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Oscar Wilde was already one of the best known literary figures in Britain when he was persuaded to turn his extraordinary talents to the theatre. Between 1891 and 1895 he produced a sequence of distinctive plays which spearheaded the dramatic renaissance of the 1890s and retain their power today.

The social comedies, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, and *An Ideal Husband*, offer a moving as well as witty dissection of society and its morals, with a sharp focus on sexual politics. By contrast, the experimental, symbolist *Salome*, written originally in French, was banned for public performance by the English censor. His final dramatic triumph was his 'trivial' comedy for serious people, *The Importance of Being Earnest* arguably the greatest farcical comedy in English.

Under the General Editorship of Dr Michael Cordner of the University of York, the texts of the plays have been newly edited and are presented with modernized spelling and punctuation. In addition, there is a scholarly introduction and detailed annotation.

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