was such a thing, could, by contemplating them in the twilight, and half closing his eyes, see them under really picturesque conditions, and produce a picture which they were not to attempt to understand, much less dare to enjoy.'

NOTE

Ernest Rhys (1895-1946), English poet and editor.

1. For a note on Whistler see p. 113.

Oscar Wilde and Art*

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson

Wilde was pre-eminently a man of letters, a poet, and a dramatist, but hardly (as he, I think, tried to persuade himself he was) a good judge of colour and form in art. Whistler liked Wilde, and thoroughly appreciated his gifts as a writer, but he would never accept his views on art, and often handled him in the sarcastic vein, as instance his well-known quip, 'He picks from our platters the plums for the puddings he peddles in the provinces,' and his retort when Wilde asked him to superintend the decorations of a house he had taken in Chelsea, 'No, Oscar, you have been lecturing to us about the House Beautiful; now is your chance to show us one.' I recall drawing Wilde's attention one day to a fine impression of the well-known Rembrandt etching of his cook, or 'The Butcher,' as it is sometimes called, of which I was very proud. He evidently did not recognize the master hand, for he turned from it with airy indifference, saying, 'Scratchy, scratchy,' upon which I could not resist retorting in his own tone, 'Rembrandt, Rembrandt!'

* Extracted from *A Player Under Three Reigns* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1925) pp. 109-10. Editor's title.

NOTE

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853-1937), English actor-manager. Wilde suggested him to play the Czarevitch in *Vera*.