De Profundis by Oscar Wilde

The Project Gutenberg eBook, De Profundis, by Oscar Wilde

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and
with no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away
or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License
at www.gutenberg.org, subject to the Project Gutenberg License
attached to this file.

Title: De Profundis

Author: Oscar Wilde

Release Date: April 11, 2007 [eBook #8127]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ISO-8859-15 (Latin9)

START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DE PROFUNDIS

Transcribed from the 1913 Methuen & Co. edition by David Price, email ccx074@pacs.birkbeck.ac.uk. Note that this edition of De Profundis contained more material. The extra material is marked with a '+' in the table of contents.

DE PROFUNDIS

Suffering is one long moment. We cannot divide it by century. We can only record its monotony, and chronicle days, weeks, and years that are all alike. Nothing ever happens. Nothing ever can happen except one thing. The unvarying monotonous coming of the one monotonous event. It is the one thing we all know. It is the one thing that is unknown to the world. Pleasure comes to us as a guest, and departs with a friend, but we have to live with Sorrow. We can only do justice to Sorrow by bearing her company to the end. We can only do justice to Sorrow by allowing her to take her own time. We can only learn what she has to teach us by submitting to her in all things. We can only learn what she has to teach us by being her slave. There is no other way.

For a long time I was unable to realize my position. The very excess of my sorrow, the very intensity of my suffering, kept me from it. I was like a person who stands too close to a great piece of sculpture, and who, from the fact that he sees everything, sees nothing, except, perhaps, some small piece of marble that the sculptor, in his carelessness, has let his chisel leave upon the block from which he is fashioning his work of beauty. I was like a person who, in a fog, walks over the edge of a precipice and feels the air that bears him up as he falls, and the sudden sharp rocks that tear his flesh as he rushes through the air, but who, owing to the fog, has no quite clear idea of the place at which he is falling to, or the place he has left, or the nature of the fall he is taking, or the extent of the injuries he is going to receive when he reaches the end of his journey, and who, in the midst of his pain, and his sickness, and his shame, and his ruin, and his disgrace, and his exile, and his loneliness, and his sorrow, and his suffering, can yet, by some strange law of his being, find some germ of beauty to be developed, some seed of wisdom to be nourished, some opportunity for the exercise of some virtue, some chance for the development of some quality that will, in the end, through much suffering and many tears, lead to his spiritual perfection.

Prison is a place in which one counts the seasons of sorrow. The very sun and moon seem there to be strangers. Outside, the day rises like some golden lily from the light that surrounds God's throne, and the night, like a great purple wave, creeps from the sea of darkness that girdles the world, and covers with its foam of silver fire the feet of the stars that are asleep on the hills. But I do not know what they are doing there. I do not know if the sun still goes, as of old, to the ends of the world to bless the herb that he has made holy, and if the moon still visits, at the prayer of the sorrowful, the sleeping flowers that she has made to grow in the dark places of the earth, and in the deep places of the sea. I do not know if the birds are still, in the morning time, the heralds of the dawn, and if, at the close of the day, the nightingale still sings of the love that is stronger than Death, and the lust that is weaker than the grave, and if the moon, when she wanders through her silver house, still, as of old, she loves to look upon the young men who, in their pride of their strength and their joyousness and their innocence, are like unto those who have never suffered, and who know not what we mean by those who are in pain, and who, because they have never suffered, and have in their souls no pity for those who are in misery, are, in their turn, cruel to those who are happy, and to those who are free, and to those who are at peace. I do not know if these things are so, or if they are not so. But I know that if I had not been in prison I should never have had any knowledge of them at all, and that they have taught me something that I should not have learned from any of my friends, or from those who, in my days of pleasure, used to sit at my table, and to talk to me about all the things that I thought most beautiful in art or life, and that they have given me a new sympathy, a new sympathy that I should not have had if I had been merely free, with all those who are in any form of suffering or sorrow, and that they have taught me that the ultimate facts of life are not the facts that we see with our eyes and hear with our ears and touch with our hands and that the world that we live in is not the world that we think we live in, but a world that_ is_ quite_ different_ from_ it_, a_ world_ that_ we_ do_ not_ see_ while_ we_ are_ in_ the_ world_ of_ which_ we_ are_ the_ masters_ and_ masters_ only_ because_ we_ do_ not_ see_ that_ it_ is_ the_ world_ of_ which_ we_ are_ the_ slaves_, the_ world_ that_ is_ the_ slave_ of_ a_ thought_ that_ is_ one_ with_ ourselves_, that_ we_ have_ made_ our_ own_ by_ our_ sin_ and_ our_ folly_ and_ our_ sloth_ and_ our_ disobedience_ to_ the_ laws_ of_ our_ being_ and_ our_ disobedience_ to_ those_ who_ have_ loved_ us_ and_ who_ love_ us_ and_ who_ alone_ love_ us_ well_, the_ world_ that_ is_ the_ slave_ of_ a_ thought_ that_ we_ have_ made_ our_ own_ by_ our_ worship_ of_ pleasure_ and_ our_ love_ of_ ease_, that_ we_ have_ made_ our_ own_ by_ our_ contempt_ for_ those_ who_ are__ better_ than_ us_ and_ our_ cruelty_ to_ those_ who_ are_ worse_ than_ us_ and_ our_ pride_ that_ we_ think__ no_ one_ is_ as_ good_ as_ we_ are_ and_ our_ selfishness_ that_ we_ think_ that_ we_ should_ have_ everything_ we_ want_ and_ be_ happy_ in_ the_ world_ that_ we_ have_ made_ our_ own_ by_ our_ ignorance_ of_ the_ fact_ that_ we_ are_ but_ a_ small_ part_ of_ a_ great_ whole_, that_ we_ are_ but_ one_ of_ many_ _ creatures_ upon_ whom_ the_ sun_ shines_ and_ the_ rain_ falls_, and_ for_ whom_ the_ green_ earth_ yields__ food_ and_ shelter_ and_ joy_ and_ beauty_ and_ rest_, that_ we_ are_ but_ one_ of_ many_ creatures_ to_ whom_ the_ mother_ Earth_ is_ a_ mother_ and_ not_ a_ stepmother_ and_ who_ love_ her_ as_ she_ loves_ her_ children_ and_ who_ are_ at_ one_ with_ her_ in_ the_ joy_ of_ their_ life_ and_ who_ are_ not_ at_ war_ with_ her_ and_ do_ not_ seek_ to_ make_ her_ children_ to_ be_ the_ slaves_ of_ those_ who_ are_ not_ her_ children_ and_ who_ do_ not

Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH F3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTIBILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need, is critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation web page at http://www.gutenberg.org/fundraising/pglaf.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887, email business@pglaf.org. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at http://www.gutenberg.org/about/contact

For additional contact information:
    Dr. Gregory B. Newby
    Chief Executive and Director
    gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit http://www.gutenberg.org/fundraising/donate

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit:
http://www.gutenberg.org/fundraising/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart is the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For thirty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

    http://www.gutenberg.org

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.