

**Shorter Prose Pieces**

**By**

**Oscar Wilde**

Contents:

Phrases And Philosophies for the Use of The Young

Mrs. Langtry as Hester Grazebrook

Slaves of Fashion

Woman's Dress

More Radical Ideas upon Dress Reform

Costume

The American Invasion

Sermons in Stones at Bloomsbury

L'Envoi

## PHRASES AND PHILOSOPHIES FOR THE USE OF THE YOUNG

The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has as yet discovered.

Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others.

If the poor only had profiles there would be no difficulty in solving the problem of poverty.

Those who see any difference between soul and body have neither.

A really well-made buttonhole is the only link between Art and Nature.

Religions die when they are proved to be true. Science is the record of dead religions.

The well-bred contradict other people. The wise contradict themselves.

Nothing that actually occurs is of the smallest importance.

Dulness is the coming of age of seriousness.

In all unimportant matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential.

In all important matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential.

If one tells the truth one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.

Pleasure is the only thing one should live for. Nothing ages like happiness.

It is only by not paying one's bills that one can hope to live in the memory of the commercial classes.

No crime is vulgar, but all vulgarity is crime. Vulgarity is the conduct of others.

Only the shallow know themselves.

Time is waste of money.

One should always be a little improbable.

There is a fatality about all good resolutions. They are invariably made too soon.

The only way to atone for being occasionally a little overdressed is by being always absolutely overeducated.

To be premature is to be perfect.

Any preoccupation with ideas of what is right or wrong in conduct shows an arrested intellectual development.

Ambition is the last refuge of the failure.

A truth ceases to be true when more than one person believes in it.

In examinations the foolish ask questions that the wise cannot answer.

Greek dress was in its essence inartistic. Nothing should reveal the body but the body.

One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art.

It is only the superficial qualities that last. Man's deeper nature is soon found out.

Industry is the root of all ugliness.

The ages live in history through their anachronisms.

It is only the gods who taste of death. Apollo has passed away,  
but Hyacinth, whom men say he slew, lives on. Nero and Narcissus  
are always with us.

The old believe everything: the middle-aged suspect everything;  
the young know everything.

The condition of perfection is idleness: the aim of perfection is  
youth.

Only the great masters of style ever succeeded in being obscure.

There is something tragic about the enormous number of young men  
there are in England at the present moment who start life with  
perfect profiles, and end by adopting some useful profession.

To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.