthetic Movement in general. A decade later, following the publication of Rossetti's *Ballads and Sonnets* and the revised *Poems*, Buchanan's arguments were revived by a number of like-minded critics.

The *Picture of Dorian Gray* was a novel which, in the eyes of those critics, seemed to fulfill Buchanan's warnings. It was a book hardly
likely to appeal to a man of Buchanan's sensibilities, and Wilde's approach to him is therefore very engaging. It might be seen to be an act of uncharacteristic naivety, but a much more likely explanation is that Wilde, ever the opportunist, was simply attempting to enlist an ally, or at the very least attempting to forestall overt criticism from a potential opponent. The practice of mutual log-rolling—that is, of averting hostile criticism by enlisting one's friends as potential and therefore favourable reviewers—was well known among late nineteenth-century authors, and Wilde himself often indulged in it. Here, however, Wilde is taking the process one step further by attempting to make a friend of an enemy.

Unpublished letters to Wilde are a useful resource for the scholar for another and more important reason. The ways in which Wilde's life has been trooped have inevitably involved neglecting some of the mundane aspects of his career, particularly many details of his career as a writer. So, for example, the importance of his early attempts to place all of his work with Macmillan, revealed in the Macmillan archive, has been virtually ignored. So too have the day-to-day negotiations undertaken as a matter of course by any aspiring dramatist in the late nineteenth century. Often significant information about such matters is contained in letters to Wilde. In them, Wilde can be seen as a working dramatist who collaborated in all aspects and at all points in the production of his plays.

In this respect a passage from a letter from his fellow-dramatist Charles Haddon Chambers is particularly revealing: "I am going to do the little gold nugget story almost at once. The motif charms me. But ought I to use your plot as my own?" (For full text, see below.) The significance of the letter is not to be found in Chambers's log-rolling attempt to recruit Wilde and Charles Hawtry to promote his own play The Collaborators; rather it exists in the throwaway postscript which sheds further light on what critics have long commented upon, Wilde's apparent unconcern with originality. Chambers's letter, however, shows in a more practical way that a disregard for the authorship of ideas or plots was not unique to Wilde. In such instances it is possible that Wilde may have been typical rather than exceptional.

Other unpublished letters to Wilde may also throw further insight into the commercial opportunism of the English theatre in the 1890s.
So a letter from the drama critic William Archer from 1894 (for text, see below) reveals a readiness to enlist Wilde’s good offices in promoting a new journalistic venture, for in modern terms Wilde was, by the mid-1890s, extremely good copy. Archer was about to begin a theatre column for the Pall Mall Budget, and he wrote asking Wilde for advance information about a play he knew Wilde had written and for confirmation of its title (the play turned out to be *An Ideal Husband*):

I am going to do for the Pall Mall Budget, in a somewhat tentative fashion, a sort of weekly *causetie* on things theatrical... Is it the case that Lewis Waller is going to produce a play of yours at the Haymarket during Tree’s absence? And is it possible for you to give me any inkling of the nature of the play, or to let me announce its title?

At the time Wilde was of course at the height of his powers and was thus a natural target for those journalists wishing to create and exploit a media personality. Letters such as these will allow the details of the lives of commercial dramatists and journalists of the time to be seen more fully.

As I indicated in “Prologue to the Letters,” the selection of letters below is only a sample of the material available. It is worth reiterating, then, that for reasons of space some letters to Wilde have been abbreviated, and annotation has been confined to bibliographical information.
ALS Lord Houghton to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

24 Addington[?] St
May 20th [1877]

Dear Mr Wilde,

Thank you for your sonnet which is touching and peaceful but [?]
not true. My life of Keats shows that he was anything but unhappy
& he was [illegible word] with unusual rapidity. The medallion is very
like him and having been put up by enthusiastic friends, it would not
do to destroy or displace it.

I am

Yours sincerely

Houghton

Give my best regards to Mr Mahaffy.
I [illegible word] him & [two illegible words] when he went to London.

ALS William Michael Rossetti to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

Marine House
Corleston
Great Yarmouth
3 Aug. 1877

Dear Sir,

I was much obliged to you for your letter, & the magazine wh. [sic]
accompanied it containing your interesting little article about the
grave of Keats. Ought to have answered before now, but was occupied
& am just now away from home (56 Euston Sq, London), but shall be
back directly.
Oscar Wilde Revalued

No doubt English people ought to erect a statue to Keats & I shd be glad to lend my modest cooperation to any such project. I don't however see any particular opening for it at present. Will confide also that I feel more especially interested in Shelley than in Keats: I did some while ago—when the Byron statue was first projected—put into print a strong suggestion that advantage might be taken of the movement so as to combine a Shelley with a Byron memorial, but it led to nothing. All three must get their statues some day, & assuredly will.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

W M Rossetti

ALS Edmund Yates to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.
The World
A Journal for Men and Women

1, York Street
Covent Garden
London, WC
Tuesday 20 May 1879

Dear Mr. Wilde,

I am very sorry that I shall not be able to use your poem in the June number, and I hope you will allow it to stand over until July. I have an eight page poem of Mrs Singleton's on a subject of the day "Killed at Isondula," and a two page poem of Mr Scudamore's, which has been in my hands for three months, and this is all the verse I can afford space for in one number. You shall have proof of "The New Helen" as soon as possible.

Faithfully yours

Edmund Yates
ALS Charles G. Leland to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip. 4 Oct. 1879.
Address: 22 Park Sq. E.

Concerning an engagement and Walter Besant’s wish to propose Wilde for the Savile Club. Leland urges Wilde to join:

I have pledged myself you will outgrow Pessimism and all morbid nonsense, and after your youthful fashionable fermentation come out a clear-headed, vigorous, healthy manly writer. That is the style of men you will meet with us—at least we aim at it.

ALS Matthew Arnold to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

Pains Hill Cottage
Cobham, Surrey
July 9th [1881]

Dear Mr Wilde

Your volume and note were put into my hands as I was leaving the Athenaeum last night. I have but glanced at the poems as yet, but I perceive in them the true feeling for rhythm, which is at the bottom of all success in poetry; of all endeavour, indeed, which is not factitious and vain, in that line of expression. I shall read the book attentively when I get a moment of that of which we all have too little,—leisure. I see you have found out the force of what Byron so insisted on:—that one must shake off London life before one can do one’s best work.

Your note has very kind,—too kind,—expressions about me and what I have done. I have not much to thank the public for; but from my fellow workers, both in poetry and in prose, I have met with kindness and recognition such as might satisfy any man.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Arnold
ALS Wilfrid Scawen Blunt to Wilde

10, James Street
Buckingham Gate
July 13 [1883]

Dear Wilde,

Will you come to me at Gabbut [?Crabbet] on Saturday the 28th July for Sunday to see my horses and meet some of my friends—

Yours truly
Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

My address is
Gabbut Park
Three Bridges
Sussex
and the 4.p.m. train from Victoria will be met.

ALS James Payn to Wilde

The Cornhill Magazine
Smith Elder & Co
Sept. 22

Dear Sir,

We do not publish translations in the Cornhill or I should have been glad to hear from you.

Yours truly
James Payn
**ALS W. E. Gladstone to Wilde**

MS Wilde, O. Recip.  
Hawarden Castle  
Chester  
Nov. 1, 88

Dear Mr Wilde,

From the printed memorial, and I am[?] afraid from the painful circumstances which you mention, I should as a reader suppose Lady Wilde's claim to be a very good one; but I am sorry to say I am not in a condition to sign the paper as I have found it necessary to make a rigid rule against taking part in any memorial of this nature, and to act by [illegible word] letter of my own in cases which I happen to have personal knowledge. Much regretting this obstacle I remain

Very faithfully yours,

W E Gladstone

**ALS Richard Le Gallienne to Wilde**

85, Oxton Road  
Birkenhead  
11. xi, '88.

My dear friend,

This is but a little script to tell you how rich you have made me with your two sweet letters, & also to thank you for your further generosity in turning so ready an ear to my "foolish whisper"...

Yea! dear Poet, let me have that Dream for my own, if so it be your pleasure—& although I have no such casket for its enshrinement as Heine coveted for the songs of his beloved die Mouche[?], still you know full well that love will not fail to make for it some dainty ark.

The thought that you sometimes recall me is sweet as a kiss & it is blessed to know that but a little while & I shall be with you once more. For, I come up to town for a week on the 15th of December—the first three days will be dedicate to the Moloch of my business examination, but the remainder will be my own. On one of these I
trust we may meet. I shall have news to tell you in which I think you will rejoice with your true-lover,

Richard Le Gallienne

ALS W. E. Henley to Wilde
MS Wilde, O. Recip.

[Illegible] House
Chiswick W
25/11/88

The "prose of France," my Oscar, is also my fancy point. Flaubert indeed is prose of France, but not genuinely French prose, the which (so far as I can [illegible word] myself to myself) I didn't accuse you of coming off in.

That, however, is nothing to the point. The point is that, as I think, you've assimilated your Flaubert to an extent that seems to me quite wonderful. His style to you is what rhyme is to some poets. . . .

W. E. H.

ALS Sir T. Wemyss Reid to Wilde
MS Wilde, O. Recip.

"The Speaker"
115, Fleet Street
London EC
24 Jan. 1890

My dear Oscar Wilde,

Of course I am going to use the admirable wisdom of your sage; but the world is so little prone to take a good teacher upon trust that I must ask you to back him with your name. You do not object to that I trust. Otherwise all the nonconformists will rage furiously against me, & my life will not be safe in the hands of any shop-keeper who reads the Speaker.

Yours ever sincerely
T. Wemyss Reid
ALS Frank Harris to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

The Fortnightly Review Office
11, Henrietta Street
Covent Garden, WC
10 February 1890

My dear Wilde,

Our lunch today has made me wish that you would write an Article for the March *Fortnightly*. Can you do this within 8 days?—An Article on Literature or any Social Subject as paradoxical as you please.

Sincerely

Frank Harris

ALS Alexander Macmillan to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

Macmillan & Co.
Bedford Street
Covent Garden
London
16 June 1890

My dear Wilde,

Thank you for letting me see your story, which I read through yesterday. George is not here today, so I cannot give it him, but as you want it back so soon I think I ought not to keep it any longer & am returning it by hand with this note.

It is a weird tale & some of the conversation is most brilliant. I am afraid however that it would not do for us to publish. We have done very little in the way of such strong situations, and I confess there is something in the power which Dorian Gray gets over the young natural scientist, & one or two other things which is rather repelling. I dare say you do not mean it to be. I am sure it is not for us, & I do not like to keep it any longer.

Yours very truly

Alexander Macmillan
ALS Wilfrid Meynell to Wilde
MS Wilde, O. Recip. n.d. [late August 1890].
[See Letters, p. 274]

Dear Mr Oscar Wilde,

I wish you would pronounce ex cathedra [on a postcard] upon the he & him question raised in my article on Newman in this week's Athenaeum.

Believe me,

Very truly yours

Wilfrid Meynell

ALS Henry Irving to Wilde

Dear Oscar Wilde,

[My?] thanks for your[?] first play which I have read with great interest.

How wise [?] of you to have it presented [?].

I read you the last [rest of letter illegible]

Yours sincerely

Henry Irving
ALS Robert [Williams] Buchanan to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

Merkland
25, Maresfield Gardens
South Hampstead
Aug. 5. 1891

My dear Oscar Wilde,

I ought to have thanked you thus for your present of *Dorian Gray*, but I was hoping to return the compliment by sending you a work of my own: this I shall do in a very few days. You are quite right as to our divergence, which is temperamental. I cannot accept yours as a serious criticism of life. You seem to me like a holiday maker throwing pebbles into the sea, or viewing the great ocean from under the awning of a bathing machine. I quite see, however, that this is only your "fun," & that your very indolence of gaiety is paradoxical, like your utterances. If I judged you by what you deny in print, I should fear that [you] were somewhat heartless. Having seen & spoken with you, I conceive that you are just as poor & self-tormenting a creature as any of the rest of us, and that you are simply joking at your own expense.

Don't think me rude in saying that *Dorian Gray* is very very clever. It is more—it is suggestive & stimulating, and has [tho' you only outlined it] the anxiety of a human *Soul* in it. You care far less about *Art*, or any other word spelt with a capital, than you are willing to admit, and [therein?] lies your salvation, as you will presently discover. Though here and there in your pages you parade the magnificent of the Disraeli waistcoat, that article of wardrobe fails to disguise you. One catches you constantly in *puris naturalibus*, and then the Man is worth observing.

With thanks & all kind wishes

Yours truly

Robert Buchanan

Oscar Wilde Esq.
ALS Elkin Mathews to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

Dear Sir

Poems

I would undertake to issue your volume of Poems on the following terms, viz:-

To instruct printer to supply Title-page with my imprint for 230 copies.

On receipt of Artist's Design for Cover at cost of £5.5.0. Block to be prepared from same the cost of which as well as that of Title-page Binding and Advertising to be first charges on the amount received for copies sold.

The cost of advertising not to exceed £5.5.0.

For my commission I agree to take 20% on the net published price, it being agreed that the book shall be brought out as a net one, the price to be fixed when bound.

After the above charges have been met the Balance to be remitted Quarterly, the first Balance to be struck Six Months after the date of publication.

I am, yours faithfully,

Elkin Mathews

Oscar Wilde Esq.

ALS Herbert Beerbohm Tree to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

Queen Down Warren
Near Sittingbourne
12 Dec. 1891
My dear Wilde,

I returned your play which I read with great interest and which I considered dramatic and stirring. It would of course require a deal in the way of rewriting, and I have two elaborate productions before me.—I think, if you will allow me to criticise, that the dialogue is, here and there, somewhat redundant, and the heroine's passions struck me as too fluctuating—for theatrical purposes. But there is great force and picturesqueness in it all.—I see there is talk of a new play by you.—My wife and I were reading several of your articles, among them "Pen, Pencil & Poison," and again "the Decay of the Art of Lying"—I think they are the most brilliantly written things of our time:—it was a real joy to read them.—

I hope we may soon meet and discuss things in general and your play in particular.

Yours sincerely

Herbert Beerbohm Tree

P.S. I send you a copy of the lecture I delivered last Thursday.

HBT

ALS Elkin Mathews to Wilde
MS Wilde, O. Recip.

The Bodley Head
Vigo Street
London W
25 Feb. 1892

My dear Sir,

Poems

I hope by the time this letter reaches you that Mr. Rickett's will have received specimen cases. I saw one today done up in the darker cloth, and the gold design looked splendid. I would strongly urge you to select this cloth "colour 11 plain" as it is distressing to see pale coloured binding get dirty after very little use. The binders tell me that (presuming 230 were sent) the 230 copies would fall short by 10
Oscar Wilde Revalued

on account of soiled, injured and missing sheets. They have rendered me a list of the latter.

I regret that I was out when you called some days ago—but you see that the matter will now be steadily pushed on to a conclusion.

I am yours faithfully
Elkin Mathews

ALS John Lane to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

June 8 1893
The Bodley Head
Vigo Street
London

Dear Mr Wilde,

Here is a specimen page of "Lady Windermere’s Fan" which I trust will meet with your early approval. We are badly in want of Act I. Please let us have it soon. I have this day seen Beardsley and arranged for 10 plates and a cover for 50 guineas!

Yours always
John Lane

ALS Edmund Gosse to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

29, Delamere Terrace
Westbourne Square, W.
15 12. '93

My dear Mr Wilde,

It is very kind of you to send me "Lady Windermere’s Fan,” the brilliant merit of which is only enhanced by the absence of stage disturbance. I have just read it through, & I think more highly of it than ever.

We might still have a drama, if they would only close the playhouses.
Wilde: Letters

Very truly yrs
Edmund Gosse

ALS John Hare to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip. [11 Apr. 1894?]
[See Letters, pp. 348–50 and 426, and Wilde’s allusions in De Profundis]

April 11[?]

3, Park Crescent
W.

Dear Wilde,

I cannot give you a definite answer till Thursday—but I may say at once that my feeling is to [?claim] by April and accept from July, [?finding] it immediate production [illegible word]. I [illegible word] Mrs[?] [illegible word] poor and unattractive, failing this production it immediately to follow Pinero—You must remember that the fault is not mine that your play was not produced long ago, had it been ready by the time you agreed then it could have been produced to follow “Diplomacy”—& you can hardly expect me now to surrender a comedy that suits me as well in many respects, simply because other managers [illegible word] from [illegible word] play [illegible words] from temporary difficulties—If you will come here and see me on Thursday at 12 o’cl—I will either return you your manuscript or definitely settle its production at the Garrick.

Sincerely
John Hare

ALS William Archer to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

40, Queen Square. W.C.
29 May 94
My dear Wilde,

I am going to do for the *Pall Mall Budget*, in a somewhat tentative fashion, a sort of weekly *causerie* on things theatrical. It will not be a *news* column, but when interesting news comes in my way, I shall of course be glad to make use of it. Is it the case that Lewis Waller is going to produce a play of yours at the Haymarket during Tree’s absence? And is it possible for you to give me any inkling of the nature of the play, or to let me announce its title? If so, you will be doing me a favour; if not, & if my proposed *causerie* comes to anything, *ce sera pour une autre fois*.

In either case

I am

Yours very sincerely,

William Archer

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**ALS Richard Le Gallienne to Wilde**

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

*Mulberry Cottage,*

*Boston Road,*

*Brentford.*

*c/o Grant Allen, Esq*

*Hind House[?]*

*Haslemere*

*19, June, ’94*

My dear Oscar,

I have sent for your acceptance a copy of my “Prose Fancies”—that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled, which in an old but treasured letter of yours says:

“your prose shd be very good, for you have distinction”! Forgive so egotistical quotation. I wd quote a better author—if I knew one.

Yours ever sincerely

Richard Le Gallienne
ALS (Sir) George Henry Lewis to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.
Messrs Lewis and Lewis

10 & 44 Ely Place
Holborn EC
London
7 July 1894

Dear Mr Wilde,

I am in receipt of your note. The information that you have received that I am acting for Lord Queensberry is perfectly correct, and under these circumstances you will at once see that it is impossible for me to offer any opinion about any proceedings you intend to take against him.

Although I cannot act against him, I should not act against you.

Believe me
Yours faithfully
George Lewis

Oscar Wilde, Esq.
16 Tite Street
Chelsea S.W.

ALS Lewis Waller to Wilde

MS Wilde, O. Recip.

The Walsingham House
Piccadilly. W.
Aug. 18th 94

Dear Wilde,

Tree consents to Mrs Pat Campbell—now we want her consent—please see her as soon as possible & read play to her—or if not convenient I will.

Yours sincerely
Lewis Waller
ALS Lady Maud Beerbohm Tree to Wilde

My dear Mr Wilde,

Thank you very much for my book, & for the sweet flattery of your pretty inscription! I am very proud & glad to possess it & very proud & glad to be concerned in its production—I mean in its production as a stage-play—in its production as a book alas! I am nothing. Oh! why did I not introduce some ineffaceable “gag” so that some word of my own own might have become immortal?

What a delicious bit of book it makes—a foz to hold—

Very many thanks, & kindest regards—

Yours always sincerely,
Maud Beerbohm Tree

ALS C. Haddon Chambers to Wilde

My dear Oscar,

I send you “The Collaborators.”

I think you will agree that if Hawtrey and Penley were to play it the result would be fine.

If you come to that conclusion and can, without any trouble to yourself get Hawtrey to read it I shall be delighted.

Very sincerely yours
C. Haddon Chambers

P.S. I am going to do the little gold nugget story almost at once. The motif charms me. But ought I to use your plot as my own?
ALS Montmorres to Wilde
MS Wilde, O. Recip. n.d.

THE ARTIST
14, Parliament-St.
Westminster.
24 Radcliffe Road
South Kensington SW

Dear Mr Wilde,

You may perhaps have heard that I have undertaken the Editorship of the "Artist." I write to ask a favour of you: may I once more "interview" you in quite a private way to learn your opinion on "an ideal mode of life." I do hope you will be able to grant my request. I have the vividest recollection of a very pleasant "interview" some two years ago.

I trust that we are shortly to be charmed by another of your plays.

Very truly yours

Montmorres
Correspondence to Wilde
Clark Library

ALS George A. Macmillan to Wilde
M1665L W6721. 11 June 1878.

Macmillan & Co
London, June 11, 1878

My dear Wilde,

Miss Fletcher called here this morning & said she was going to write to you today so you will know her address from herself. I had not seen her before.

I'm quite delighted to hear of your success in the Newdigate. My people here don't care much for publishing prize poems, so I am afraid that though of course I should have been glad to oblige you, we cannot undertake yours. I think I should advise your getting it printed in Oxford, especially as you want it out quickly. What is the length of it? Tell me when it is out, as I am anxious to see it.

Whenever you think of writing something on a larger scale we shall be happy to hear of it.

Are you not to be in town this season? If you are up by any chance on July 3rd we should be very glad if you could accept the enclosed invitation. You would be sure to meet a lot of interesting people.

Look me up when you do come to town.

& Believe me

Yours very truly

George A. Macmillan

ALS Oscar Browning to Wilde
MS Wilde L91: 3; [Various] [File of 7 letters—one incomplete—to Oscar Wilde].
[Letter 1:]

| 90 |
My Dear Wilde,

I shall be delighted to give you a testimonial but I once did one for a friend and was answered by the Duke of Richmond that no testimonials can be received for anyone who has not reached the age of twenty five. I do not know if you have attained that mature majority. If you tell me that you have I will write to the Duke at once. I need hardly say that any political influence which you can bring to bear on the Duke and his Private Secretary will be of great avail.

Believe me

Ever yours

Oscar Browning

ALS William Blackwood to Wilde

PR5819 F851. cop. 2

45, George Street
Edinburgh
4th June 1889

Dear Sir,

I am glad you are agreeable to my publishing your story "The Portrait of Mr W.H." in a new series of "Tales from Blackwood" after it has appeared in [the] Magazine. I am having it set up and am endeavouring to arrange for using it in my July number. As you are desirous of having the honorarium now I have the pleasure of enclosing your cheque of £25—in acknowledgement of it, which in the circumstances is somewhat beyond Magazine's usual scale. The Printers estimate it will run to about 18 pages & I expect to send you proof in January.

Yours truly

William Blackwood

Oscar Wilde Esq.
ALS Dion Boucicault to Wilde
B7553L W6721. 22 Apr. 1894.

Lyceum Theatre
Sydney
April 22nd / 94

My dear old friend Oscar—My time has been so occupied since my arrival from New Zealand that I have had no leisure moment to sit down and scribble you a few lines. I received your letter with delight. You have been informed rightly, I am very grey, but I think it is rather becoming—so I shall not dye my hair as you suggest. I am very sunburnt with my trip so that I am a fit subject for a study in black & white.

I hear you have a cottage at Goring. Please see there is a room prepared for me on my trip to England. I hope to arrive somewhere about the end of July. I prefer a room looking on to the river, and should like it, please, furnished in the Eastern way, that style of decoration setting off to the greatest advantage my peculiar form of beauty. I have not been able, in this benighted land, to secure a copy of “Salomé”—so have one beautifully bound & preserved in a cedar casket perfumed with attar of roses—awaiting my arrival.

I am sending you a photograph of myself, which please cherish.

I produce Lady Windermere’s Fan in about a month’s time here—you shall have all the papers, and photographs of the scenes & principal characters forwarded to you. Here’s to its success. Why should I write that? A play by Oscar Wilde cannot fail. His name alone is one to conjure with. In the lexicon of his youth there’s been no such word as “fail.”

You ought to send me your photograph—I have only one taken centuries ago. You hear I look old and grey. I hear you have found the elixir vitae—the secret of perpetual youth and are looking younger yearly. How is it done? Please forward recipe.

Ever affectionately yours
Dot

address

  c/o Allen & Allen
Dear Mr Wilde,

Mr Matthews, it appears, has had some correspondence with you re the distribution of your books on our dissolving partnership. You wrote quite frankly to the firm that you wished me to retain the Plays & that you wished Mr Matthews to publish Mr W.H. I was perfectly agreeable to that arrangement, but it now appears that Mr Matthews has again communicated with you on the subject & he declines to have Mr "W.H." at "any price" but he wants the "plays." Since I have pointed out that if he takes the plays he must also take Mr W.H. He declines both.

For my part I am perfectly willing to publish your plays, & Mr W.H. provided I see & approve the latter before it is printed, but I am sure that you as a man of the world would not expect me or any other publisher to issue a book he had never seen.

Can we not meet, talk the matter over & settle things?

Yours very truly,

John Lane

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We have considered your letter in all its bearings and have come to the following decision.

Mr Lane will carry out the firm's agreement with you with regard to your 3 plays, Salomé & the Sphinx and Mr W.H. We are agreed that
Mr Lane shall accept all responsibilities assumed by the firm in the agreement. There can be no grounds however for your complaint against the firm with regard to the lapse of time since the agreement for this book was entered upon as we have never received the M.S. If you will send it to Mr Lane he is prepared to deal with it immediately.

Draft of letter sent by the firm
to Oscar Wilde 21 Sept 1894

AL More Adey to Oscar Wilde


[Draft fragment of a letter with notes in Adey’s hand; for Wilde’s response, see Letters, p. 515.]

. . . Miss S has heard from a lady whom I believe to be Cyril’s godmother who has been with Mrs W for about 6 months, that Mrs W was anxious for O to promise . . . I wrote to Miss S offering to see O & obtain this from him, Mrs W has probably seen my letter offering to see O: I advise O to make this assurance, if possible in writing, but I strongly urge him to refuse if asked to enter into any legal agreement to give up his rights over his children. He need not mention this warning but act upon it!

AL More Adey to Oscar Wilde

A2332 N911. [1896?]. [Notes and Drafts in More Adey’s hand concerning financial settlement, divorce proceedings and custody of children.]

. . . We want you to write to your wife saying much what you said to More, namely that you wished her to have her own money to bring them [the children] up upon as she liked, that you would not interfere with them, and that you would not of course live with them on your release. We want you also to add that you are willing to join with her in appointing a guardian for them on her death, if she will chose someone who will not bring them up either to hate or despise their father & that is all you ask. We hope that if you do this you may avoid
being legally deprived of guardianship, and may retain enough influence over your wife to practically prevent the education of your children in ways which you would not approve.

ALS Herbert Beerbohm Tree to Wilde
T786L W6721. 17 Feb. 1900.

Her Majesty's Theatre
17 Feb. 1900

Dear Wilde,

Pray excuse my delay in answering your letter—the fact is that "A Woman of No Importance" has only once been given by Mrs Waller—I understand that I am bound to pay any fees to the Trustees in Bankruptcy. Anyhow, I have received no payment from her. I spoke to Alexander about you the other day, and he told me that he owed you some fees and that he would be glad to settle them—I told him I was sure they would be welcome—I am indeed glad, and we all shall be, to know that you are determined to resume your dramatic work, for no one did such distinguished work as you—it has been rumoured that you had already finished your play—but I suppose this was not true.—I do most sincerely hope that good luck may come to you and that your splendid talents may shine forth again.

I have a lively remembrance of your many acts of kindness and courtesy—and was one of those who devoutly hoped that misfortune would not submerge you.

With best wishes, I remain

Yours sincerely

Herbert Beerbohm Tree

ANS Clifford Millage to Wilde
M6441L W6721. 5 Nov. 1900.
The Daily Chronicle

59 Rue de Maubeuge
Paris
12 Salisbury Square
London EC
5 Nov. 1900

My dear Sir,

I should be happy if you could make a rendez-vous at your earliest convenience as I should like to know something about your piece "Mr & Mrs Daventry" in your interests & in my professional capacity. I know that your address was in the Rue André des Arts but failed to find it.

Yours faithfully
Clifford Millage

ALS Dion Boucicault to Wilde

L91: 3 MS Wilde; [Various] [File of 7 letters—one incomplete—to Oscar Wilde]; n.d.
[Letter 2:]

51 Victoria Sq
Wednesday

My dear Oscar,

Your play reached me last night.
I read it this morning. The charpente of the work is good and dramatic—I mean the spinal column.

Vera
+

The Czarewitz
The catastrophe is new & good—But the ribs and the limbs do not proceed from the spinal column.

Your other characters—
Your subjects of dialogue
which occupy 5/6 of the play—are not action—but discussion.
The interest—lies with V & the C—and all that does not further that interest—develop and increase is improper—however good it may be.

You asked me to be candid—I have been so.

You have dramatic powers but have not shaped your subject perfectly before beginning it. You have seen three incidents:
The adherence of the Czarewitiz and her rescue of the Nihilist
The assassination of Czar
The sacrifice of Vera & its manner
But between these incidents as dialogue—not action—a chain of incidents, should lead from one to the other.

Your action stops for dialogue—whereas dialogue should be the necessary outcome of the action exerting an influence on the characters.

Ever yours
Dion Boucicault

ALS Marion Morris to Wilde
L91: 3 MS Wilde; [Various] [File of 7 letters—one incomplete—to Oscar Wilde]; n.d.
[Letter 3:]
48 Wellington Road
St Johns Wood N5

Dear Mr Wilde,

I am going to bother you—now I suppose you will not read any further! It is the penalty you pay for being influential and great. I am neither so I want to borrow some of your powers. Mr Mackay whom you saw act at Goring, is very anxious to know if you would be so very kind as to give him a letter of introduction to Mr Hare. Mr Forbes Robertson would have spoken for him, but he has never seen him play anything & told him that a few words from you would go so much further. He is so anxious to get [illegible word] being diffident; he would not even write to you himself!

Please forgive one for troubling you, when I have no right to & if you could, give Mr Mackay the benefit of your influence with Mr Hare.

Believe me
Yours sincerely
Marion Morris

I don’t think I shall ever go on the stage because I shall wait till you give me a part to create!