

# A TERRIBLE NOVEL BY AN ITALIAN POET.

A FEW months ago the name of the Italian poet-novelist Gabriele d'Annunzio, had hardly been heard in this country. One of the first things to call the attention of Americans to his work was the remark of Mr. Henry James that "he speaks so loud that one hears him well only from a distance."

It was through the French, however, that Mr. James made the acquaintance of d'Annunzio's work, which has been a cult in France for two or three years, and it is indeed stated that his novels have been more largely read by the French than by his own countrymen.

Yet there is certainly much interest in Italy—where great novelists seem to be rarer than in other countries—in the career of the gifted young author. He is a native of Abruzzi, whose picturesque beauty colors much of his work. His birthplace is a tiny hamlet called Pescara, situated on the Adriatic coast. This village, in which he was born thirty-three years ago, he still clings to as his home, and the simple-minded, true-hearted and honest Italian, what fanciful inhabitants figure in many of his tales.

He was educated at Prato, and was still a student there—a mere lad of fifteen—when he published his first book, a volume of verse so daringly erotic that all Italy was scandalized. But the boy poet stoutly defended his work, maintaining that whatever the opinion of the feeling and sentiment of the poems, they were unassailable as regards verifications—which the critics were forced to admit.

These first literary attempts were followed by other poems which gained for him a recognized place in the front rank of modern Italian poets and won for him the title of "the Romantic Poet of the Italian Renaissance." Of the extraordinary success of this immature work d'Annunzio himself has said:

"Every one sought me, burned incense before me, made a god of me. I appeared especially to women. In this lay a great danger for me. Praise intoxicated me. Eager for its pleasures, I threw myself desperately into life with all my youthful ardor. I committed fault after fault. I skirted a thousand precipices. A sort of apologetic madness took hold of me. I published a little book of poems entitled 'Intermezzo di Rime,' where in plastic verse of faultless prosody I sang of all the pleasures of the flesh with a shamelessness which I have never seen except in the great poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As was just, I began to pay for my mistakes, my dissipations, my excesses. I began to suffer with the same intensity with which I had enjoyed. Suffering made a new man of me. The works of Tolstol and Dostolevsky helped to develop new feelings within me. And now that my art was ripe, I succeeded at once in expressing my new conception of life in a complete and organic whole—in my novel called 'L'Innocente.'"

This novel, which appeared in the Paris Temps under the title, "L'Intrus," giving the author a sudden vogue in France, was the second written by d'Annunzio, and was published in 1892, his first being "Placere," written and printed three years earlier. The three novels upon which his reputation mainly rest are these: "Placere," "L'Innocente," and "Fronzoni." The last, published about a year ago, being generally considered the greatest. They all bear on the title page the words, "Romances of the Rosa," and while they have all been translated and passed through several editions in French, they have not yet found a publisher courageous enough to attempt their translation into English.

Now, however, Chicago, who is never afraid, comes forward. Messrs. H. S. Stone & Co. have just brought out the first translation of d'Annunzio, making the experiment by means of "Episcopo & Co.," which is assumed to be more translatable than most that he has written. d'Annunzio's creed, so far as he can be said to have one, is an ardent worship of the beautiful, and his books are a constant apotheosis of art. "Art," he says in "Placere," "there the faithful mistress, immortal and forever young; there the fountain of unadulterated joy, forbidden to the multitude, conceded to the elect; there the precious nutriment which makes man equal to the gods."

But what shall be said of "Episcopo & Co.," when the very title suggests something infamous? The difficulty of undertaking to describe one of d'Annunzio's novels may be inferred from the fact that Paris, which swallows Zola without turning a hair, has found it necessary to expurgate the Italian novelist. It would be interesting to know what was left after this process of expurgation was gone through with. From beginning to end there is nothing but corruption: the whole work smells of the charnel house, and reeks with unspeakable horror. The motive—if the hysterical, violent, incoherent outcry of the work may be described as a motive—is the hypnotic control of a strong evil nature over one that is merely weak. The tale, which is autobiographical, begins with an altercation among a number of drunken men, in which Episcopo is cut on the forehead by a glass thrown by Wanzan at another man. "As soon," says Episcopo, "as I felt the warm blood on my face I lost consciousness. When I came to my head was banded. Wanzan was at my side with doleful mien; in a few words he excused himself to me. He took me back to the house, the doctor going with us; he assisted at the second dressing of the wound; he insisted upon remaining in my room until a late hour. He returned the next morning; he returned often. And this was the beginning of my slavery."

"No attitude toward him was possible to me save that of a dog that is afraid. When he came to my room he took on the air of a master. He opened my drawers, combed his hair with my comb, washed his hands in my basin, smoked my pipe, rummaged among my papers, read my letters, took away things he wanted. Every day his tyranny became more unbearable; and every day my soul grew more degraded, more cringing. I had no longer the shadow of a will; I submitted simply without a protest. "I followed him everywhere he wished; I waited long hours for him, in the street, in front of doorways; I sat up nights to copy papers for him; I carried his letters from one end of Rome to the other; a hundred times I climbed the stairs of Montefiore; I ran breathless from money lender to money lender, to get him the money which was to be his salvation; a hundred times I have stood behind his chair in a gambling house until dawn, dreading with fatigue and disgust, kept awake by his snoring and by the acid smoke which he drew my throat; and my mouth irritated and he blamed me for his ill luck; and when we left, if he had lost, he dragged me after him like a rag, through deserted streets, in the thick fog, swearing and gesticulating, until such time as some shadow, appearing at a turn, would offer us a glass of brandy. "Ah, sir, who will unveil for me this mystery before I die? Are there then on this earth men who, meeting other men, can do with them what they will, can make them their slaves? Is there then a way of taking his will away from a man, as you would take from his fingers a wisp of straw? Is that possible, sir? Why is it so? "A helpless fool in the hands of Wanzan, Episcopo meets the bad woman—a waitress—who, with the bad man, is to rule his life. The first time he sees her is de-

scribed with hideous vividness: "A room lighted by gas, overheated with an arid heat that dries the skin; the odor and the fumes of meats; a confused sound of voices, and above all the voices, the harsh voice of Wanzan, giving to each word a brutal accent. Then from time to time, an interruption, a silence which seems to me fearful. A hand touches me, takes the plate from before me, puts another in its place, conveys to me the thrill of a caress. This thrill each one at the table feels in turn; that is evident. The heat becomes stifling, ears become inflamed, eyes shine. A low, almost bestial expression appears on the faces of those men who have eaten and drunk; who have attained the single object of their daily existence. "The revelation of their impurity is a blow to me, a blow so cruel that I feel like fainting. I take a firm hold of my chair; I draw in my elbows to increase the space between my neighbors and myself. A voice cries in the midst of the din, 'Episcopo has the colic.' Another, 'No; he is playing the sentimental. Did you not see his face when Ginevra changed his plate?' "I try to laugh. I raise my eyes and I meet Ginevra's fixed upon me with an ambiguous expression. "It is through a joke sprung at the table that the title of the story is suggested. It may not be named. Those curious to know what it is will find it set down in the book

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# A MAGNIFICENT NEW EDITION OF THE BIBLE.

SEVERAL years have elapsed since Gustave Dore's illustrated Bible was put out, and no attempt has been made until lately to publish anything similar to that grand work. It appears from articles in Dutch newspapers that before long the world may expect to see an illustrated edition of the Bible which bids fair to be veritably a monumental work of art.

My attention having been directed to some of these paragraphs, I called on Mr. Dake, the famous Amsterdam etcher and professor at the Royal Academy of Arts in that town, and found him in the board room of the natty little club-house of Art and Amicilia, the well-known Dutch art society, of which he is the president.

In the course of my interview I learned the following facts: Last year a syndicate was formed in Holland to furnish the capital necessary for the printing and publishing of a new illustrated world edition of the Bible, the originators of the scheme being Mr. Dake and Mr. Gerard Muller, another well-known Dutch painter, and secretary to the art society above referred to. These two gentlemen were appointed by the syndicate to act as managing directors for the artistic department, and Mr. Warendorf, of the firm of Van Holkema & Warendorf, at Amsterdam, was appointed managing director for the printing and publishing part.

The new Bible is to be printed in English, French, German and Dutch. For the Dutch text the old Dordrecht Synod translation of 1619 will be taken. With regard to the English edition, the advice is being taken of several eminent English classical scholars as to whether the translation of 1811 or the New Authorized Version shall be used. The supervision of the text has been entrusted to Professor de, of the Leyden university. It will be published in twenty-five parts, a folio form, and

"Other illustrations of the Old Testament will be contributed by E. A. Abbey, George Morot and Tisot. "The New Testament will be illustrated by E. Hebert, Dominico Morelli and Benjamin Constant, while the sufferings and death of Christ will be dealt with by Munkacsy. "E. P. Miehett will do 'The Acts of the Apostles.' "C. J. VOORTMAN, Amsterdam, Aug. 25.

# NEW BOOKS BY NEW WRITERS AND OLD.

SEPTEMBER is always a month of great activity among publishers, and the present season promises an unusual number of important books.

Foremost among these are several works of biography, of which the most eagerly expected is, perhaps, "The Brontes and Their Circle," edited by Mr. Clement K. Shorter and Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll. Mr. Shorter is probably the greatest living authority on the Brontes, and he has given all his knowledge to the preparation of this work, which will contain a great deal of new matter, and many heretofore unpublished letters. The circle of the gifted family included many of the most distinguished English men and women of letters of that day. The American publishers

of this country, and has a distinct literary value, aside from its pictorial beauty. Another richly illustrated publication to be issued by this firm is "Gutter Children," by the well known artist, Paul May, who has supplied the letter-press, as well as the illustrations for the work. But "The History of Modern Painting," by Richard Muttter, with its 1,200 illustrations, which will be published during the Autumn, surpasses everything else of its kind, and will be sold only by subscription. "Old English Ballads," edited by Mr. Hamilton Wright Mable, will also be profusely illustrated. "The many readers of 'Little Rivers,' one of the most successful books of last year, will be glad to know that the Macmillan Company are to publish a new work by the author, the Rev. Henry Van Dyke (pastor of the Brick Church), the new book being entitled "The Gospel for an Age of Dark." Among the fiction announced by this firm are new novels by several leading novelists: "The Choir Invisible," by James Lane Allen, an historical novel of Kentucky life in the period following the Revolution; the background of the story being the migration of the Anglo-Saxon race from the Atlantic seaboard West; Mr. Marion Crawford's "Targuisara," another tale of Italian life; Mr. Rudyard Kipling's "Soldiers' Stories," a book for boys; Mr. Henry James's "The Other House," a characteristic "carven cherry stone"; Mrs. Malvern's "The Oriel Window," a juvenile tale; and Mrs. Humphry Ward's last novel, "Sir George Trevelyan."

The most important announcement made by Messrs. Harper Brothers, is Mr. Du Maurier's novel, "The Martian," which will make its first appearance, with illustrations by the author, serially in their magazine. In book form they announce Mr. Poulton Bigelow's "History of the German Struggle for Liberty," the second volume of Curtis's "Constitutional History," "Shakespeare the Boy," by William J. Rolfe; Mrs. Margaret Sangster's new book, "With My Neighbor"; "Reminiscences by an Octogenarian," by Charles H. Haswell, and the "Impressions and Experiences" of Mr. Howells.

Messrs. D. Appleton & Co. announce "The Seven Seas," a new volume of verse by Rudyard Kipling; "The Beginnings of a Nation," by Dr. Edward Eggleston; "When William IV. was King," by John Ashton, a volume of social, political and personal anecdotes of that period; "Genius and Degeneration," by Dr. William Hirsch, and "Guy Juvenile Offenders," a new volume in the criminology series.

Among the works of fiction the most conspicuous are "Rodney Stanger," a novel by A. Conan Doyle, and "The Little Regiment," by Stephen Crane. The juvenile publications down on the list of Messrs. Appleton & Co. are many, including "Midshipman Farragut," by James Barnes, a new volume in the Young Heroes Series; "Navy Stories," illustrated by C. T. Chapman; "The Wampum Belt," by Ezekiel Butlerworth, illustrated by H. Whitrop Peires; "The Windmill," by W. O. Stoddard, illustrated by B. West; "Climax," "Classical Career," a story for girls, by Pauline King, illustrated by Wilhelmina Walker.

Foremost on the list of Mr. Edward Arnold stands "The Adventures of My Life," the authorized English edition of Mr. Henri Rochefort's memoirs, which has been prepared under his personal supervision. "Through Unknown African Countries," by Dr. Donaldson Smith, is a work of travel which seems likely to attract considerable attention, and which Mr. Arnold will publish at an early date. "In and Beyond the Himalayas," by S. J. Stone, and "Fifty Years' Reminiscences of India," by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Pollock, of the British Army, are two fascinating studies of Indian life. Mr. Arnold's announcements include many scientific books, and also an interesting array of fiction, among the latter being "Interludes," by Maud Oxenden; "A Reluctant Evangelist," by Alice Spinner; "The Bapomet That Came Home