

detention, the third time to pass into a prison for two years. Society, as we have constituted it, will have no place for me, has none to offer; but Nature, whose sweet rains fall on unjust and just alike, will have clefts in the rocks where I may hide, and secret valleys in whose silence I may weep undisturbed. She will hang the night with stars so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my footprints so that none may track me to my hurt: she will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole.--De Profundis.

DOMESTICITY AT BERNEVAL

DIEPPE,

June 1st, 1897.

My Dear Robbie,--I propose to live at Berneval. I will not live in Paris, nor in Algiers, nor in Southern Italy. Surely a house for a year, if I choose to continue there, at 32 pounds is absurdly cheap. I could not live cheaper at a hotel. You are penny foolish, and pound foolish--a dreadful state for my financier to be in. I told M. Bonnet that my bankers were MM. Ross et Cie, banquiers celebres de Londres--and now you suddenly show me that you have no place among the great financial people,

and are afraid of any investment over 31 pounds, 10s. It is merely the extra ten shillings that baffles you. As regards people living on me, and the extra bedrooms: dear boy, there is no one who would stay with me but you, and you will pay your own bill at the hotel for meals; and as for your room, the charge will be nominally 2 francs 50 centimes a night, but there will be lots of extras such as bougie, bain and hot water, and all cigarettes smoked in the bedrooms are charged extra. And if any one does not take the extras, of course he is charged more:--

Bain, 25 C.

Pas de bain, 50 C.

Cigarette dans la chambre a coucher, 10 C. pour chaque cigarette.

Pas de cigarette dans la chambre a coucher, 20 C. pour chaque cigarette.

This is the system at all good hotels. If Reggie comes, of course he will pay a little more: I cannot forget that he gave me a dressing-case. Sphinxes pay a hundred per cent more than any one else--they always did in Ancient Egypt.

But seriously, Robbie, if people stayed with me, of course they would pay their pension at the hotel. They would have to: except architects. A modern architect, like modern architecture, doesn't pay. But then I know

only one architect and you are hiding him somewhere from me. I believe that he is as extinct as the dado, of which now only fossil remains are found, chiefly in the vicinity of Brompton, where they are sometimes discovered by workmen excavating. They are usually embedded in the old Lincrusta Walton strata, and are rare consequently.

I visited M. le Cure {4} to-day. He has a charming house and a jardin potager. He showed me over the church. To-morrow I sit in the choir by his special invitation. He showed me all his vestments. To-morrow he really will be charming in red. He knows I am a heretic, and believes Pusey is still alive. He says that God will convert England on account of England's kindness to les pretres exiles at the time of the Revolution. It is to be the reward of that sea-lashed island.

Stained glass windows are wanted in the church; he has only six; fourteen more are needed. He gets them at 300 francs--12 pounds--a window in Paris. I was nearly offering half a dozen, but remembered you, and so only gave him something pour les pauvres. You had a narrow escape, Robbie. You should be thankful.

I hope the 40 pounds is on its way, and that the 60 pounds will follow. I am going to hire a boat. It will save walking and so be an economy in the end. Dear Robbie, I must start well. If the life of St. Francis of Assissi awaits me I shall not be angry. Worse things might happen.

Yours,

OSCAR.

--Letter to Robert Ross.

A VISIT TO THE POPE

c/o COOK & SON, PIAZZA DI SPAGNA, ROME,

April 16th, 1900.

My dear Robbie,--I simply cannot write. It is too horrid, not of me, but to me. It is a mode of paralysis--a cacoethes tacendi--the one form that malady takes in me.

Well, all passed over very successfully. Palermo, where we stayed eight days, was lovely. The most beautifully situated town in the world--it dreams away its life in the concha d'oro, the exquisite valley that lies between two seas. The lemon groves and the orange gardens were so entirely perfect that I became quite a Pre-Raphaelite, and loathed the ordinary impressionists whose muddy souls and blurred intelligences would have rendered, but by mud and blur, those "golden lamps hung in a