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TRANSLATIONS FROM CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN POETRY WITH BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

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INTRODUCTION

THE years between 1860 and 1870 saw the making of the Italian nation; but they seemed almost to look on at the death-throes of Italian literature. Never had letters in general, and poetry in especial, sunk to so low an ebb. It was not that there were no authors, but that those there were wrote but little, were founding no school and heading no onward movement; and, above all, that no one read their works—no one, that is, save the select few who in all ages, throughout the darkest hours of gloom and depression, tend and keep alive the sacred lamp of art. How long ago that period of literary darkness seems to be, to the Italian of to-day! 'Who remembers now,' asks Carducci, writing in 1880, 'the Italian poetry of ten or eleven years since?' Yet there were poets in the land, some who still continued their song, and others who rested on laurels won long years before. In 1870, Manzoni was yet alive: Prati, whom Carducci calls the only true and richly poetic author of the second generation of the Italian Romanticists, was still writing: Aleardi was at the

summit of his fame: the *abate* Zanella, Terenzio Mamiani, Niccolò Tommaseo, and many more, had not yet passed away, and of these not a few were still carrying on the great traditions of Italian poetry.

Whence, then, came that depression of the poetic art, and of literature in general, which marked the period of which I am speaking?

Briefly, it may be ascribed to two causes: one political, one literary.

The literature of Italy in our century has been largely political. From 1815 to 1870 the entire intellect of the nation, almost without exception, either threw itself with fervour into the national movement, or was in sympathy with it. Except where despair reigned, the function of intellect and the purpose of literature became indeed the preparation of Italians for the new Italy. It is difficult to mention more than one or two writers of eminence in the hostile camp; though, on the other hand, there were many divisions in the army of liberation. And it is probable that at first, for all their intellectual predominance, those who firmly believed in the re-arising of Italy were a minority so far as mere numbers were concerned. They had to educate the nation; they had to inspire it with hope and enthusiasm; they had to point out the paths which might lead to freedom. Theirs it was, too, to combat the disintegrat-

ing tendencies which showed themselves in every province, and gradually to substitute national aspirations towards union for local discontent, for local jealousies and mutual suspicion, for the rash and futile efforts of Tuscan or Sicilian to secure for his own province some form of precarious and even dangerous autonomy. And, finally, it was their mission to proclaim the wrongs and the aspirations of Italy to the world at large.

What wonder, when literature was thus absolutely and fervently devoting itself to a political cause, that it should, so to speak, lose sight of itself; that it should cease to recur to the primary fountains of inspiration; that it should become, in some aspects, little more than the handmaid of politics; and that, finally, it should sink exhausted and almost moribund, on the day when the national hopes and struggles were crowned with success?

For fifty years and more the poets of Italy had raised the song of liberty, only to find, now that freedom was at last attained, that they had lost the power to sing of aught else.

This, however, is only one aspect of the matter. Poetry can never absolutely cease to have an atmosphere of its own. Italian literature had become largely political, but it had not become mere pamphleteering; it was literature still, and had even been

a great literary movement. If, therefore, it had decayed and was neglected, so much so as to be in danger of being forgotten, there must have been an inward as well as an outward cause for the deterioration.

In a superficial view, it is impossible to dissociate literature from politics during those years of the making of Italy; yet, in the abstract, it may be practicable to consider them separately.

Viewed, therefore, from an entirely literary standpoint, the time had come when, as constantly occurs in the history of letters, a reforming and, on the whole, a fruitful and beneficent movement loses its vitality, and, after having at first overthrown older conventional methods, becomes in its turn a convention and a deadening paralysis. Now, in the Italy of 1860 to 1870 this was the case with Romanticism.

I have not here to write the history of Italian Romanticism. Inaugurated by such men as Manzoni, Berchet, and Silvio Pellico, it was part of the great Romantic movement which informed all the great literatures of Europe with new life. In Italy the impulse came chiefly from Germany, but Romanticism assumed here those peculiar aspects which the history of the times required. It did—without doubt—great and excellent work. It cast aside certain so-called classical forms and conventions, and sought

inspiration in the Middle Ages; and therefore it appealed to the great spirit of mediæval literature, to Faith: and the *Inni Sacri* of Manzoni were its consecration. But that was when the century was young, and times changed with the rapidity which is characteristic of the age. First, the Catholic literature of Italy was discredited by the policy of the Vatican. When Pius IX. executed his famous *volte face* (not without some reason, or at least some excuse), Gioberti's dream—a great and splendid dream—of a confederated Italy under an enlightened and progressive Papacy, vanished to take its place among the forgotten Utopias. Henceforth, intellect, on the whole, arrayed itself against the Papacy; but in so doing it lost touch with the Faith which had been one of its chief inspirations.

In the next place, while the Romantic movement, originally one of hope, was beginning to pine away in discouragement and disillusion, it was no longer compelled to make any great effort to sustain itself against the healthy rivalry of contending schools. The 'Puristi' had been absorbed: Giusti was dead and had left no successor; and in Leopardi the older classical movement had, long since, to a great extent lost itself in despair. That writers so eminent as these had left no school was in itself a fatal sign. They had, it is true, an abundance of followers without

vitality; Manzoni, too, had his, for Italy was tormented with imitations of the 'Catholic' poetry. Such a one 'leopardeggiava'; such another held aloft the battered standard of 'Manzonianism.'

Thus, amid all this imitation, among all these mimicries—insufficiently redeemed by the nobler work of the few who, overwhelmed in the common neglect, found no listeners—Romanticism in its second generation (with which alone we have here to do) was dying, and threatened to involve in its ruin that literary spirit from which it was then supposed to be inseparable. Sentiment had become sentimentality, and the public would have none of it. Italian authors ceased to be read; even Prati and Aleardi were afraid to risk the publication of a volume. The third-rate produce of French literature alone found a sale: the people—rumour, or perhaps scandal, says even one of the Popes—read Paul de Kock.

And now we come to the inevitable revolt. Was it likely, under the circumstances, to be moderate, gradual, plausible, and conciliatory?

What was necessary was a thorough, a far-spreading reaction. It must be anti-Catholic, which in Italy means anti-Christian; it must be anti-Romantic, which in the Italy of to-day can only be classical —that is, Pagan; it must be anti-ascetic, anti-conventional: it must demand freedom for mind and

for art, now that freedom in the political sphere had been attained.

Hence the 'Veristi,' the realists of Italy; hence Carducci's *Hymn to Satan*; hence Praga and Stecchetti. We may not sympathise with the first ostensible aims of the school; we need not yield unqualified admiration to its 'satanic' or its 'fleshly' work (splendid though it be in form, eloquence, and vigour); yet we may recognise, reluctantly perhaps, that the revulsion was inevitable; we must admit that it has saved literature in Italy (and without literature the Faith itself cannot everywhere survive); and finally, if we have any observation and any appreciative faculty, it must be apparent to us that the movement has dowered Italian poetry with new and rich resources; that, without abandoning the modern standpoint, it has gone back to the primal sources, to the fountains of the language, to the beauty and purity of the classics, to love of nature, to a free and spontaneous expression of passion and emotion.

These in themselves are great things; and, what is infinitely more, what is infinitely better, they open the way to a greater future. For the violence of insurrection passes away; its results remain; and if the revolt has been against corruption and decay, those results cannot but be for good. And already the period of storm and stress draws to its conclusion.

It has made room for the development of genius, and to Italy, of old and always, genius has never long been lacking.

This, then, is in itself one reason why the Italian poetry of to-day is interesting to the student. What the Third Italy is likely to do, in any sphere, is a problem worthy of the deepest consideration. The First gave to Europe law, civilisation, order, religion—forms of necessary subjection: the Second, besides restoring classical antiquity and the classic traditions, gave us art and literature, summoned like Lazarus from the dead; it endowed us with municipal organisation and intellectual independence—forms of necessary freedom. The Third cannot hope to accomplish as much as its predecessors, for its sphere is necessarily more limited; but it is Italy still, it is Italy again; let us keep it in view. And literature may perhaps be the voice by which it will speak.

Yet this is not the only point of view from which it is worth our while to observe what, in the field of poetry, is being done in Italy to-day. It is an era of fertile and, in many respects, already of remarkable production.

During the ten years (1860-1870) of which I am speaking, the movement had already begun, and had taken two or three varying directions before it settled into deeper channels. I will touch first, and briefly,

upon the more violent form of reaction. Emilio Praga, now so long dead (1875) that he does not enter into the plan of this volume, had published his *Penombre*, in which, as in his later utterances, he took up the attitude of an extreme Bohemian, almost of a literary Nihilist. Stecchetti is his nearest modern analogue: with this difference, however, that Stecchetti visibly poses as more Bohemian—more licentious, in fact—than he is: while Praga was in deadly earnest. Theirs is the louder and more aggressive cry of armed revolution: there were gentler voices besides, as well as a more enduring and deeper influence.

To the chorus of the milder spirits belongs another innovator, Vittorio Betteloni, whose *In Primavera* was published in 1869, and who was, as Carducci has said, the first, or at least one of the first, to emerge from the currents of Romanticism. He discarded the conventions of the day, and proved that poetry could be written without them; that is his merit, his great service to literature. Yet Betteloni was not a master; his style, being a reaction against set forms, comes perilously near the commonplace. He was a standard-bearer in the revolutionary army; he was not destined to become its leader. It was inevitable that the revolt against Romanticism in Italy should take the form of Classicism.

For many years past, young students of poetry had perceived the necessity for such a movement. At Florence, Chiarini, Nencioni, and Carducci were the chief members of a group of rising young men who assumed, or who accepted, the significant title of *gli amici pedanti*. The name, too, of their short-lived periodical, *Il Poliziano*, suggested a return, not to the *classicisti* of the end of the last century, but directly to those of the Renascence, and with them to Greek and Roman antiquity. The movement had perhaps been premature (we have gone back for a moment to the years ending in 1860); at any rate, the leaders were as yet too young to have any great influence. The group broke up; its members, however, continued their studies and pursued their old aims. Carducci began his 'cold bath of erudition,' and Nencioni threw himself into those foreign studies, especially in English literature, as a result of which he has taken the foremost place among Italian critics, and has widened the horizon of Italian letters.

From 1860 to 1870, the powers of the young generation were maturing. Besides those we have mentioned, Arnaboldi, Capuana, and Gnoli were silently freeing themselves from the old bondage, and Carducci had already spoken. The period of his *Juvenilia* was over, and in 1867 he threw down

the gauntlet in the famous *Hymn to Satan.* The new movement was to be aggressive and remorselessly destructive: Romanticism was to be attacked in its strongholds; its spirit as much as its style, its faith as well as its forms, were to be overthrown and uprooted: there were to be no half-measures. The *Levia Gravia* followed in 1868; the *Decennalia* (1860-1870), rapidly accumulating, were to be published in 1871. And with the *Giambi ed Epodi* (written between 1867 and 1872), the *Nuove Poesie* (1873), and the *Odi barbare* (1877), the classical movement was at its height. At the same time, the more ungovernable spirits were following in the footsteps of Praga; and since the critics would not listen to Olindo Guerrini, a bold manœuvre forced them, in 1877, to hear the voice of 'Lorenzo Stecchetti.'

I need not enter into the long and envenomed controversies of those years. The 'Pagans,' the 'Veristi' or 'Elzevirians,' as they were called from the little yellow-backed volumes in which the publisher Zanichelli of Bologna introduced them to the world, won the day. Now the heat of the battle is over, and the young generation is abandoning the violent methods by which it had to be fought. Literature is recovering its equanimity; and poetry, while extending its sphere, has regained its popularity and is deepening the impression it has made.

It will have been observed that there were two wings to the onward movement, Carducci being the chief representative of one, and (latterly) Stecchetti of the other. Both are 'Pagan' in the sense that they both assume an attitude entirely hostile to Christianity as well as to Romanticism; but Stecchetti's is chiefly a foreign, Carducci's more especially a classical inspiration. The former, moreover, affects a Bohemian cynicism, and uses of set purpose the weapons of derision; he wishes to shock as well as to offend; he makes ostentatious display of sensualism, and does not shrink from blasphemy. Carducci has better taste and far greater dignity; his is the grand style. Even his youthful outburst, the *Hymn to Satan*, rightly understood, is not irreverent vituperation. Satan is no Semitic spirit of evil: he is the classical revolt, the spirit of freedom, the Titans re-arising, the unbound Prometheus. Only, for an anti-Catholic movement, Prometheus would not serve. The Church was to be attacked in the name of liberty and reason; and hence

'Salute, o Satana,
O ribellione,
O forza vindice
Della ragione!'

And now that the work of destruction is over, and that of reconstruction well advanced, it is time to

ask, what are the more permanent aims and tendencies of the new school? If I have understood them aright, they may be summed up as the union of the modern spirit with the purity and beauty of classical form and inspiration; a return to nature and to the love of nature, and a new appeal to the forgotten resources of the language.

When we in England have sometimes been compelled to free ourselves from certain outworn conventions, the innovators, intolerant of Latinisms, have returned to the Saxon origins of our tongue. In Italy, a movement in its essence the same necessarily takes the opposite direction; the revolt is against the 'Gothic,' the return is to classical antiquity. Whether the movement, in this sense, has gone too far—whether Carducci's language be so overladen with classical words and allusions as to be, at times, to the ordinary mind somewhat obscure and involved—it is perhaps difficult for us to judge. But here, incidentally, an interesting question arises—that of the neo-classical forms. For Carducci and his followers have emphasised their 'paganism' by what is not so much a revival of classical metres as a creation of analogous forms of verse founded upon the actual materials and methods of the modern language. And the resulting *Odi barbare* have been so much discussed, and so often misapprehended, that it may not be out of place

to give a short account of them, even though this should necessitate some little technical detail.

The *Odi barbare*, says Carducci, are so termed 'because they would so sound to the ears and judgment of the Greeks and Romans, although I have wished to compose them in the metrical forms belonging to the lyrical poetry of those nations; and because they will, too truly, so sound to very many Italians, although they are composed and harmonised in Italian verses and accents.' The two clauses of this sentence, quoted from Carducci's note to the volume of 1877, lay down the conditions which he has considered essential to the revival of classical forms in modern Italian. That language has no quantity, and Carducci makes no attempt to revive it, as had been done, without much success, by Leon Battista Alberti, by Tolomei, and more recently by Tommaseo. He follows rather the example which had been set him by Chiabrera; and, reading the verse of Horace and Catullus irrespective of quantity and rhythmical accent, but according to its natural grammatical accent, he attempts to reproduce the metrical effect by a combination of recognised Italian metres.

To make this point clear, I cannot do better than quote the words of one of Carducci's most distinguished disciples, Guido Mazzoni, to whose courtesy I am indebted for them. 'We have no quantity;

but we can render in Italian verse the sound of Latin verses, *as it appears to strike our "barbarous" ears.* That is to say: since we, when reading Horace, hear in his Odes our own five-syllable, seven-syllable, nine-syllable, and hendecasyllabic metres, so we can construct, by means of these metres, strophes which apparently correspond to his. For instance:

'Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume,'

sounds to our Italian ears as though it were composed of two *quinarii* [five-syllable lines], the first simple, the second *sdrucciolo* [having an additional syllable forming a dactylic ending]; and therefore for

'Éheu fugáces, | Póstume, Póstume,'

Carducci writes [*Alla Stazione*, in the first *Odi barbare*]

'Oh quei fanáli | cóme s'inséguono.'

How does this theory work out in practice? It may be interesting to some readers if I give one or two examples.

And first a word upon Carducci's elegiacs. He has to face the fact that few Italian words have the accent on the last syllable. Therefore he boldly introduces pentameters with the accent on the antepenultimate; and Chiarini, his apologist (in *I critici italiani e il metro delle Odi barbare*), justifies him

in so doing by the frequent example of Propertius, Tibullus, and Catullus. I have not attempted to reproduce this peculiarity (and he takes further liberties) in my version of *San Petronio*, because in our tongue there is no such necessity as that which Carducci had to consider, and the introduction of such an ending would in English be entirely artificial. In *Nevicata*, which I have also endeavoured to translate, he has followed his models more closely.

Now let us take the alcaic metre. In Carducci, the first and second lines have a cæsura after the fifth syllable: the first two syllables vary, but the third must be short, the fourth long, the fifth short (I use the words short and long for convenience sake, to represent unaccented and accented syllables). In the second division, again, the essential rule is that the last three syllables shall constitute what we call a dactyl. So we have

> 'Or wért thou, cloúd-borne, | guíding the eágles, when
> Befóre the súrging | Mársian sóldiery.'

The third line is of nine syllables, usually thus accented:

> 'Thy spléndour irrádiate dázzled';

and the fourth line, a decasyllable, admits of three

variations, of which the following is that employed in this ode:

'The tumúltuous Párthian ónset,'

the anapæstic rush of which (however feebly rendered in my translation) fitly closes a verse which has in Italian a genuine and ringing melody.

One more example. The 'barbaric' sapphic has been pronounced by Professor Mommsen (who has admirably translated some of Carducci's odes) a comparative failure: curiously enough, it has nevertheless been in Italy the most popular of the new forms.

Here the cæsura is once more placed after the fifth syllable. The third is short, the fourth long, the fifth again short. In the second division, the last three syllables are, as before, short, long, and short. As to the fourth line, it may be as in Latin a dactyl and a trochee, or the accents of the first two syllables may be inverted. Thus we have, not without variety:

'Betwéen the vérses | pénsively arísing,
Míne be the láughter | of the jóyous víntage,
And míne the rósebuds | fúgitive, in wínter
Flów'ring to pérish.'

I have given the examples in English, because the

frequent elisions of the Italian render it somewhat difficult for a foreigner at once to catch the scansion; but when this slight obstacle is once overcome, the melody of the verse can only be fully appreciated by the study of the original.

But in all this, the classical scholar may ask, what has become of the Latin prosody? The answer is, that the rules of Latin or Greek prosody have no place in Italian: a new prosody, so to speak, adapted to a non-quantitative language, has been substituted for them; the accents have been dislodged, and new sapphics and alcaics have appeared, which are good Italian metres. But again, are they now the sapphics and alcaics we knew? or are 'these lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer'? No, they are not; they do not pretend to be; that is the very essence of the matter; but what they are is this: in a language in which it is impossible to write alcaics, sapphics, or elegiacs absolutely identical with those of antiquity (save, perhaps, occasionally as a *tour de force*), these are the metres which, natural to the language, create an impression almost exactly the same as that of the ancient metres. And is this really so? Are they Italian metres—not the pedantic experiments of scholars? That is a question for the ear, for the ear that understands Italian and is not seeking for classical echoes; and, put to this test, the answer,

I think, will be almost always affirmative. In the words of Professor Trezza, 'they do not sound like reminiscences of defunct forms: they sound like a living new creation.' And that it is so is proved, to my mind, by the fact that they have taken root and flourished. Meeting at first with violent opposition, they have become popular, and the language will not willingly let them die.

Carducci and his apologists admit the success of the Germans and the English (especially Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Robinson Ellis) in pursuing another method: what they maintain is, that such successes, however brilliant, do not nationalise and modernise the ancient metres, and that in Italian far less success is attainable by such means. Of this last they are the best judges. I have endeavoured, in my translations, to reproduce the Italian method: if the 'barbaric' metres in this volume shock the scholar, let me at least say that I have not written classical, but Italian sapphics and alcaics; that in the original they possess a charm of their own, and that I have merely endeavoured to enable Englishmen not deeply versed in Italian poetry to know something of the new methods.

It is perhaps fair to add that in certain of their essays Carducci and his school have attempted, not without success, to reproduce even the *ictus* of their

Latin models; but I have chosen rather to illustrate their usual and more characteristic practice.

As the leader of a great school, and as the inventor (practically speaking) of new forms, Carducci has made exceptional demands upon my space. But for this I should have much to say concerning other poets of the time who stand in the foremost ranks. In the elder generation, the first place, in my opinion, belongs to Enrico Panzacchi, one of the most original and charming writers of Italy; and I am not without hope that he may become as familiar to the English public as he well deserves to be. Two others who must be singled out for special notice are Antonio Fogazzaro, perhaps more widely admired as a novelist, but a poet, also, of rare and exquisite feeling, excelling chiefly as a meditative student of nature; and Arturo Graf, whose sombre and powerful Muse, though somewhat unequal in achievement, gives him a high position among the pessimistic poets of modern Europe.

To the rising generation, to the young men of brilliant promise and in some cases already of excellent performance, belong Giovanni Marradi, Guido Mazzoni, Severino Ferrari, Giovanni Pascoli, and others. For the position and merits of these I must refer the reader to the notices by which I have prefaced my attempts to render some small portion of

their work. But first of them all in point of fame, and, so far, of achievement, stands the 'marvellous boy' Gabriele d'Annunzio, who, combining in some degree the influences of Carducci and Stecchetti, has none the less struck out what is, broadly speaking, a new path of his own. He is still very young, and has perhaps the largest dower of poetical genius vouchsafed to any living European of his time and of his years; but he has run, and is still running, the risk of squandering his literary capital. That his astonishing successes should have left him unspoiled was doubtless not to be expected. He is the most interesting phenomenon of the Italian literature of the day; but so far, to my mind, his earlier work still remains his best, and his future is in his own hands. If he is able to add judgment, experience, and observation to the vigour, eloquence and consummate artistic skill which he already possesses, his will be one of the greatest names of the age; at present he is in danger of becoming a young man 'd'un bien beau passé.'

Before concluding, I must not omit to say that in Italy considerable difference may be observed between the writers of one province and those of another: a fact easily explained by the slightest reference to history. Signor Raffaello Barbiera, himself a poet, has pointed out some chief points of

difference, which I rapidly sum up, premising that he is speaking of the century at large rather than of the present generation. The Venetians, then, have an expansive and brilliant note; while the Lombards are more prone to reflection and to brooding over the eternal tears of mankind. The Piedmontese have usually been noted for their fervour of patriotic and liberal enthusiasm. The Neapolitans, again, burn with the fire of extemporisation, and sing of their flaming mountain and of their sunlit seas; while the Sicilians, though passionately attached to their beautiful island, are yet wont to philosophise concerning Nature in general, and are filled with a revolutionary spirit: it was they who began the great European movement of 1848, and they have under their eyes to-day the miseries attendant on convict labour. The Tuscans, Emilians, and Romans must be classed together, for they inherit the majestic traditions of Rome and the ancient purity of the language: to them naturally belongs the literary movement of the day.

After these observations, it may be interesting to classify the authors quoted in this volume according to their birth. The Venetians are Betteloni, Boito, Fogazzaro, and Zardo; the Lombards, Arnaboldi, Fontana, Ada Negri. De Amicis, Graf, and Ferrero are Piedmontese by birth or residence; Milelli,

d'Annunzio, and Perotti, Neapolitans; Capuana, Rapisardi, and Fleres are Sicilians; while to the Central contingent belong Carducci, Chiarini, Nencioni, Gnoli, Panzacchi, Stecchetti, Mazzoni, Marradi, Pascoli, and Baccelli. The few who remain over may be variously distributed.

In the present volume I have not adopted this method of classification, because I believe that these distinctions are now tending to disappear, and therefore the arrangement would be in some respects misleading. Moreover, differences such as there are, are more apparent to a native than to a foreigner, especially when the latter has only a very scanty sample of the work of each writer before him; and finally, a study based upon the distinction as to provinces should take especial note of the abundant and interesting literature in dialect which has been produced in Italy of recent years; and this I have been unable to do. A poem in dialect owes its chief piquancy to the relation which that dialect bears to the literary language: it must therefore remain untranslated, or else, in order to produce an analogous though not identical effect, it must be rendered in a dialect. The translator, moreover, must be familiar with the original patois, and to such familiarity I can only in one or two instances lay claim.

The translations included in this volume have been accumulating for some years, and are from writers all of them living at the time, the intention of the translator being that of giving some slight idea of the present condition and the present aspects and methods of Italian lyrical verse. In almost every case the attempt has been made exactly to reproduce the metre of the original poem. To this rule the exceptions are few and, I believe, unimportant; but it may be well to point them out. The frequent recurrence of the sonnet form, so especially Italian, will be observed. I have almost everywhere exactly followed the original disposition of the rhymes, though in one of Countess Lara's an alteration has been made in this respect. In one or two lines of irregular verse I have rejected the so-called *sdrucciolo* rhyme (rhymeless dactylic endings) as on the whole unmusical to the English ear; though I have attempted to reproduce this peculiar effect elsewhere, and especially in Arnaboldi's 'Rhamses II.' In Fogazzaro's 'Evening' I have taken some slight and necessary liberties for the sake of interpreting the spirit of the poem in a corresponding English form; and some slight alterations have been made in the loose structure of Capuana's 'Semirhythms.' Elsewhere, no change has been allowed to vary the original metre, a strict adherence to which is to my

ear essential. The severity of this rule has, perhaps necessarily, resulted in the exclusion of certain poems which I should have much desired to have included in this volume. When, for instance, as in Carducci's *Hymn to Satan*, the lines are very short, the movement rapid and dependent upon an un-English form, that of the *sdrucciolo* endings, accurate reproduction of both sense and metre becomes almost an impossibility.

I have endeavoured sincerely and sympathetically to reproduce in each version the spirit of the poem treated and the idiosyncrasy of the writer as in that poem represented. I have also attempted to transfer into our tongue not only the form, but also some slight echo of the peculiarities of melody which belong to the originals. In this I cannot hope to have been often successful; but I have treated my subject reverently, and if I have anywhere been a *traduttore-traditore*, it is not because I have commonly avoided difficulties by means of an excessive recourse to paraphrase. And on the other hand, some few of the faults which may justly be laid to my charge by the lover of English verse are due to my endeavour to acclimatise in English certain impalpable elements of Italian poetry, such as the frequent employment of vowel-elision.

I regret that the necessary limitations of space, among other reasons, have not permitted me to include in this collection several living poets whom I should have much desired to have quoted: for it must not be supposed that thirty-four names go near to exhaust the list of those who are worthy of mention. The age, as I have said, is one of fertile production; and as many of the writers here represented have hitherto been unknown in England, I trust I shall be pardoned for my omissions. Similar considerations have in some cases greatly limited the space available for a single author, who may in consequence be perhaps somewhat unfairly represented.

Finally, I have to thank the greater number of the authors of whom I have treated in this volume for the very courteous and prompt response which they have made to my request for information to be embodied in the biographical notices. In some cases where such response was not forthcoming, I have been made aware that the fault was to be ascribed to uncertain addresses or other accidental circumstances. I have, of course, in every case also consulted such other authoritative sources of information as were open to me; but so far as one or two very recent works are concerned—for I have tried to bring my view of contemporary Italian

poetry up to the earlier months of the current year —there have naturally been special difficulties. In general, I cannot hope to have altogether avoided making certain slips and mistakes, though I have done my best to reduce the possibilities of error. It may be noted that I have uniformly omitted the customary courteous prefix to the writers' names— a course which has been adopted, not from want of respect, but because the constant repetition would in English have proved intolerably awkward. I am indebted to many friends here and in Italy for help and for suggestions by which I have been able to profit; and among these I should wish to mention my friend Carlo Placci, the author of *Un Furto*, for his kind encouragement and assistance.

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

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This singularly brilliant and successful young poet was born in 1864 *on the yacht 'Irene,' on the waters of that Adriatic whose surges often seem to echo in his verse. That was not far from Pescara in the Abruzzi. He was educated chiefly at Prato, and, having a natural inclination for art, was taught that of painting, his chief models being Fra Filippo Lippi, Ghirlandajo, and Botticelli. This preraphaelite influence he believes to have had its effect upon his poetry, though his colouring is more Venetian than Florentine, at least in his earlier work As a boy at school, he hated poetry, and, being set to write fifty-two lines on the subject of the Thermopylæ, succeeded after much effort in producing three. One day—it was in* 1878—*Carducci's 'Odi barbare' fell into his hands; he read them, and the next day he was a poet. In* 1879, *being then in his sixteenth year, he published 'Primo Vere'* (*Chieti, Ricci*), *with the motto, 'Mihi, Musis et paucis amicis.' It was, of course, pure Carducci: but of singular promise. In the 'Fanfulla della Domenica,' Giuseppe Chiarini gave the book high praise, and proclaimed d'Annunzio an 'enfant prodige.' That day he woke up to find himself famous.*

In 1880 *he went to Rome, where among the contributors to the 'Cronaca Bizantina,' published by Sommaruga* (*paper and publisher are now, alas! both memories*), *he came instantly to the front. Nay more, he became, in*

some degree, the head of a school the characteristics of which, to use his own words, were the abuse of colour, the employment of unusual expressions, and a great audacity in erotic description. His 'In Memoriam' (Pistoia, Niccolai) had appeared in 1880. *To his period of 'storm and stress' belongs the 'Canto Novo' (the new school do not write 'nuovo'), published by Sommaruga, Rome* 1882. *But the 'erotic' impulse reached its climax in* 1883, *by the publication of the 'Intermezzo di Rime' (Rome, Sommaruga), which was, for good and sufficient reasons, violently attacked on the score of morality. In the fierce controversy which followed, Chiarini, Panzacchi, and Nencioni took part.*

So far, d'Annunzio's career, considering his extreme youth, had been perhaps the most amazing series of triumphant successes that the last half-century has known in any country. What wonder if his head threatened to turn? And I have not mentioned his prose work, 'Terra Vergine,' published at that time. Still little more than a boy, he was already in the foremost ranks of the writers of his time.

He left Rome, and returned to his native mountains and sea, where he recovered the energies which had been endangered by excessive adulation. There he wrote, in prose and verse, the 'Libro delle Vergini,' 'San Pantaleone,' and 'Isaotta Guttadauro.'

To the violent revolutionist and realist in verse, succeeded the modern novelist with his analytical subtleties. 'Piacere' belongs to this period: in it, however, he continues to speak with that frankness to which it is permissible to give another name. It was followed by 'Giovanni Episcopo,' the 'Trionfo della Morte,' and 'L'Innocente,' the last of which must be to many minds a crowning offence. It is a novel of the modern French school, a

horror of realism. Yet in verse his latest impulses are against realism. The essence of poetry, he believes, is mystery, and the poet should give to mankind the record of things that they have never seen. 'I hold,' he writes, 'that the poetry of the future will have all the mystery and all the suggestiveness of great music.' And again: 'In lyric poetry the essential element is not the word: it is the music; it is not the word as letter, but the word as sound and rhythm.' And once more, 'the verse is everything.'

These are the doctrines which he is about to proclaim to the world in his forthcoming volume, to which he has given the delightful title of 'Margaritæ ante porcos.'

Meanwhile, he has written his 'L'Isottèo e la Chimera' (*Milan, Treves*, 1890) *and the 'Elegie Romane'* (*Bologna, Zanichelli*, 1892).

D'Annunzio is a genuine admirer of English poetry. He has for Shelley, in especial, a kind of religious worship, and after him he holds Keats, Tennyson, and Swinburne in high honour. These predilections will perhaps, to some extent, prepare English readers for the characteristic developments of his genius. To our minds, he suggests Swinburne more than any other of our poets. He began, as I have said, as a Carduccian; but the erotic and—pass me the word—licentious influence of Stecchetti soon made itself felt in his verse. In other words, he has abandoned the almost purely Italian and Latin paths of Carducci for the modern French movement, in Italy always a natural and generally a fatal tendency. But in his earlier work, with all its faults, there is a savour of the salt sea, a breath of mountain air, which is lacking in what he wrote in the intoxication of his Roman triumphs.

The rapid rise of d'Annunzio is, I repeat, one of the

most astounding phenomena of the century. He is not yet thirty years of age, and he stands second in rank, first in quantity of recent excellent production, among the writers of Italy. And this in a country where, twenty-five years ago, there was absolutely no demand for, and no market for poetry !

DEDICATION

TO E. Z.

O MAIDEN strange with great and wandering eyes
Mysterious, bright and deep as the sea is deep,
Fair maid, 'tis not for me to immortalise
That smile which in my songs I cannot keep!
And yet the rhymes of love that murmuring rise
Like the hum of a hive afar, and onward sweep,
Swarming the circle's bounds where magic lies,
Lull thee, white witch, into a dreamy sleep:

And while thou see'st, in delicate shades forlorn
Of mournful eve, the hill-top's outline flee,
Where whiffs of perfume o'er the wave are borne,

Thou dreamest of a skiff that sailing free
Enters the harbour's mouth by the breeze of morn,
'Mid opal surges of the violet sea.

(*Canto Novo.*)

EVENING IN MAY

NOW in the Mayday twilight
O'er the bright skies pearl-coloured clouds float through the emerald spaces,
While on the shore the wavelets
Lightly take hands, rise and subside, dance like enamoured naiads.

Never a sail is seen there ;
But with gay song swallows afar fleetly wing o'er the waters,
Stretched in long lines of shadow :
Sharp and acute odours of tar come on the freshening breezes.

Ah ! and the happy children,
Whom the sun first smiled on, whom first burned the malignant south wind,
Down the long sands are racing ;
Laughter and shouts mingle afar as of a band of seagulls.

Vesper of Maytime ending !
Now in my heart sweetly the rhymes buzz like a swarming beehive ;
Vesper, to thee made sacred,
Bend to my yoke, quivering still, leaping, the sapphic verses,

Bend to my yoke, quiescent !
Beautiful girls, sunburnt and bright, magical songs are singing—
Now that the lunar crescent
Rises o'er hills Samnite afar, set the loud echoes ringing !

(*Canto Novo*, i. 14.)

'O FALCE DI LUNA CALANTE'

O SICKLE of moonlight declining
That shinest o'er waters deserted,
O sickle of silver, what harvest of visions
Is waving down here, thy mild lustre beneath !

Ephemeral breathing of foliage,
Of flowers, of waves from the forest,
Goes forth to the ocean ; no cry and no singing,
No sound through the infinite silences goes.

Oppressed with its loves and its pleasures,
The life of the world lies in slumber ;
O sickle declining, what harvest of visions
Is waving down here, thy mild lustre beneath !

(*Canto Novo*, ii. 10.)

SONNET

THE humming rhymes swarm in my sleepy brain
Here where the sunbeams fierce, remorseless, beat,
Unceasing, like some jewelled glittering train
Of emerald scarabs with foul food replete.
Here with parched, eager lips I seek to gain
A little shade where drooping branches meet :
In front the Adrian sea, a silent plain,
Glares, all one dazzle of terrific heat.

The sea-mews vanish far beneath the glow
Malignant, motionless, of torrid day,
Without a cry, in white lines quivering ong ;

And now and then, as salt sea-breezes blow,
Like voices of men shipwrecked far away,
Quiver and shake the weary wings of song.

(*Canto Novo*, iii. 1.)

BY TRECCATI MARSH

I

HERE by Treccati marsh in circle stand
The crooked trees with broken boughs outspread,
Seeming fantastic shapes, in grim command
Over the croaking frogs a shadowing dread.
The sun through ensanguined mists sends out a brand
That strikes malignant sparks from waters dead,
While up from the putrid scum an exiled band
Of vampire bats before the sun are fled.

A boy with wild grey eyes sees far away
Across the southern sky, with vague unease,
In wedge-shaped flight, the wild-ducks flit and stray—

O who will give him back the Illyrian breeze
Fresh on the wrinkling waves in nights of May,
And pungent sea-weed smells o'er scented seas?

II

THERE comes from far across the slumbrous air
A melancholy song on the winds astray:
There is in it the cry of an anguished care,
And the wan desire no earthly hope can stay:

There is the slimy cold of the serpent's lair,
That round the reeds entwined awaits its prey,
And the fevered shudder which in his death-despair
Glides through the sick man's veins, like a snake,
away.

Breathless he listens ; then with a sudden pain
He lays his pale face down ; as the pulses beat,
He feels the choking blood to his hot throat fly—

O for a breath of air from the breezy main
To cool his weary lungs in the summer heat,
One breath alone, and then—and then to die !

(*Canto Novo*, iii. 5.)

FOUR SONNETS

I

He was a love-child. In his gloomy eye
Burned flames of desperate hatred, prompt to glow,
Like lurid gleams of sunset from the sky
Fallen in foul waters of a ditch below ;
Pale, lean he was : his red hair stood up high
Over his head deformed and marked with woe,
And his misshapen body made awry
As if from stone hewn by an axe's blow.

And yet— ! None knew his heart-beats in the night,
None saw his burning tears, none heard him weep
Tears breaking his poor heart, in youth's despite,

When o'er the deck broke from the odorous deep
Vast waves of perfume 'neath the full moonlight,
And nought was heard save long-drawn breaths of sleep.

II

Ah, none! She passes o'er the sands of gold,
Singing a song, and with the sunlight crowned;
Given to the Loves her ample breasts unfold,
Given to the winds her tresses flow unbound.
Joyous with youth her honest eyes and bold,
Blue like the tropic skies, seek all around
Fancies and dreams, while to the heavens out-rolled
O'er the opal sea her joyous songs resound.

He breathless, quivering with passions vain,
Crouched in the boat along the swaying keel,
Holds in his hands his temples filled with pain—

'See to the nets!' the skipper's orders peal,
As he kicks him where he lies. And o'er the main
Her jocund songs arise, rebound and wheel.

III

The song said: 'Sea-weeds! flowers o' the ample sea!
Down in the waters green the mermaids dwell
In gardens coralline, where mansions be,
Built for fair maids who love their sweethearts well.'

The song said : 'Flower of may on the hawthorn tree !
There is a grotto made of many a shell,
Deep in the waters blue, a home of glee
Built for fair maids who love's sweet story tell.'

And Rufus thought to himself : 'I am a cur !
For me there is no smile for dear love's sake,
And never a kiss for me ! I am a cur !

'Up ! draw the bridle tight ! I work and ache ;
My blood I sell for bread, while none demur :
Yet—if one day the worn-out cord should break ?'

IV

The murderer climbed the cliff with hurrying feet,
With pale and anxious face, with aching head,
Like a wild beast struck mad in the summer heat,
Grasping the guilty knife still dripping red.
The angry sea-gulls in battalions fleet
Raised o'er the crags their clamorous shout, and fled ;
And the death-cry shook far off a lugger's sheet
As he hurled himself to the wave that onward sped.

Far echoed o'er the golden sands the sound
Of human labour : mournful and unblest,
Voices of women surged along the ground ;

And tossed upon the sea's sublime unrest,
On emerald deeps with zones of glory crowned,
A corpse turned to the sun its shattered breast.

(*Canto Novo*, iii. 7.)

SONNET

BENEATH the white full-moon the murmuring seas
Send songs of love across the pine-tree glade ;
The moonlight filtering through the dome-topped trees
Fills with weird life the vast and secret shade ;
A fresh salt perfume on the Illyrian breeze
From sea-weeds on the rocks is hither swayed,
While my sad heart, worn out and ill at ease,
A wild poetic longing doth invade.

But now more joyous still the love-songs flow
O'er waves of silver sea ; from pine to pine
A sweet name echoes in the winds that blow,

And hovering through yon spaces diamantine,
A phantom fair with silent flight and slow
Smiles on me from its great-orbed eyes divine.

(*Canto Novo*, iii. 11.)

TWO SONNETS

I

AT times exhausted by the pains austere
Of long night-labours with success uncrowned,
I lean my head upon my books, and hear
The sea that bellows through the night profound ;

And in the northern wind a sudden fear
Destroys each fairest dream my heart has found,
When all my sweetest visions disappear,
And doubt and cold and the void have hemmed me round :

Then think I often of a great ship lost,
With shattered keel, in the whirlwind's storm and stress,
Alone 'twixt sea and heaven, from land afar :

I think of the shipwrecked men that, tempest-tossed,
Helpless and hopeless in their last distress,
Despairing cling to the last remaining spar.

II

AGAIN ! again ! on the remaining mast
Like a living bunch of fruit on the tempest swayed,
The shipwrecked men upon the whirlwind cast
Utter their desperate cries and shout for aid.
In vain ! in vain ! The black hull sinks at last,
A horrid bier, by vain hopes undelayed,
Deep in the roaring waves where, dense and vast,
A bank of sea-weed lurks in silent shade.

The cuttlefish shall watch with hungry eyes,
With horrible eyes, with yellowish eyes and grim,
That tragic agony of life that dies :

Then, in a play of shadows strange and dim,
Entwined around men's bodies serpent-wise,
Long tentacles shall seize each human limb.

(*Canto Novo*, iii. 15.)

PRELUDE

As from corrupted flesh the over-bold
Young vines in dense luxuriance rankly grow,
And strange weird plants their horrid buds unfold
O'er the foul rotting of a corpse below ;

As spreading crimson flowers with centred gold
Like the fresh blood of recent wounds o'erflow,
Where vile enormous chrysalids are rolled
In the young leaves, and cruel blossoms blow :

E'en so within my heart malignant flowers
Of verse swell forth : the leaves in fearful gloom
Exhale a sinister scent of human breath.

Lured by the radiance of the blood-red bowers,
The unconscious hand is stretched to pluck the bloom,
And the sharp poison fills the veins with death.

(*Intermezzo di Rime*, i.)

SADNESS OF A NIGHT IN SPRING

I

GREAT Mother Earth, moved by the sunlit hour,
In her inmost mind revolves the things to be.
Obscure and terrible is her slumbering power.

All shapes wherewith the sacred midnight teems
Form but one Shape immense which none may see.
Composed in peace, the mighty Mother dreams.

Silent, the stars divine brood o'er her sleep.
She breathes the breath of worlds, the breath of all:
And through the night I hear her bosom deep
With long-drawn sighs suspire and rise and fall.

II

Since o'er the hills the moon her light hath spent,
The stars are raining down, immortal tears,
Through the profound and humid night intent.

Slow, silent tears, of sorrow a silent rain,
The stars rain through the ether. From what spheres?
What hidden eyes are grieving for our pain?

For human hearts what pity from above?
Pity for us from the unbounded heaven!
E'en thou, perchance, our far-off secret love
Tears so divinely sweet hast never given.

III

Within my weary soul tumultuous breath
Rises from warring dreams : new pains reveal
The vague desires that bear successive sway.

Mute are my lips, as though the hand of Death,
Passing, had placed thereon its icy seal ;
And in the soul the last hope dies away.

Vain, vain for me the Dawn's awakening fires !
The flesh is weary, and the soul expires.

IV

Say, whither tend the stars in chorus slow?
hey pass through vales of shadow to the Day.
Soul, join thyself with them where they must go !

The vale of shadows ends with golden gates ;
Streams of oblivion murmur by the way,
And on the threshold Death refulgent waits ;

Waits on the threshold, prompt to ope the door.
Soul, follow thou the stars that disappear !
Sweet be it, with their light, to be no more :
Sign that the longed-for Day at last is near.

(*La Chimera.*)

ALESSANDRO ARNABOLDI

ALESSANDRO ARNABOLDI

Born at Milan on the 19*th December* 1827, *Arnaboldi was educated at the University of Pavia, where he obtained the degree of Doctor of Laws. Although received as an advocate, he does not practise in the Courts, but entered at an early age into administrative employment, from which, however, being possessed of a competence, he has long ago retired in order to give himself up to literary pursuits.*

His first appearance in public as a poet was in 1847, *on the occasion of a monument being erected to the poet Parini; but this first essay, though well received, was followed by a silence of many years. In* 1872 *he published his earliest volume of collected verse* ('*Versi*,' *Milan, Paolo Carrara*), *which at once placed him among the first writers of the day, and was very highly praised in the* '*Quarterly Review*' *for October* 1877. *A translation of his* '*Sera d'un primo Novembre*' *appeared in Mr. Eugene Lee-Hamilton's* '*Poems and Transcripts:*' *others have had the peculiar honour of being translated into Czech by the poet Jaroslaw Vrchlicky.*

In 1888 *were published his* '*Nuovi Versi*' (*Milan, Fratelli Dumolard*), *which were also received with applause; and he is now engaged on a version of Coleridge's* '*Ancient Mariner.*' *Unfortunately, his weak eyesight has been a great and serious obstacle to his literary labours.*

As might be anticipated from a writer whose style was formed during a period of literary transition, Arnaboldi does not belong exclusively to any one school. He has not entirely renounced the Romantic tendencies which were dominant in his youth, and has refused to throw himself in with the pronounced naturalism of the more advanced 'veristi,' or even with the neo-paganism of which Carducci is the chief exponent. The new classical influence shows itself, in his verse, chiefly in the chiselled perfection of the form: he is more notable, perhaps, for artistic finish than for strength or inspiring passion. In his poetry, says the eminent critic Giuseppe Chiarini, 'life is a serious thing, and the office of the poet in life is a loftily moral one. . . . Arnaboldi's poetry is often, in its best portions, grave, meditative, and at times almost oratorical;' and he goes on to speak of a 'sympathetic understanding of nature and humanity' as the essential quality of his verse.

RHAMSES II

GREECE as Sesostris honoured thee,
Whose soul superb soared once on conquering wings
O'er Asia whelmed and desolate,
Rhamses, thou greatest of Egyptian kings!

For thrice ten ages sepulchred,
Swathed in protecting bonds, in scented gloom
Waiting the resurrection-day,
Thy sacred form lay safely in the tomb;

In darkness it was slumbering
Profound, while followed down the eternal ways
Each Cæsar of the decadence,
Born ages after thy forgotten days;

Ay, in its glory slumbering
Already, ere the grand old warrior-priest
Dreamed of a home for Israel
Over the Red Sea waves, i' the distant East:

And yesterday audaciously
Barbarian moderns tore thee from thy rest;
Turbaned Arabian sectaries
Unwound the linens from thy kingly breast;

Tomb-breaking and irreverent,
They bore thy royal form profanely bare,
Numbered and basely ticketed,
Into the vile museum's vulgar glare;

Where glances unintelligent
Of ignorant tourists scan thee, or the smiles
Of knowledge-grubbing scientists,
Amid the sacred cats and crocodiles.

Ah ! for thy Cushite cavalry
To avenge the insults of this Asian horde !
For the chariots irresistible
Wherefrom sublime thy heroes swung the sword !

In vain ! in greater majesty
Than e'en thine own, hath risen a Power of might,
Science, probing the mysteries
Of foregone ages with remorseless light ;

Nor will she bow in reverence
To vanish'd grandeurs of forgotten Time,
Over thee too victorious,
Thou vaunted glory of the Egyptian prime !

But when thy cycle culminates,
What indignation thine, what fierce disdain,
When at the nod omnipotent
Of Phtha Divine thy bones should rise again !

Vainly thy soul re-immigrant
Shall seek its former flesh, its home of power ;
The whirlwind of humanity
What seem'd eternal shatters in an hour.

(*Nuovi Versi*, bk. ii.)

ALFREDO BACCELLI

ALFREDO BACCELLI

The son of Guido Baccelli, a famous Roman doctor and professor (of Florentine lineage), who was a member of Parliament, and at one time Minister of Public Instruction, Alfredo was born in Rome in 1863, *and pursued his studies in the University of that city, where he had a brilliant career, and became Doctor of Laws in* 1887 *and of Letters in* 1888, *in both cases with special honours. He is an advocate by profession, and also a distinguished journalist and man of letters. He has been either editor of, or a principal contributor to, most of the leading literary periodicals, such as the 'Fanfulla della Domenica,' 'Natura ed Arte,' and the 'Cronaca Bizantina.' He printed in* 1881 *an ode to Alfredo Cappellini, but practically made his début as a poet in* 1883 *by the publication of 'Germina,' in which, as is usual with the younger generation of Italian poets, the influence of Carducci makes itself strongly felt; and in* 1885 *he chose the 'barbarous' sapphics as the vehicle for his poem 'Diva Natura,' which gave rise to an interesting controversy in which Nencioni and Panzacchi took part. In this work Baccelli depicts the eternal struggle between man and nature, and the victories of science, believing that the poetry of the age should be brought into conformity with its scientific spirit. This curious experiment in scientific poetry somewhat naturally brought upon him the accusation of attempting to revive the horrors (literarily*

speaking) of didactic verse—an accusation against which he defended himself with vigour. As a matter of fact, there is in 'Diva Natura' more poetry than science or didactics. It is divided into five cantos: 'Fire,' 'Waters,' 'Winds,' 'Rocks,' and 'Man.' 'Sacuntala,' a lyrical drama, followed in 1888, *as well as 'La leggenda del cuore,' the eternal story of love placed in a fantastic mythological framework. A volume entitled 'Vittime e Ribelli' is announced for publication this autumn. Baccelli has also made valuable contributions to literary criticism.*

In 'Diva Natura,' which so far must be looked upon as his chief title to recognition as a poet, Baccelli has ceased to be an imitator, and has a style of his own. He handles the Italian sapphic with ease and freedom, and has both precision of literary form and wealth of colour. Of Carducci he has retained what indeed constitutes the lasting influence of that master's teaching—the union of classical beauty, elegance, and precision with the informing spirit of what is, somewhat awkwardly, styled modernity.

THE BIRTH OF FIRE

STILL on the rocky cones of towering mountains
Gleamed, like a radiant scintillating ocean,
The quivering tremor of enormous glaciers
Struck by the sunlight.

And shapeless monsters from the gloomy forests,
Vast forms unsightly, formidable, hairy,
Like to uprooted peaks of mountains moving,
Heavily wandered.

There, terror-stricken, stupefied with torpor,
Man in the caverns where the rumorous waters
Were hoarsely murmuring, on the ground procumbent
Muttered his prayer.

'Dazzling circle, who thro' vaults of azure
Takest thy journey, with revolving glory
Wheeling thine ardours, and o'er mountains rising
Banishest darkness;

'O King of daylight, gorgeously resplendent!
In whom, as men do in the limpid streamlets,
The exalted armies of the gods immortal
Mirror their faces;

'Send but a shaft down from thy crown of glory :
Let but one ray fall from thy golden tresses ;
O fount of light and life, send us it whirling
Swift through the ether !'

He said, and straightway from the crystal heavens,
Through clouds of darkness, phosphorescent lightning
Darting contorted, on the shaggy woodlands
Burst like a meteor.

The yearning forest stretched out arms to meet it,
And quivered, shaking in the fierce embraces :
So was I born, while thunderclaps proclaimed me
Heaven-descended.

(*Diva Natura : Canto del Foco.*)

VITTORIO BETTELONI

VITTORIO BETTELONI

Vittorio, son of the eminent poet Cesare Betteloni, was born at Verona in 1840, *and was educated at Como and at the University of Pisa. He is now Professor of Italian Literature and History in the Female College of his native town.*

After a first attempt, a novel in 'ottava rima' entitled 'L'Ombra dello Sposo' (1866), *Betteloni published 'In Primavera'* (*Milan, Treves*, 1869), *and thereby placed himself among the poets of Italy. In* 1880 *appeared the 'Nuovi Versi'* (*Bologna, Zanichelli*), *with an appreciative introduction by Carducci. Betteloni has translated the first six cantos of 'Don Juan'* (*in 'ottava rima'*); *Hamerling's 'Ahasver in Rom;' and, in hexameters, Goethe's 'Hermann und Dorothea.'*

Betteloni's work represents one aspect of the transition period. In his youth, Romanticism, as understood in Italy, had devoured all poetry and left only a convention; but the study of the Greek and Latin poets, instilled into his mind by his father, 'saved him from Romanticism.' Yet in 1869 *the new classical movement can hardly be said to have begun, so far as the general public was concerned; and he was not destined to be its head, nor even to follow closely upon the lines which it has taken. But he contributed largely to the strength of the revolt against the Romantic school, and his 'Primavera' gave an impulse to the onward movement, which is perhaps*

his most eminent service to literature. Aleardi, also a Veronese, who was a personal friend of Cesare and a patron of Vittorio Betteloni, was then one of the most eminent poets of Italy—I should have said the most popular; but poetry, thanks to politics and Romanticism, was not popular at that time. And Aleardi was so much offended by the publication of his young friend's volume of verse, that for some time he refused to recognise him.

'In Primavera,' in fact, was at once the signal and the first-fruits of a reaction which has now long since changed its path and become a triumphal progress. Carducci has acknowledged the influence which Betteloni exercised in his moment—a moment now, perhaps, forgotten. But the promise of 'Primavera' has hardly been realised. Betteloni has not held his own in the struggle. His muse was the first to fling off the trappings of Romanticism, but it found no glorious raiment to take their place: it has remained bare, and, I am afraid, forsaken. His style wants loftiness, and it lacks depth; it attains often the simplicity of great verse, but oftener still it expresses only the simpleness of the diurnal commonplace.

'WHEN WE WERE YOUNG'

THEN slowly was I wont to follow you
As a young lover will, content to spy
The form beloved, far off, and so to do
As to deceive the casual passers-by.

And you with cautious and suspectful mien,
As if no thought of me had crossed your mind,
Now and again, hoping yourself unseen,
Would turn your face—not oft—and glance behind ;

And yet not very seldom, truth to say,
Because you feared lest I should be too slow,
Or lest perchance I should mistake the way,
Or meet some friend who would not let me go.

Then, when you reached the threshold of your home,
For one short moment you would pause, and stay ;
Quickly around your loving glance would roam,
To see if I were near or far away.

Then swiftly up the stair your feet would fly,
And on the terrace you would pause awhile ;
Slow, very slowly would I saunter by ;
And then you made me happy with a smile.

(*In Primavera : Canzoniere dei Vent' anni.*)

ERSILIO BICCI

ERSILIO BICCI

Born at Pisa in 1845, *Ersilio Bicci studied at Florence, whither his family had moved after the events of the year* 1849, *in which his father had taken part. Beginning life in a printer's office, Bicci subsequently became an employé of the Florentine municipality. Passing, however, into the scholastic profession, he has held posts in various provinces of Italy, and since* 1890 *is Professor of Italian literature in the Licei Dante and Toscanelli at Florence.*

Professor Bicci is one of the opponents of the 'Odi Barbare,' believing that Greek and Latin metres, however freely treated, are not adapted to the forms and spirit of modern languages. He aims at simplicity, and wishes poetry to be understood by the people generally. Giusti is one of his favourite poets, and he is preparing for the press an edition of that poet's works; he has also produced editions of Italian classical authors for the use of schools.

The following characteristic piece is taken from his 'Nuovi Versi' (*Lecce, Ammirato,* 1882).

CONTEMPT

When I pass singing, singing on my way,
I think not, dream not of her—not indeed!
Burns she with jealousy? well, well! she may;
I mind my own affairs, and give no heed.
If in my song she fancy that she hears
Some note of sadness or some trace of tears,
It is my whim—not that my heart is sore!
For as to that, I care for her no more.

And if they say I drive the cynic's trade,
It is Time's fault, not hers who love betrayed;

Or that I call on Death where'er I rove,
What matters that to her?—Am I her love?

But if I meet her with Luigi, know
She to her grave—I to the gallows go.

(*Nuovi Versi.*)

ARRIGO BOITO

ARRIGO BOITO

This illustrious musician, known all over the world as the author and composer of 'Mefistofele,' was born at Padua in 1842, *and studied music at the Milan Conservatoire. This is not the place to speak of the fame which he has acquired in that art, or of the fortunes of his celebrated 'mystic' opera. In the field of letters he has had a distinguished career, belonging to that poetic school which found its chief master in Emilio Praga, who was his personal friend: a school which sought for novelty and freedom in realism pushed to its extreme, and in strange and cunning expedients of form and language. In collaboration with Praga, he wrote for the theatre 'Le madri galanti,' which met with an unfavourable reception; in* 1877, *he published a volume of verse entitled 'Il Libro dei Versi e Re Orso,' now long out of print; and he has written the librettos of 'La Gioconda' for Ponchielli's music, of 'Ero e Leandro'* (*under the anagram of 'Tobia Gorrio'*) *for Bottesini, of 'Otello' and 'Falstaff' for Verdi, and of his own operas 'Mefistofele' and 'Nerone,' the latter of which is eagerly looked for.*

The strong individuality, the almost perverse ingenuity of diction, the rapid and vigorous metres, and the strange experiments in verse, which, together with eloquence, vivid colouring, and a peculiar terseness of style, have given Boito an unique position among living poets, are at the same time the despair of a would-be translator.

Poetry written in certain of the shorter and quicker lyrical metres of Italian poetry (as those know to their cost who have attempted versions of Carducci's 'Inno a Satana') can usually only be rendered into another language by paraphrase, by very great laxity of translation, or by the abandonment of the original metre. When to the problem of uniting fidelity of translation with the maintenance of a difficult short and rapid verse, is added that 'curiosité pittoresque du vocabulaire' which is itself strange and unfamiliar even in the original tongue, it is perhaps pardonable for a foreigner to confess himself defeated. To reproduce, for instance, the rhymes 'florido lido' and 'rorido nido,' and at the same time to translate the words and keep to the metre, is beyond the possibilities of translation; and this is only one instance among many.

SONNET FROM 'FALSTAFF'

FENTON

Now Song from human lips ecstatic flies
  Soaring o'er silences of Night in sleep,
  And seeks with other lips its tryst to keep,
Which answer it again in tuneful guise.

Alone no more, the joyous voice replies
  In mystic melodies vibrating deep,
  While through the enamoured air the concords sweep
Of wedded notes returned to re-arise.

Then as it sounds once more, still Song is fain
  To reunite that which must break its tune.

Lips long desired, that to my kiss reply !
  Of mouth so kissed the fortune shall not wane.

ANNE (*within, far away*)

Nay, rather it renews as doth the moon.

FENTON (*moving quickly to meet her*)

Yet on the meeting lips the song must die.

(*Falsta* , act iii. pt. 2.)

ALINDA BONACCI-BRUNAMONTI

ALINDA BONACCI-BRUNAMONTI

Maria Alinda Bonacci, the most widely known of the poetesses of Italy, was born in 1842 *at Perugia, where she has continued to reside since her marriage with Professor Pietro Brunamonti, of that University. Her father, who was also a Perugian professor of distinguished literary ability, gave her an education greatly in advance of that usually conceded to her sex in Italy, or indeed, at that time, elsewhere. At nine years of age she is said to have known a great part of the 'Divina Commedia' by heart; at eleven she read Virgil with ease, and she has subsequently taught herself Greek. She was only fourteen when her first 'Raccolta di Versi' saw the light, and created no small sensation. These verses were of course somewhat imitative and immature: another Raccolta, published on the occasion of her marriage, gave proof of her advanced study and poetical power. Meanwhile the vicissitudes of the great national struggle for freedom inspired her 'Canti Nazionali,' which may be said to extend over the period* 1859-1878. *An enlarged reissue of her poems appeared in* 1875 (*'Canti,' Florence, Le Monnier*), *and a new volume was published in* 1887 *under the title of 'Nuovi Canti' (Città di Castello, Lapi).*

Apart from the literary quality displayed in verse often purely classical in form, Signora Brunamonti excels chiefly in the exposition of simple passion and religious fervour. Imagination and the love of Nature, aided and disciplined by profound study, have contributed in her to the formation of a poetical manner of which perhaps the most striking characteristic is the union of the patriotic impulse with the steadfast light of spiritual faith.

THE CLOCK-TOWER

Like the drip of slow water descending
On the depths of its porphyry bower,
The bronze stroke of Time forth is sending
Each equal monotonous hour.
Of Time the beginning and ending
We know not, though Time be our dower.
Can we read in its last open pages
The thoughts of the sepulchred ages?

Perpetually murmur and quiver
The voices of years that have flown;
They recall through the spaces for ever
Generations long-linked with our own.
So the stars in the midnight that shiver
From zones of deep heavens unknown
Pass on through the silences shining,
Their skein of bright silver untwining.

Of all that yet lives, or is dying,
The bell can some image retain;
A dirge of dim echoes set flying
In the hour when the day 'gins to wane,
Recalling lost memories, crying
Of hope to the nations in pain,
One sound through the centuries pealing
One deathless sweet Hope is revealing.

(*Microcosmo: Voci vespertine.*)

LUIGI CAPUANA

LUIGI CAPUANA

At once novelist, critic, dramatist, poet, and writer of popular tales for the young, Capuana is best known in the first of these capacities, as the author of 'Profili di Donne,' 'Storia fosca,' and other collections of short stories, but especially for his 'Giacinta' (1879), *described as a naturalistic novel, which had a great success and was dramatised by the author himself.*

Born at Mineo, in the province of Catania, in the year 1839 (*28th May*), *Luigi Capuana is chiefly self-educated. His earliest attempts in the field of literature were 'Garibaldi,' a dramatic legend in three cantos; and 'Vanitas Vanitatum,' fourteen sonnets, in the last of which he bade farewell to the Muse. This was before* 1864, *but it was not till* 1877 *that his name became widely known; he was then on the staff of the 'Corriere della Sera' of Milan. The greater part of his work is in prose, but he has had several relapses into verse, among which his parodies of Mario Rapisardi's 'Lucifero' and 'Giobbe' may be mentioned. A more serious contribution to poetical literature is his curious volume of 'Semiritmi'* (*Milan, Treves,* 1888), *in which he makes essay of various rhythmical forms which approach the nature of measured prose, and remind the English reader of Walt Whitman, though without the American author's freedom and 'verve.' Of these he has himself said: 'In these days when many volumes of verse are published in which there*

is little or no poetry, would it not be at least curious to write a volume of poetical compositions with little or no verse?'

Of late he has been writing, under the title of 'Istantanee,' brief moments or bursts of song, which have not yet been collected into a volume, but of which his courtesy has allowed me to give a specimen.

A new edition of his poems, including many hitherto unpublished, will shortly appear with the title, 'Ritmi e Semiritmi.'

In a general view of his work, Capuana must be classed among the realistic writers: he has, however, the modern tendency towards psychology, and perhaps that vague mysticism which in this age sometimes takes the place of the dethroned idealism. But he cannot be said to belong to any one recognised school: least of all in his verse, of which the originality of form is by no means the only merit; for he has great eloquence and descriptive power. In the following versions, I have not always found it easy to reproduce the exact metre, which is, as might be expected from 'semi-rhythms,' somewhat difficult to ascertain; but I have endeavoured to give the metrical effect.

SUB UMBRA

When I half-close in silences of night
The much-imagining eyes that still desire
Landscapes for ever green, skies ever clear,

I see you once again, retreat unknown,
Where in an arch the sacred olives stretched,
Rustling in undertones, their ashy boughs.

There on a carpet of green grasses, starred
With corn-chrysanthemums and daisies white,
Fell like a rainshower tremulous flakes of gold:

And lighted up with unexpected fire
The unstable wings of fireflies, and the sheen
Of emerald insects buzzing in the flowers.

Fell like a shower, in tremulous flakes of gold,
The sunlight through the boughs, and seemed to be
Songs of cicalas flaming through the air.

Divine, Hellenic, the cicalas sang,
Deceived by sunlight falling from on high,
They who adore the sunburnt stubbly plain:

And the green grass, protected by the boughs,
The gold chrysanthemums, and daisies white,
Astonished, heard the unfamiliar song.

Oh, cool and calm of that unknown retreat,
Where with my love white-garmented I drank,
Voluptuous, the joy of being alive !

In generous pulsings to the temples white,
Her blood was beating with vibrating rhythm,
While roseate splendours shone upon her cheeks,

And smiles upon her lips refulgent-red,
Smiles in her eyeballs swimming with desire,
Vague wishes, unattainable desires.

Her sweet speech trembled in her voice, and broke,
Like to a prayer arising from the deep
Profundities of earth, whereon we two,

Like flowers and grass, seemed to be taking root,
Absorbing the exuberant overflow
Of life, green wave wherein to drown were sweet.

Between the spreading branches, clear and bright.
The coruscating ether, blue, profound,
Stretched boundless, incommensurably far.

We, lying on the dewy grass at ease,
Without a thought, in the great calm absorbed,
Breathed-in the full voluptuous joy of life ;

Each for himself, without a kiss, a word,
With egoism intense, beneath the weight,
The sacred weight, O Nature, of thy breath !—

Dream, O my dream ! how far thou art away !

(*Semiritmi.*)

CAMEO

HERE, near the crystal fountain murmuring lightly,
Under the shadowing boughs of laurel and myrtle-blossom,
Endymion is sleeping,
Stretched on the young grass, fair like a god of Olympus !

Silent around him the lisp of the murmurous foliage ;
Nor dare they to shake their wings, the silenced meridian zephyrs:
O'er him Diana is gazing
Irresolute, leant on her bending bow, and the bosom

White of the maiden Goddess is rising, swelling ;
While with a sign of her hand she restrains at a distance her faithful
Hounds alert for the hunting,
Wagging their tails, and gazing upon her intently.

(*Semiritmi.*)

PASSIO DOMINI NOSTRI

(*Fragment of a Mystery*)

PILATE'S WIFE

I HAVE dreamed an evil dream :
I dreamed of a blood-filled sky ;
And the veil of the temple
Was rent in twain.

And the sun and the moon went out,
And the stars in the heaven went out ;
And I heard a voice crying aloud :
'The Most Just is of Pilate condemned.'

PILATE

My mind is ill at ease :
I find no fault in this Nazarene.
He is doubtless out of his mind,
For he deems himself Son of God.

But I will make question of him
Again for the last time ; then
I will deliver him unto the priests,
And wash my hands of him.

PILATE'S WIFE

Woe, O my lord, to who contemns
The fate-foretelling voices of the dreams !
They are the Gods, admonishing us
In the twilight hours of morn.

Wherefore wash thy hands of him,
If that Just One is innocent ?

PILATE

When I shall have washed my hands of him
I shall have nought more to do therewith.

Woman, leave me in peace ;
For I am busied with many matters :
And dreams are a thing that is vain,
A vanishing mist that flies before the sun.

Images, phantoms, escaped
From the inmost cells of the brain,
They wander about the mind
While reason slumbers and sleeps.

Or perchance they are vain deceits
Of the humours hot and cold,
Or whims of perturbing spirits
That wander in wastes of the night.

But hither the high priest cometh ;
Leave me alone with him.
Hearest thou not the people without
Roaring like a storm-swept sea?

THE JEWS

His blood be on us ! on our heads !
On our children's heads, his blood !
Let his blood fall ! his blood !
Let his blood fall !

PILATE

O superstitious people ! may the Gods
Bend listening ears, and hear !

THE JEWS

Release unto us Barabbas!
Away with this man! let him die!

(*Semiritmi.*)

PATERNOSTER

'Our Father—Ave Mary!'—So I pray,
As though for me Doubt had no sting at all.
What matter though my prayer should lose the way,
And find no passage to a listening ear?
Ah, it is something, thus for help to call,
E'en when one knows that nobody will hear.

(*Istantanee.*)

GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI

(ENOTRIO ROMANO)

GIOSUÈ CARDUCCI

The future head of the Neo-classical school in Italian poetry was born on the 27th July 1836 *at Valdicastello, near Pietrasanta in Tuscany, of an ancient family descended from Francesco Carducci, gonfalonier of Florence. He spent his earlier years in the Pisan Maremma, where his father practised as a physician. Here he learned to appreciate Virgil and the Latin classics generally; and in Italian literature, Dante, Tasso, and others; but he was brought up chiefly in the Romantic school, and his early favourites were Berchet, Giusti, and Manzoni, till an overdose of the latter (inflicted as a punishment) caused his first revulsion against the Manzonianism of the day; Giusti, however, was still his predilection. In* 1847, *at the age of eleven, he wrote his first verses, among which was an elegy on a pet owl.*

In the troubles of 1849, *his father lost his post and migrated to Florence, where Giosuè was placed to study at the Scuole Pie. Here he met with Enrico Nencioni, from whom he learned to love Leopardi, Lamartine, and Victor Hugo. After pursuing his studies at Pisa, Carducci went as teacher of rhetoric to San Miniato, where he made but a short stay, but where his first volume of 'Rime' appeared in* 1857. *Returning to Florence, he supported himself by giving private lessons and by*

writing for the literary periodicals. Here he became a prominent member of a companionship of young men who called themselves 'Gli Amici pedanti,' to which Giuseppe Chiarini also belonged, and whose chief aim in literature was that of restoring classical studies and forms to the supremacy from which they had been long displaced by a bastard and decaying Romanticism. This spirit of revolt manifested itself in their periodical, 'Il Poliziano,' which, for all its brilliancy, met the fate destined for those whom the gods love. For some years he was engaged in preparing editions of the Italian classics, such as Alfieri and Giusti, for Barbèra the publisher, and was for a short time teaching at Pistoia; but in 1860 *he began his long residence at Bologna, on his appointment to the chair of Italian Literature in that University. Here ends the period of his poetical production which is represented in later editions of his works by the 'Juvenilia,' written between* 1850 *and* 1860, *some of which are included in the 'Rime,' mentioned above. At Bologna he devoted himself from* 1861 *to* 1867 *to the duties of his post and to the classics, wishing, as he has himself said, 'to take a cold bath of erudition.' In* 1865, *however, was published at Pistoia, under the now famous pseudonym 'Enotrio Romano,' the still more famous Hymn to Satan ('Inno a Satana'), which had been written, at one sitting, in* 1863, *in brief 'sdrucciolo' metre of amazing force and vivacity. Satan is invoked as the undying, unconquerable spirit of freedom and progress:*

A te, de l' essere
Principio immenso,
Materia e spirito,
Ragione e senso;'

(*To thee, the immense Principle of all Being; matter and*

spirit, reason and sense); and the formidable outburst against Christianity, or rather the Mediæval Church, concludes with the lines:

'Salute, o Satana,
O ribellione,
O forza vindice
Della ragione!

Sacri a te salgano
Gl' incensi e i voti!
Hai vinto il Geova
De' sacerdoti.'

(Hail to thee, O Satan, O rebellion, O avenging force of reason! Sacred to thee let incense and vows arise, for thou hast vanquished the Jehovah of the priests.)

The reception which this war-song of Paganism met with at the hands of the clerics and their followers may easily be imagined; and Carducci and his admirers have, since then, somewhat modified, by authorised interpretations, the violence of the attack. Nevertheless, the Hymn to Satan remains the expression of a revolt against the asceticism and mysticism of Christianity, against the authority of the Church, against the obscurantism of the priests. I am not concerned to defend it; I do not even, for all its brilliancy, consider it truly representative of Carducci's genius; and with respect to its form, this appears to be the poet's own maturer judgment upon the youthful outburst which made him famous. Yet it is memorable as the first authoritative proclamation of that return to Nature and the love of Nature, here symbolised in Satan, which has become one of the great impulses of the new school, and which has led to the general revival of the classical spirit in Italy.

At Bologna, Carducci became the most illustrious of a group of notable writers such as are seldom to be found together in a provincial town, and which has included, among others, Enrico Panzacchi and Olindo Guerrini, better known as Lorenzo Stecchetti.

The 'Levia Gravia' appeared in 1867, *and mark a further progress of his art and of the movement which he had inaugurated. These were followed by the poems now classified as the 'Decennalia'* (1860-1870), *the 'Nuove Poesie di Enotrio Romano'* (*Imola, Galeati*, 1873), *and the 'Giambi ed epodi'* (*now so called in the edition of* 1882 : *Bologna, Zanichelli*). *Many of the poems included under these titles have been so variously distributed in different editions as to cause the student some little perplexity. A general edition of Carducci's works in prose and verse has now been published by Zanichelli of Bologna.*

Meanwhile the 'Odi barbare' had appeared (1877), *and had given rise to a long and fruitful controversy as to the possibility of reviving in Italian the classical metres which Rome had borrowed from Greece. The chief defence of the new departure is to be found in Giuseppe Chiarini's volume entitled 'I critici italiani e la metrica delle Odi barbare.' The 'Nuove Odi barbare' followed* (*Bologna, Zanichelli*, 1882), *and the 'Terze Odi barbare'* (*Bologna, Zanichelli*, 1889).

Carducci has written many works of criticism and literary history, and in his 'Confessioni e Battaglie' has given us some contributions towards his own biography, and some account of the controversies in which he has at various times been engaged. Of his political life it is needless to say more than that he began as a fervent Republican and as such was elected to the lower Chamber, but that he has latterly rallied to the defence of the

constitutional monarchy as represented by the House of Savoy. He is now a Senator of the Kingdom.

Strength and vigour of conception and of expression, abundant and facile eloquence, power of suggestion, melody now resonant and ringing, now subtle and delicate, exquisite finish and beauty of form, a rare mastery of metre, love of external nature and the power of representing it in its poetical aspects: these are some of the qualities of Carducci's genius. He is a realist of an entirely different school from that of French Zolaism; an artist essentially, not a photographer, his is the worship of the beautiful. His muse is never base, never morbid, and in this respect he differs widely from many who in Italy call themselves 'veristi.' He is of the Roman, even of the Hellenic—not of the French school. While both he and Stecchetti reject and assail Christianity, Carducci does not find comfort in licence: he seeks at once the high levels and the 'large utterance' of the early gods. He is the Pagan of Wordsworth's sonnet, realised, and the gods and nymphs live in his verse, a spiritual presence, enabling us to

> *'Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,*
> *Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.'*

Freedom and nobility in man's soul, beauty in external nature, are the informing influences in his poetry; and the aim of his art is to combine classical purity and perfection of form with the onward movement and the broadened vision of the modern spirit. So he sings in Horatian metres, or rather in their natural Italian equivalents, the death of Maximilian of Mexico ('Miramar'), or that of the Prince Imperial ('In Morte di Napoleone Eugenio'). The faults with which he is often reproached are those belonging to a movement which

embodies a reaction: thus his Neo-paganism makes him unjust to Christianity, and his worship of classic antiquity has sometimes caused him to be 'caviare to the general.' His vocabulary, truth to tell, seems to be somewhat overladen with Latinisms; but this is, in Italy, a healthy return to the sources of the language.

SONNET

ALONE my vessel passes, mid the cry
Of halcyons, on the stormy waters borne,
Swept on, by thunder of the billows torn,
Beneath the clamours of the lightening sky.

All Memories turn to that far shore gone by
Their faces wet with tears and sorrow-worn,
And all fair Hopes o'erthrown their glance forlorn
Cast on the splintered oars that broken lie.

Yet at the stern still doth my Genius stand,
While to the creaking masts he hearkeneth,
And cries o'er sea and sky his loud command :

'Row on ! row on ! O guides of desperate breath,
Toward cloudy ports of the forgetful land,
Toward whitening breakers of the reefs of death.'

(*Juvenilia*, bk. iii. 36.)

IN AN ALBUM

STILL do I see 'neath memory's pleasant sway
Your modest looks, sweet maids, and on each face
The smile that doth your down-bent features grace ;
And now my mind recalls the earlier day
When to me too Love seemed a thing divine ;
And with a sigh I see a white dress shine
And rustle through the flowers in the pale moonlight
While murmurs sweet I breathe to the air of night.

When the poor pilgrim, in a valley deep,
Fearful of lonely night on a stony road,
Lifts his tired eyes to the hill o'er which he strode
An hour gone by, and sees its summits keep
The splendour of the sun's departing ray,
He thinks of when began his weary way,
And of the springtime in his happy home,
And the evening fire that welcomed those that roam.

For the sun, the green sward and the amorous wind,
For the sweet harmonies through the world dispersed,
The sore heart sighs ; but me the winds accursed
Hurl back where living loves and hatred blind
Rage for a thousand years ; from the tomb rebound
Accents of fiery wrath, and the trumpets' sound.
Ah ! hear them not, sweet maids, but pure and gay,
Pluck ye the fleeting rose while yet 'tis day.

(*Levia Gravia*, i. 2.)

ROME

ONCE with thy locks upon the wind outspread,
Breast bare, and sea-blue eyes afire for war,
Thou didst the chariot urge ;—before thee far
Panic and fear with panting breath had fled :

The shadows of the helm upon thine head,
Like the fierce dazzle of an iron star,
Outran the winds ; behind thy swift-wheeled car
Hovered the dust of trampled empires dead.

Great Rome ! the nations vanquished by thy fame
Saw thus thine image in their ancient fears :
To-day thy regal locks a mitre's shame

Dishonours ; in thy hand bedewed with tears
The beads of prayer !—O once more with thy name
Affright the world and free the wearied years !

(*Levia Gravia*, ii. 28.)

TO THE SONNET

I

BRIEF and most ample song ! thee, light as dreams,
His thoughts in better worlds which earth o'ertower,
Hath Dante loved ; and thee mid flowers a flower
Hath Petrarch gathered by the running streams :

Thee too did oft with epic strength endower
Imprisoned Tasso ; thee that hand redeems
Which strove with marble till full-souled it beams,
For thee he shaped with slow and mightier power.

That Æschylus by Avon born again
Made thee, Art's pilgrim on an alien shore,
His hidden utterance of hidden pain :

The Anglian, Lusian Virgils loved thy strain,
But Bavius, mouthing verse with pompous roar,
Hates thee, O Sonnet : I but love thee more.

(*Levia Gravia*, xxi.)

II

FROM Dante's lips the Sonnet soared divine
On angels' wings through azure air and gold;
On Petrarch's 'twas the speech of hearts that pine,
A stream from heaven in murmuring verse outrolled.

The Mantuan nectar and the Venusine,
To Tibur granted by the Muse of old,
Torquato gave; a dart, a fiery sign,
Alfieri hurled it 'gainst the tyrant's hold.

The nightingale in Ugo's sweetest lays
Beneath the Ionian cypress made it ring,
Acanthus-blossomed, o'er his native bays;

And I, not sixth, but last, as joy I bring,
Tears, perfume, wrath, and Art, in lonely days
Its fame recall, as to the tombs I sing.

(*Rime Nuove*, ii.)

PANTHEISM

I TOLD it not, O vigilant stars, to you;
To thee, all-seeing sun, I made no moan;
Her name, the flower of all things fair and true,
Was echoed in my silent heart alone.

Yet now my secret star tells unto star,
Through the brown night, to some vague sphery tune ;
The great sun smiles at it, when, sinking far,
He whispers love to the white and rising moon.

On shadowy hills, on shores where life is gay,
Each bush repeats it to each flower that blows ;
The flitting birds sing, 'Poet grim and grey,
At last Love's honeyed dreams thy spirit knows.'

I told it not, yet heaven and earth repeat
The name beloved in sounds divine that swell,
And mid the acacia-blossom's perfume sweet
Murmurs the Spirit of All—'She loves thee well.'

(*Rime Nuove*, XXV.)

IN THE SQUARE OF SAN PETRONIO AT BOLOGNA ON A WINTER'S EVENING

RISES in frost of winter, gloomy and towered, Bologna,
While the mountain above smiles in the glimmer of snow.

This is the tranquil hour when the sun that is dying saluteth
Towers and fane to thee, sainted Petronius, raised.

Towers whose summits were touched by wings of the ages that vanished,
And of the solemn fane pinnacles lofty and lone.

Cold, adamantine, the heavens are a-gleam with dazzling
splendour ;
All the air like a veil, silver, diaphanous lies

Over the forum lightly, blending with colour the masses
Dark, which the weaponed hand once of our ancestors
built.

Up on the lofty heights the sun as it sinketh, delaying,
Pierces with languid smile violet mists of the night,

Which in the old grey stone, in the dusky vermilion
brickwork,
Seems to waken anew souls of the ages that passed,

So that a mournful desire in the frosty air is awakened—
Ah ! for the roseate Mays, warm in the perfume of eve,

When the beautiful maidens danced in the open places,
And with the conquered kings triumphing consuls
returned.

So do the joyful Muses turn to the resonant metre
Trembling with vain desire, seeking the beauty antique.

(*Odi barbare.*)

RUIT HORA

O NOW so long-desired, thou verdurous solitude,
Far from all rumour of mankind !
Hither we come companioned by two friends divine,
By wine and love, O Lydia.

Ah, see how laughs in sparkling goblets crystalline
Lyaeus, god eternal-young !
How in thy dazzling eyes, resplendent Lydia,
Love triumphs and unbinds himself !

Low down the sun peeps in beneath the trellised vine,
And rosily reflected gleams
Within my glass ; golden it shines, and tremulous,
Among thy tresses, Lydia.

Among thy raven tresses, O white Lydia,
One pale-hued rose is languishing ;
Softly upon my heart a sudden sadness falls,
Falls to restrain Love's rising fires.

Tell me, wherefore beneath the flaming sunset-sky
Mysterious lamentations moan
Up from the sea below ? Lydia, what songs are they
Yon pines unto each other sing ?

See with what deep desire yon darkening hills out-
stretch
Their summits to the sinking sun :
The shadow grows, and wraps them round ; they seem
to ask
The last sweet kiss, O Lydia.

I seek thy kisses when the shade envelops me,
Lyaeus, thou who givest joy ;
I seek thy loving eyes, resplendent Lydia,
When great Hyperion falls.

Now falls, now falls the imminent hour. O roseate lips,
Unclose: O blossom of the soul,
O flower of all desire, open thy petals wide:
Beloved arms, unclose yourselves.

(*Odi barbare.*)

TO THE STATUE OF VICTORY

IN THE RUINS OF THE TEMPLE OF VESPASIAN AT BRESCIA

Olympian maiden, did once thy favouring
Wings shake o'er down-bent helms of the peltastæ,
Who, leaning their knees to their bucklers,
Were awaiting with lances extended?

Or wert thou, cloud-borne, guiding the eagles, when,
Before the surging Marsian soldiery,
Thy splendour irradiate dazzled
The tumultous Parthian onset?

With folded pinions, thou stand'st magnificent,
Thy proud foot trampling on foemen helmeted;
The name of what conquering captain
Dost thou write on the resonant clipeus?

An archon's glory, who over tyranny
The laws of freedom mightily magnified?
A consul's, who widened the empire,
And the dread of Rome mighty in battle?

Could I but hear thee, as once in majesty,
Through Alpine tempests, call to the centuries :
'O nations ! here Italy standeth,
Her renown and her birthright avenging !'

But meanwhile Lydia, the flow'rets gathering
Which drear October spreads like a memory
O'er ruins of Roman refulgence,
At thy feet lays a garland in homage,

And asks thee, 'Virgin, entombed and slumbering,
Long ages silent, what wert thou dreaming of?
Didst hear, when the horse of the Teuton
Trod the ground o'er thy forehead Hellenic?'

'I heard,' she answers, godlike and lightening
Mid echoed thunders : 'Glory of Greece am I,
And strength of the conquering Latium,
That shall last in my bronze through the ages.

'The lapsing ages passed like the sinister
Twelve vultures bearing empire to Romulus :—
Then rose I, to Italy thund'ring,
"Re-arisen are thy gods and thy heroes !"

'And proud and joyful Brescia welcomed me,
Brescia the mighty, Brescia iron-armed,
O lion of Italy ! Brescia
Steeped in blood of barbarian foemen.'

(*Odi barbare.*)

SNOWFALL

Slowly flutters the snow from ash-coloured heavens in silence ;
Sound or tumult of life rises not up from the town ;

Not of herbseller the cry, nor rumorous rattle of wagons,
Not love's passionate song joyous in musical youth.

But, from the belfry swaying, hoarsely the hours thro' the evening
Moan like sighs from a world far from the light of our day.

Wandering song-birds beat at my tarnished window panes ; friendly
Spirits returning are they, seeking and calling for me.

Soon, O belovèd ones, soon—be calm, heart ever undaunted—
Soon to the silence I come, soon in the shades to repose.

(*Nuove Odi barbare.*)

ON MONTE MARIO

Cypresses solemn stand on Monte Mario ;
Luminous, quiet is the air around them ;
They watch the Tiber through the misty meadows
Wandering voiceless.

They gaze beneath them where, a silent city,
Rome lies extended : like a giant shepherd,
O'er flocks unnumbered vigilant and watchful,
Rises St. Peter's.

Friends, on the summit of the sunlit mountain
Mix we the white wine, scintillating brightly
In mirrored sunshine ; smile, O lovely maidens :
Death comes to-morrow.

Lalage, touch not in the scented copses
The boasted laurel that is called eternal,
Lest it should lose there, in thy chestnut tresses,
Half of its splendour.

Between the verses pensively arising,
Mine be the laughter of the joyous vintage,
And mine the rosebuds fugitive, in winter
Flowering to perish.

We die to-morrow, as the lost and loved ones
Yesterday perished ; out of all men's mem'ries
And all men's loving, shadow-like and fleeting[1]
We too shall vanish.

Yes, we must die, friends ; and the earth, unceasing
Still in its labour, round the sun revolving,
Shall ev'ry instant send out lives in thousands,
Sparks evanescent ;

Lives which in new loves passionate shall quiver,
Lives which in new wars conquering shall triumph,
And unto Gods new sing in grander chorus
Hymns of the future.

Nations unborn yet ! in whose hands the beacon
Shall blaze resplendent, which from ours has fallen,
Ye too shall vanish, luminous battalions,
Into the endless.

Farewell, thou mother, Earth, of my brief musings,
And of my spirit fugitive ! How much thou,
Æons-long whirling, round the sun shalt carry
Glory and sorrow !

Till the day comes, when, on the chilled equator,
Following vainly heat that is expiring,
Of Man's exhausted race survive one only
Man, and one woman,

Who stand forsaken on the ruin'd mountains,
Mid the dead forests, pale, with glassy eyeballs,
Watching the sun's orb o'er the fearful icefields
Sink for the last time.

(*Terze Odi barbare.*)

GIUSEPPE CHIARINI

GIUSEPPE CHIARINI

A Tuscan, born at Arezzo in 1833, *Giuseppe Chiarini was educated partly in that city and partly at Florence, where he was long associated with Carducci, who became his lifelong friend. From* 1860 *to* 1867 *he held a Secretaryship at the Ministry of Public Instruction. In* 1866 *he founded, at Florence, the 'Ateneo Italiano,' a literary periodical which had a brilliant but brief existence. After this he was for many years at Leghorn as President of the Liceo and of other institutions for public instruction; and since* 1884 *he has been President of the Liceo Umberto I° and Lecturer in Modern Literatures at the University of Rome.*

Chiarini is one of the first critics of Italy, and is deeply versed in the literature of his own and of other countries. He has published 'Poesie,' including many translations from Heine and from the English (*Leghorn, Vigo,* 1874); *'In Memoriam'* (*Imola, Galeati,* 1875); *'Lacrymæ'* (*Bologna, Zanichelli,* 1879-80); *'Esperimenti metrici'* (*the same publisher,* 1882); *and, among other translations, Heine's 'Atta Troll.' Of his critical works the best known is his memorable defence of Carducci entitled 'Sopra i critici italiani e la metrica delle Odi barbare'* (*Bologna, Zanichelli,* 1878).

As a poet, Chiarini excels in the expression of pathos and emotion. His 'Lacrymæ' is a small volume of verses composed to alleviate his own domestic sorrows in

the premature loss of two of his children. It has achieved a great reputation in Italy, though to an English reader that free expression of pain which is most natural in a Southern is apt to appear undignified. The fault, or at least the misfortune, is ours. But Chiarini as a poet has had the ill-luck to be overweighted by inevitable contrasts and comparisons. His companion in youth, Carducci, has outgrown and overshadowed him; and when he has essayed the expression of the sorrows of home-life, the comparison with Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' cannot be avoided, and the result is, from our point of view, unfavourable. But 'Lacrymæ,' though lacking the dignity, depth, philosophy, and faith of our greatest elegy, has notable merits of its own, and is the voice of a simple sorrow fully and artistically expressed. And we Englishmen should be grateful to Giuseppe Chiarini for what he has done to spread the knowledge of our literature (as well as that of Germany) throughout his native land.

PRELUDE TO 'LACRYMÆ'

THE shining stars pass ever,
They pass through the ether deep,
Pass into the endless sleep
Where one day all must lie.

But none hath seen them ever,
By ardent flame destroyed,
Fall from the lofty void
And ruining down the sky.

Yet for the stars in heaven
No father's heart hath spoken,
No father's heart is broken
To see them fade and die.

(*Lacrymæ.*)

EDMONDO DE AMICIS

EDMONDO DE AMICIS

Born in 1846 *at Oneglia, and of Genoese descent, Edmondo De Amicis was educated for the military profession, and was a sub-lieutenant when the war of* 1866 *broke out. He was present at the disastrous battle of Custoza in that year; in the following we find him at Florence editing the 'Italia Militare,' in which his famous 'Bozzetti della Vita militare' first appeared—sketches which made his name, and which have enjoyed an enormous sale. After the deliverance of Rome in* 1870, *De Amicis considered his military duties accomplished, and, retiring from the army, gave himself entirely to literature. His books of travel, such as 'Spagna,' 'Marocco,' 'Olanda,' and 'Costantinopoli,' are familiar wherever the Italian language is spoken; but he has also achieved success in fiction, and his 'Romance of a Schoolmaster' has been recently translated into English by Mrs. M. A. Craig* (1892).

Almost all his work is in prose; but it contains so much evidence of poetic feeling and pathos that no one was astonished by the publication of a volume of verse ('*Versi*,' *Milan, Treves, fourth edition,* 1882), *which, however, consists almost entirely of sonnets. Without being a great poet, he has attained considerable mastery over this peculiarly Italian form. There is an almost horrible, but eloquent, realism, mingled with ghastly humour, in the series entitled 'Guerra.' His greatest success, however, is attained in quiet and meditative descriptions of scenery.*

WAR

FROM all the summits of the hills on high,
In battle-smoke the armed and furious bands,
Shaking with rage their fierce ensanguined hands,
Send forth of conquest the tremendous cry.

The insolent trumpet-blast rings up to the sky;
Beneath the dying sun each face expands,
While the bronzed victor thunders o'er the lands
His ultimate insults to the foes that fly.

Down on the fugitives o'er all the lea,
An avalanche of red remorseless swords
Ruining falls with a delirious glee,

And stamps in blood, and rends, and slays outright,
Pierces and breaks the miserable hordes
O' the vanquished, whelmed in infamy of flight.

(*Poesie: La Guerra*, x.)

SNOWFALL

(*Near Leyden*)

O'ER mournful lands and bare, without a sound
Gently in broadening flakes descends the snow;
In velvet layers, beneath its pallid glow,
Silent, immaculate, all earth is bound.

It hides behind its veil all things around,
Houses and bridges, and the waters slow;
Fills ditches; whitens the great ships below;
Endless, continual, covering the ground.

Here through the white veil o'er the hills, on high
The windmills with a lofty mien severe
Stretch out their frozen arms into the sky;

And far away, o'er plains of densest white,
Old Leyden rises black, in curves austere—
Continual, endless snowfall infinite.

(*Poesie: Ricordi di Olanda.*)

SEVERINO FERRARI

SEVERINO FERRARI

Born in 1856 *at Alberino in the province of Bologna, on the Reno, Ferrari was at school at Bologna from* 1865 *to* 1870, *and was apparently not entirely a model scholar. There he met with Ugo Brilli and Giovanni Pascoli. Passing some years later into the Istituto di Studi Superiori at Florence, he became a fervent Carduccian, and with Giovanni Marradi and others formed the literary 'cénacle' known as the 'Goliardi.' Besides publishing the ephemeral periodical, 'I Nuovi Goliardi,' each of this group blossomed into verse of his own. Ferrari began in* 1876 *with a small volume printed by Zanichelli of Bologna: in* 1884 *he published 'Il Mago'—the magician is his friend Ugo Brilli—and in* 1885 *the first collection of 'Bordatini'* (*Ancona, Morelli*), *which was followed by a 'Secondo Libro dei Bordatini'* (*Florence, Ademollo,* 1886). *A more complete edition of his 'Versi' appeared in* 1892 (*Modena, Sarasino*).

As Ferrari gradually delivered himself from the influences which make for imitation only, he took for his special study the popular poetry and poetical forms of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. Hence the 'Bordatini:' the name, fantastically selected, means rough stuffs inwoven in various colours. They are short sketches, impressions, and outcries in brief verse, like the Tuscan 'rispetti' and 'stornelli.' A favourite form of his is the 'romanelle' of four hendecasyllabic lines

rhyming a b b c: these he has sometimes grouped into series making one poem. These rapid and limited forms necessarily lead to brevity, emphasis, and perhaps obscurity; the one thing to be avoided is epigram, for the form is essentially popular. Ferrari has proved that these ancient metres have retained their vitality, though doubtless there is some little affectation, some slight artificiality in his work. Elsewhere they show much freshness and originality. They have been praised by Carducci, who says of one (the first among those which I have endeavoured to translate) that it is a 'ballatina' of which Petrarch himself, were he to live again to-day, would not be ashamed.

At the end of the volume of 'Versi' recently published there is a fine series of sonnets on the beautiful Gulf of Spezia (Ferrari, given up to the profession of teaching, was long so employed in that town) in one of which occurs an allusion which is worth quoting:

> *'Mentre Tetide piange ancor il destino*
> *Del giovinetto Shelley che in lei dorme,*
> *Distratto dietro a un suo sogno divino.'*

The death of our great poet has rarely been so well, so classically sung.

Of the splendid sun a ray
Fell on my heart, and will not thence away.

While o'er thy work half-done
Thou guidedst with thy hand, my heart's desire,
The needle running through the web with speed,
A golden ray the sun
Athwart thy tresses interwove ; and fire
Blazed all around : my heart began to bleed :—
'A goddess this indeed !
She must return to heaven : she cannot stay.'

(*Bordatini*, vi.)

The white snow laughs upon the mountain height :
It asks the sun for a brief and tender ray ;
And, in the sunset, dreams of the moon's delight.

Yet in so fervent a kiss it melts away,
And warmly clings to the plants in dew, that glows
Gemming the leaves beneath the ardent day.

And so thy warmer heart, mid all thy snows,
Quickens upon thy lips a flowering rose.

(*Bordatini*, viii.)

AUGUSTO FERRERO

AUGUSTO FERRERO

Born in 1866 *at Bologna, but of Piedmontese extraction, Augusto Ferrero, at the age of seventeen, gave his first promise of future literary distinction by carrying off the gold medal in a national competition on a patriotic subject, open to all students in the 'Licei,' on which occasion Carducci was one of the judges. Educated for the profession of the law, Ferrero soon abandoned it for journalism, and is now on the staff of the 'Gazzetta Piemontese' of Turin. His only volume of poetry is 'Nostalgie d'Amore'* (*Turin, Roux e Co.*, 1893), *one of the latest additions to Italian poetical literature.*

The influence of Carducci is less apparent in Ferrero than in most versifiers of the day, and that of the Gallicising schools is refreshingly absent. The formalist and somewhat artificial tendencies which constitute the chief danger of the Neo-latin movement, and of which d'Annunzio, with all his excellence, is the chief exponent, have been avoided; more obvious is Ferrero's indebtedness to the Nature-spirit and the simpler forms of Fogazzaro's poetry. In the delineation of pure and peaceful home-life, Ferrero is doubtless to some extent influenced by his English models, Wordsworth, Shelley, Longfellow, and Tennyson, some of whose poems he has translated.

THE STRIKING OF THE HOURS

I WOKE up in the night, alone, with a shock
To hear the sudden striking of a clock.

And O the moonless night! the darkling night!
What chill, what panic did my heart affright!

No voice o' the street, no sound of the ocean's roar:
A blind abyss, the dark room yawned before.

By the cold horror of the void o'erthrown,
Terror of silence, dread of the unknown

Fell leaden on my soul. Thereafter, drear,
The slow hours struck once more: I seemed to hear

In the infinite gloom some god-like voice of power,
Proclaim the striking of my latest hour.

(*Nostalgie d'Amore*, xxix.)

THEN

THE old men tell of the green years gone by:
(There—the cigar is lighted once again):
They tell of arms, of hopes and loves gone by.
The cat by the fire looks on and lists amain.

The women's thoughts are wandering, following fleet
The mournful wind that moans along the street.
The old men tell o' the years that had an end,
Of many a beauty gone, and many a friend——
And while they speak, the wild wind bursts in a shout :
(There—once again the spent cigar's gone out)——.

(*Nostalgie d'Amore*, l.)

TWILIGHT DREAM

'MOTHER, three little heads I see, and a light :
One fair, one dark, and one like the chestnut's stain.'—
O poetry of the evening, pure and bright,
The only poetry sweet and never vain,
Would that I too might see that quiet glow
From yonder corner, whence a child may know
The three loved faces shadowed in a light !
O poetry of the evening, pure and bright,
The only poetry sweet and never vain,
O sisters, mother mine ! seen ne'er again——.

(*Nostalgie d'Amore*, li.)

UGO FLERES

UGO FLERES

Born in 1857 *at Messina, Ugo Fleres studied there till his family sent him to learn painting at Naples, where he energetically neglected that art in favour of literature. Passing on to Rome at the age of seventeen, he has lived the life of a 'newspaper-man' who dreams of art and has to practise journalism. But he did not dream only: he wrote very abundantly—tragedies, comedies, translations without end. Yet, of all this fertile production, very little has seen the light: partly because he is his own severest critic, partly because, as he says himself, he 'writes in floods, and publishers are few.' Nevertheless, in* 1881, *the publisher Sommaruga (who, believing in literature, ended in bankruptcy) prevailed upon him to give his 'Versi' to the world. Since then several romances and other volumes have appeared bearing his name. His 'Don Juan'—an original work and not a translation—and his 'Giovinezza del Cid' have been long expected: of the latter a fragment appears in his volume entitled 'Sacellum: Nuovi Versi'* (*Catania, Giannotta,* 1889).

Fleres excels in brief, epigrammatic verse. He has translated a few quatrains from Omar Khayyam, and something of the spirit of that poet (at least as we know him in England) may be discerned in 'La Collana' ('*Sacellum*'), *a 'necklace' from which I have detached two or three links.*

QUATRAINS

FOOLS the cicalas are—'tis long agreed ;
How wise the ant, is known to every one.
But is it so? Is foresight worth indeed
More than long singing in the summer sun ?

HATH Faith expired?—Its image hath not fled :
In our ancestral blood it lingers yet.
When once the Book of Mystery thou hast read,
Its pages thou canst tear, but not forget.

I AM a book open 'neath mine own eyes ;
I gaze therein and find my sense unstrung.
Again I gaze, perplexed—to realise
The book is written in an unknown tongue.

(*Sacellum : La Collana.*)

ANTONIO FOGAZZARO

ANTONIO FOGAZZARO

One of the most distinguished and most popular novelists of contemporary Italy, author of '*Malombra*,' '*Daniele Cortis*,' '*Il Mistero del Poeta*,' '*Fedele*,' *and other volumes of stories. Born at Vicenza in* 1842, *Fogazzaro's earlier studies were carried out under the direction of the eminent priest-poet, the Abbé Zanella, after which he became Doctor of Laws at the University of Turin in* 1861. *Although he is best known by his novels, he began as a poet; and he has not only produced admirable work in that sphere, but has exercised an important and beneficent influence on the poetical literature of his day. His romance in verse,* '*Miranda*' (*Florence, Le Monnier*, 1874), *was followed in* 1876 *by a more important volume,* '*Valsolda*,' *which was republished in an enlarged form as* '*Valsolda: Poesia dispersa*' (*Turin, Casanova*, 1886). *Another of his contributions to the treasury of the Muses is* '*Profumo, poesie*' (*Milan*, 1881).

According to the geographical distribution of authors, usually the most essential and instructive in the Italy of the nineteenth century, Fogazzaro is called a Venetian. In this case the classification is misleading. The Venetian spirit sparkles like sunlight on the sea: it is brilliant, of many facets, restless, in continual aspiration and revolt. Fogazzaro is of the Lake school. The inland waters with their yearly interchange of sunshine and mist; the heights of Monte Generoso, where columbine and jonquil

grow in wild abundance; the melody of streams as they flow and their thunder as they fall;—such are the penetrating influences which have inspired his Northern muse. The sentiment of external Nature is at once vivified and made mystical in him by the ever-suggested presence of an ideal which is above and beyond Nature, but of which Nature is the mirror. To this mental attitude necessarily corresponds a poetical style dominated by the search for refined expression, and an instinctive revulsion from the loud and vulgar methods of certain schools. But when Fogazzaro is face to face with the ugly in life, he can in a masterly way employ his acquired delicacy of touch so as to illustrate it without offence.

Readers of George Meredith's 'Diana of the Crossways' will remember the bells on Lake Lugano: Fogazzaro has treated the same subject, very differently, in the piece entitled 'Evening.'

Now in the vesper shades my vacant room
Looms larger to mine eyes through gathering gloom.
Beyond, the lake appears in misty light,
Like a deserted, boundless sea at night.

Could I sail out upon this desert sea !
Sail out alone, sail out afar and free ;
And, when the vanishing shores are lost to view,
Yield to my thoughts and to the waters blue !

Then phantoms would i' the open sea appear
Which still the heart conceals with jealous fear.
I seated aft, they to the fore would rise,
Each silent, gazing in the other's eyes.

(*Valsolda*, iv.)

EVENING

THE BELLS OF ORIA

Westward the sky o'ergloometh,
The hour of darkness cometh.
From spirits of evil,
From Death and the Devil,
Keep us, O Lord, night and day !
Come, let us pray.

THE BELLS OF ÒSTENO

O'er waters waste we too must sound,
From lonely shores where echoes bound,
Our voice profound.
From spirits of evil,
From Death and the Devil,
Keep us, O Lord, night and day !
Come, let us pray.

THE BELLS OF FURIA

We too, remote and high,
From the dark mountains cry :
Hear us, O Lord !
From spirits of evil,
From Death and the Devil,
Keep us, O Lord, night and day !
Come, let us pray.

Echoes from the Valleys

Let us pray !

ALL THE BELLS

The light is born and dies,
Enduring never :
Sunset follows sunrise
For ever;

All things, O Lord All-wise !
Save Thine eternity,
Are vanity.

Echoes from the Valleys

Vanity !

ALL THE BELLS

Come, let us pray and weep,
From the heights and from the deep,
For the living, for them that sleep,
For so much sin unknown, and so much pain.
Have mercy, Lord !
All suffering and pain,
That does not pray to Thee ;
All error that in vain
Does not give way to Thee ;
All love that must complain,
Yet yields no sway to Thee,
Pardon, O Holy One !

Echoes from the Valleys

O Holy One !

ALL THE BELLS

Pray we, and toll the bell
For the dead beneath the loam,
Whom Earth hath gathered home

Guilty or guiltless, as vain men opine.
Thou, Mystery Divine !
Alone canst tell.

Echoes from the Valleys
Alone canst tell !

ALL THE BELLS

Let us pray for the immense
Pain of the universe,
That lives its life intense,
Loves, suffers Thine adverse
Inscrutable decrees.
Peace to the wave, to the hill
These voices, too, be still :
O beat o' the bronze, be still !
Peace !

Echoes from the Valleys
Peace !

THE WAVE

Dost thou sleep, fair shore
That the waters adore ?
With quivering breath
My pain lingereth
As I sing, as I weep ;
And my love is asleep !

One accent alone,
One murmur, one moan,
One sigh—only this—
As thy pebbles I kiss.
Be silent, O deep !
The stars as they smile
Fall in love for awhile
With my mirror serene :
In my bosom bright Vesper reflected
is seen.
Silence and sleep !
One accent alone,
One murmur, one moan,
One sigh—only this
One kiss.

THE WATERFALL OF RESCIA

My waves have no peace ;
My waves do not cease—
They murmur and roar
Through silences lonely
On a desolate shore.
The silent waves hear ;
The dark mountains hear ;
They list, and hear only
My murmurs austere.

(*Valsolda*, xix.)

IN ST. MARK'S AT VENICE

Cold is my soul like thee, O glorious fane!
And thy mosaics' mingled shadow and gold
Are like the shapes that I in fancy mould
Mid tomb-like silence of my heart's domain,

Where love lies buried, love that shone in vain,
Like thy gemmed treasure, useless and untold;
And to the hoped Ideal, the Faith I hold,
One lamp lifts up a light that ne'er shall wane.

Yet sometimes thro' thy gate that moaning opes
Sunlight comes in, whiffs o' the salt lagoon,
Sad silent forms that linger for awhile;

And so to me, at times, come sunlit hopes,
Quick fever-fits of life that vanish soon,
Or a sweet, tender face that stays to smile.

(*Poesia dispersa*, ii.)

FERDINANDO FONTANA

FERDINANDO FONTANA

Born at Milan in 1850, *Ferdinando Fontana has had an adventurous and variegated existence. He has been able-bodied seaman, assistant in a shop, and reader of proofs to a daily paper; and he has travelled a great deal—usually in search of work. Indefatigable, energetic, versatile, the list of his contributions to periodical and even to permanent literature is a long one. He has published, among other works,* '*Poesie e Novelle in Versi;*' '*Nuove Poesie*' (*Bologna, Zanichelli,* 1882); '*Poesie Vecchie e Nuove*' (*Milan, Galli,* 1892); *besides* '*Bambann,*' *a volume of verse in the Milanese dialect; many works of biography and criticism; several prose dramas, of which* '*La Statoa del sur Incioda*' (*in dialect*) *has had an enormous success; and the librettos for more than fifty operas. He is now his own publisher. He is about to produce a drama entitled* '*Nabucco,*' *and is writing* '*Dramatic Poems.*'

Fontana's local reputation was first made by '*Il Rebecchino*' (1875), *on the demolition of the old houses which formerly surrounded Milan Cathedral. He is a vivacious, bizarre, unrestrained, and somewhat revolutionary writer of not inconsiderable originality: in politics a republican.*

TO THE STATUE OF MOLIÈRE

If I have read aright thy features gay,
Whose delicate irony marks some mad conceit,
Thou, seated here in bronze, art glad to-day,
Poet, to take thy place where cross-roads meet.

And noting how the worn-out farce holds sway
O'er all these crowds, who do thee honour meet,
Meseems I hear thee cry, 'Ah, human clay!
Could I resume my work left incomplete!'

Well were it for the world again to writhe
'Neath the correction of thy lashes blithe!
For, knowing thee locked up within the vault,

The new Tartuffes return to the assault,
While on the stage conventions re-arise,
And stilted Tragedy weighs down our eyes.

(*Nuove Poesie: Parigi.*)

RENATO FUCINI

(TANFUCIO NERI)

RENATO FUCINI

'Tanfucio Neri,' the anagrammatic pseudonym under which Signor Fucini has acquired perhaps the greatest share of renown accorded in our day to any Italian writer in dialect, is a household word in Tuscany and a name held in esteem over all Italy. He was born in 1843 *at Monterotondo in the Tuscan Maremma, and studied at the University of Pisa, a city the dialect of which he has made the chosen vehicle of his best work. After having been for twelve years an engineer at Florence, he devoted himself, when it ceased to be the capital, to the profession of teaching, and was for some years at Pistoia; he was subsequently appointed Inspector of Schools, and now resides at Empoli. He has published the following books, which have passed through many editions:—'Poesie* [*di Neri Tanfucio*] *in vernacolo pisano'* (*Bracali, Pistoia*)*; 'Napoli a occhio nudo'* (*Le Monnier, Florence*)*; 'Le Veglie di Neri'* (*Hoepli, Milan*)*. Unfortunately for the public, his present occupations do not afford him much leisure for literary production.*

EPIGRAM

Clodius the banker, seven times or more
Bankrupt, and each time richer than before,
Although he could escape, and save his fleece
From Public Prosecutor and police,
Could not avoid indeed
Men's justice fierce and rude,
Prompt ill things to resent:
They have sent him with speed—
—'Good! To penal servitude?'
—No! into Parliament.

DOMENICO GNOLI

DOMENICO GNOLI

Domenico Gnoli, son of Count Tommaso Gnoli of Ferrara, was born in Rome in 1839, *studied classics at the Collegio Romano, took his degree in law at the University and was received advocate. In* 1870 *he published his first volume of verse under the pseudonym (rendered necessary by political reasons) of 'Dario Gaddi,' and the same year he was nominated to a chair of Italian Literature in one of the newly founded 'licei,' whence he was called to become Professor of Italian Literature at Turin. Since then he has returned to Rome, where he is Prefect of the National Library 'Vittorio Emmanuele,' and founder* (1888) *and editor of the 'Archivio Storico dell' Arte.'*

Meanwhile he had published in 1879 *his 'Odi Tiberine,' and in* 1885 *the 'Nuove Odi Tiberine;' and had translated Goethe's 'Lieder' and 'Römische Elegien;' while in prose his 'Gli amori di Volfango Goethe,' his 'Studi letterari' and 'Vittoria Accoramboni'—a subject familiar to Elizabethan students—originally contributed to the 'Nuova Antologia,' placed him among the first critical writers of Italy.*

A Roman influence or tendency may thus be observed even in the titles of his works; and although much of this predilection for the Eternal City has found its scope in historical research, especially in connection with the Roman Art of the Renaissance, it is also the dominant note in his poetry. In his youth, indeed, he belonged to a group

of writers to whom was given the name of Roman school, and which, coming before the time when the great impulse of the Neo-latin writers had revivified the classical memories never long dormant in Italy, sought to raise into new life the poetical forms of the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Later influences have enlarged his views and brought him more closely into touch with modern life, without depriving him of his classic elegance of form and style. His verse, sometimes patriotic in the choice of subjects, and often tinged with the melancholy of glorious memories, gives proof also of much power in expressing the sentiment of external nature and that of the home affections.

GLORY

And thus to die! But one day in my gloom
Death came and mocked me:—'Doth a dead man hear?'
Vain! vain! No hymn of praise resounding clear
Can pierce the sombre deafness of the tomb.

Posthumous Fame runs on, yet none resume
The vacant saddle; and the cavalier
Enjoys no more the impetuous career,
Valiant in vain, prone in the dust of doom.

The blackened lava which dread Death pours down
Presses with equal weight on brows left bare,
And those that wore with pride the laureate crown.

Earth, pious mother, doth alike requite
Her every son; there is no envy there,
In that equality of endless night.

(*Nuove Odi Tiberine.*)

ARTURO GRAF

ARTURO GRAF

The son of a German father and of an Italian mother, Arturo Graf was born in Athens in 1848. *Of his early years, some were passed at Trieste, some in Roumania: afterwards, though almost entirely self-taught, he entered the University of Naples, where he studied law. After three or four more years in Roumania, he became in* 1874 *private tutor in the University of Rome, and in* 1876 *went on to that of Turin, first as Professor of the Romance Languages, and since* 1882 *as Professor of Italian Literature. His poetical works are* '*Poesie*' (*Braila*, 1874); '*Poesie e Novelle*' (*Rome, Loescher*, 1876); '*Medusa*' (*Turin, Loescher*, 1880), *which has passed through three editions. A new volume,* '*Dopo il tramonto*,' *will probably have seen the light* (*if one may use the phrase in this connection*) *when these lines are printed.*

So far, it is in the third book of '*Medusa*' *that Graf's genius has found its highest expression. When at its best, his poetry is among the most remarkable of the day. He is, in lyrical verse, the Webster of modern Italy:* '*his terrible and funereal Muse is Death.*' *To his Northern blood, to his Southern birth, to his cosmopolitan training, Graf owes, perhaps, the special characteristics of his poetry. His is, in his own words, a Northern Muse born on Italian soil. The mists and snows of the North have given him a sombre melancholy which has been deepened by his studies till it has become scientific pessimism: yet he remains an Athenian, and at the same time an Italian.*

Miss Helen Zimmern has admirably expressed it ('*Blackwood*,' *March* 1892): '*Northern sadness and an attraction to twilight effects, with southern intensity, with the plastic precision of Greece and the sense of colour of sunny Italy. Precision, indeed, of image and expression is, in his opinion, of the essence of poetry: he wishes the reader fully and clearly to understand his meaning. The* '*symbolists*,' *therefore, are his natural aversion. With all his gloom, the gloom of one who has no faith and ever laments its irremediable loss, Graf is one of the most entirely original writers of modern Italy, and belongs to none of the schools. Of the Neo-classical, he has only the careful form and finish, and in this respect he has sometimes achieved perfection. The first critics of Italy have admitted as much; though it is not likely that he will ever be popular. Domenico Gnoli has said of his best works that they are* '*poems cast in steel*,' *and Nencioni speaks of his* '*acqueforti indimenticabili*.'

THE DEPTH AND END

Upon my poisoned lips all vain delight
Has died for ever : hopes that might have been,
And pious falsehoods flourishing unseen
Within my heart, have killed my heart outright.

In vain the rose takes fire on branches green,
In vain a sweet face beams with love and light,
In vain o'er conquered skies the sun is bright ;
The depth and end of all things I have seen.

The end and depth, the Never and For ever ;
And in my bitter cup, O sacred Death,
Living, I drank the drops that souls dissever.

The fall of worlds in ruined space I see ;
I hear the bells of Time with failing breath
Ring hours and years through void eternity.

(*Medusa*, bk. iii.)

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

A lonely rock into the lonely skies
Lifts its slate-coloured, bare and rugged head,
Where, far below, the emerald wave outspread
Surges with gurgling sound, and falls and dies.

I, from the peak where lost in thought I stand,
Gaze on the ocean's boundless solitude,
And the ashy heaven, by which the waters rude
As if by a dome of lead are overspanned.

Westward a spear of fire, from heaven downthrown,
Pierces a depth of cloud yet undescried,
Skirts the horizon's edge, and opens wide
A path of light into a world unknown.

One dark and lonely sail, afar from shore,
Looms like a dream amid the fiery seas;
Moveless it seems—and now by slow degrees
Fades on the lengthening sea, and is no more.

Beneath the clouds that brood like a grey despair,
Passes a flock of birds, broad-winged and white—
Passes aloft with steadfast sideward flight,
With silent wings that flap the silent air.

—'Aërial voyagers! O ye that go
Wheeling your flight athwart the vault sublime,
What are ye? and to what undreamt-of clime
Wing ye your weary way, that none can know?

—'We are thy thoughts—thy thoughts in woe and glee;
Thy hopes we are—the dreams that thou hast known;
From thy forsaken heart we all have flown,
And thou our fleeting wings no more shalt see.'

They pass to seek that unimagined shore :
Westward they fly—I hear their cry afar
Faint like the death-song of a fallen star,
'Thou seest us for ever never more.'

(*Medusa*, bk. iii.

MORS REGINA

FOAM-GIRT amid the ocean's thunderous call,
A mountain measureless is heaped on high,
Black in the whiteness of the dazzling sky,
And built of fallen cities, wall o'er wall.

On the steep summit where the sunbeams fall,
A glorious fane doth to the Sun reply
From dome of opal where the eagles fly ;
And adamantine columns gird the hall.

Round is the Temple, each way open wide ;
And in the midst a lofty Throne designed,
With gloomy purple hung on every side.

There on the throne, aloft in splendid space,
Sits Death, a crownèd queen : while all mankind
Lie prone around and watch her changeless face.

(*Medusa*, bk. iii.)

WATER-LILY

A FRAGRANT morning in the early year ;
A sky as if of silk, serene and bright ;
Up on the hill the ancient pinewood, dight
With mourning foliage, taciturn, severe ;

And on the hill-top where, remote from light
The wood is densest in its shades austere,
Enclosed in narrow bounds, an open sphere
Of clear enchanted waters greets the sight.

There, lonely, lulled on the transparent deep,
A silver water-lily meets the gleam
Of sunlight piercing through the outer shade,

Like a dream of love arising out of sleep,
Which to the radiance of a thought supreme
Opes in the virgin soul of some pure maid.

(*Medusa*, bk. iii.)

THE LONELY FIR-TREE

UP on the granite heights, funereal foliage wearing,
A solitary fir his head erect and daring
Points like a javelin to the vault immense ;
Alone upon the Alpine peak that upward soareth,
Where with infuriate voice the tramontana roareth
O'er silent fields, with icy breath intense.

Beneath, chaotic rocks in ruinous heaps confounded,
Precipitous cliffs, abysms with gloomy depths unsounded,
Wind-shattered woods where trees uprooted lie;
Above, the ether's luminous arc, a boundless heaven,
And cloudlets white o'er violet depths of ether driven,
And the sun resplendent in the violet sky.

Far in the plains the fir-tree from his lonely mountain
Sees fertile hills below, fair plains and many a fountain,
Harvests, and pastures where the tulips blow;
He sees as in a dream, the north wind through him wailing,
Gathers his sombre foliage close, and stands unfailing,
Mute and superb, o'er heights of Alpine snow.

(*Medusa*, bk. iii.)

THE BELL

Beneath a jasper sky, in the profound
Silence, which holds o'er lonely fields its sway,
Clangs out afar with weary, plaintive sound
A church-bell mourning for the dying day.

Fevered with agony, it seems to bound
From depths of heaven, a mystic voice astray;
A voice it seems to be from worlds unfound,
So weak and thin its tone, so far away.

The sun has fallen, and through the silent air
Whence, slowly fading, light and day pass o'er,
The weary voice laments and weeps for aid.

Long, long it calls in anguish and despair,
In vain it calls the God that is no more,
The perished Faith, the Hope that was betrayed.

(*Medusa*, bk. iii.)

COUNTESS LARA

(EVELINE CATTERMOLE-MANCINI)

COUNTESS LARA

(EVELINE CATTERMOLE-MANCINI)

'Countess Lara' is the pseudonym under which one of the most distinguished as well as the most cosmopolitan poetesses of contemporary Italy veils an identity which has long been an open secret. Miss Eveline Cattermole was born in 1858 *at Cannes, of an English father and a Russian mother, and received much of her education in France; but of the five languages which she speaks, Italian must be considered to be essentially her own, if not exactly her native, tongue, since it is that in which her genius finds its natural expression. She is a frequent contributor to literary and other periodicals, such as the 'Capitan Fracassa,' and the 'Piccolo' of Naples. Her first volume, entitled 'Versi'* (*Rome, Sommaruga,* 1883) *won for her a foremost place among the poets of the day: since then it has been followed by 'E ancora versi'* (*Florence, Oscar Sersale,* 1886).

'Countess Lara' writes with much elegance and grace; she has also a great facility of expression in a certain sphere. Her representation of human life, usually from a woman's point of view, is generally effected by the terse and rapid expression of instantaneous emotions and impressions; hence her natural predilection (*natural especially to one who writes in Italian*) *for the sonnet.*

IN THE EVENING

I SIT alone and watch the cinders glare,
Or hear the pine-logs crackling sharp and low.
I wait him still; he went not long ago,
Humming a tune, his cigarette aflare.

He was called out by some most grave affair:
His friends, on cards intent, would have it so;
Or some new singer's style he fain would know,
Who with false graces mars a grand old air.

And for such things as these he stays away,
Till midnight passes, and, at one, the bell
Booms from the neighbouring church its single flight;

Then gaily he returns, and half in play
Kisses me lightly, asks if I am well,
And never dreams that I have wept all night.

(*Versi: Intimità.*)

THE CHURCHYARD

SUPERB, the sun resplendently
Over the churchyard glows;
The birds in leafage green their loves declare,
And the intoxicant air
Warms the young sap of violet and rose.

But cold, cold are the sepulchres
'Neath the sun's warmest ray:
He who for ever sleeps may not awake,
Though all bright Nature make
Harmonious festival of accents gay.

And I? Doth youth irradiate
My soul? Not for mine ears
The songs of love wherein I have no part:
A sepulchre is mine heart,
Crowned with a cross where no one hath
shed tears.

(*Versi: Intimità.*)

GIOVANNI MARRADI

GIOVANNI MARRADI

Among the poets who have arisen since the wars of deliverance ended with the taking of Rome in 1870, *Giovanni Marradi holds a foremost post. Born at Leghorn in* 1852, *he was approaching manhood when that event took place, which has allowed a new generation to pursue the study of art and literature without the sound of the trumpet echoing ever in their ears. He studied at the University of Pisa and subsequently at the Istituto di Studi Superiori in Florence, where in* 1877, *in conjunction with Guido Biagi and Severino Ferrari, he founded the brilliant but ephemeral literary periodical 'I Nuovi Goliardi,' from which this talented and ingenious group of young poets for a time took their name. The 'Goliardi' were soon dispersed, and Marradi began a distinguished literary career by the publication of the 'Canzoni moderne di G. M. Labronio,' the pseudonym which he had adopted in his newspaper. Since then he has to a certain degree withdrawn himself from the world, refusing to enter into any literary coterie or to engage in polemical discussions. His subsequent volumes were 'Poesie'* (*Turin*, 1887); *'Ricordi lirici'* (*Rome, Sommaruga*, 1884); *'Fantasie marine'* (1881); *and 'Nuovi Canti'* (*Milan, Treves Brothers*, 1891). *A complete edition of his poems is in preparation, and will be issued by the publishers last named. Like the rest of the Carduccians, Marradi is at once classical and modern; but he has a tuneful, suggestive and harmonious note of his own.*

FLORENTINE MEMORIES

I

On heights and towers beats the sunlight sheer,
The spring-tide sun that glares on marbles white
Where Brunellesco's dome sublime, austere,
Lifts its olympic mass in sunshine bright.

In the violet-scented air, slender and clear,
The marvellous bell-tower soars divinely slight,
And mid the perfume of the wheat-fields near
The open windows flame i' the sunset-light.

Well mayst thou smile o'er Art's antique domain,
Italian May! o'er San Giovanni's square,
And o'er that hallowed and triumphant fane,

Where an artist-race, in youth strong-limbed and fair,
Heard their immortal Poet's noblest strain,
And taking arms, destroyed the tyrant's lair.

II

Dost thou remember? Down the steep incline
From Fiesole we came in that pale hour
Of night fantastic, while a vague, divine
Sadness spread o'er our weary hearts its power.

Like an aërial and gigantic pine
Girt with the stars and with the mists that lour,
Lonely and lofty soared through the argentine
Sweet calm of night, St. Mary of the Flower.

All else we saw fade fast and disappear
In that vast solitude which lay around,
As in a sea of mist, now veiled, now clear ;

Where, mid all voices that through night resound,
Thy voice arose and echoed far and near,
Mingling with them its musical wave of sound.

GUIDO MAZZONI

GUIDO MAZZONI

One of the most eminent of the younger poets who have formed their taste and style under the influence of Carducci, whose pupil he was at Bologna. Born at Florence in 1859, *he studied at Pisa before proceeding to the northern university. He has taught Italian literature at various Government institutions, and was appointed Professor at the University of Padua in* 1887. *He is married to a daughter of Giuseppe Chiarini.*

His first volume, 'Poesie' (Sommaruga, Rome, 1882), *received the high honour of being introduced to the public in a preface by Carducci; it speedily ran through two editions, and was followed by 'Nuove Poesie'* (1886, *Molino, Rome). A new edition of all his verses appeared in* 1891 (*Zanichelli, Bologna). The same publisher will shortly issue a volume of poems entitled 'Voci della vita.'*

Professor Mazzoni is a warm admirer of English poetry; and not long ago Signor Bonghi, writing in the 'Academy,' spoke of his work as giving proof of the influence of our great writers upon his poetical style. This criticism is perhaps somewhat exaggerated, and Mazzoni disclaims any conscious imitation. The new school of Italian poetry rightly and reasonably welcomes what is excellent in other literatures, but it has remained distinctively national and Italian in form, manner, and tendency.

Mazzoni is of course a Carduccian, and passes, indeed, for the master's favourite pupil; but he is no copyist or imitator, and has formed a style of his own. He has both vigour and elegance in the employment of difficult metres: some of his hexameters are ranked by Carducci as second only to Chiarini's translations from Theocritus. But this delight in form, accompanied in Mazzoni by an apparent predilection for the bizarre and the 'recherché,' sometimes results in mechanism and at least the appearance of pedantry. Mazzoni has achieved considerable success in the art of translating music into poetry; that is, of rendering into an art-form which is partly or even chiefly representative, the effects produced upon the individual mind by one in its essence suggestive. Poems of this nature are necessarily the product of an imaginative subjectivity, and it is in subjective poetry that Mazzoni chiefly excels. The best-known of these poems on music is the 'Cori della Vita,' from Beethoven, which have been translated into English by Baroness Swift, and published in the 'Ladies' Treasury' of March 1889.

I

WELL, well I know the stars in heaven supreme
Are worlds afar from ours, which navigate
The boundless seas, and have nor ruth nor hate
For man's poor petty race o'er whom they gleam.

Yet, grateful self-deceit ! myself I please
To think them sweet, consenting maidens fair.
Wherefore I rise thro' spaces infinite,
When silence holds the depth of starry seas,
Up to Polaris from the far-off Bear ;
And then descend where shines remote and bright,
Within her group of deep and tranquil light,
Fair Cassiopeia, beautiful, divine.
From the great curve of heaven, goddess benign,
She smiles on me, as till the morn I dream.

II

Now Night spreads out her starry veil anew
To comfort all the fields with heat consumed :
O'er dusky hills around, now re-illumed,
Rises heaven's glittering dome of deepest blue.

Perpetual harmony sounds deep and low
As of a wedding song, where through the sky
The silent stars take their refulgent way ;
And through the heart of man the current slow

Of ancient memory runs, as with a sigh
He calls to mind his youth's departed day.
Wherefore such deep complaint? shall anger sway
This fragile form so swiftly withering?
Life bringeth forth in everlasting spring
Upon the eternal stem flowers ever new.

(*Poesie*, bk. iii.)

DOMENICO MILELLI

DOMENICO MILELLI

A Calabrian poet of versatile and prolific talent, Domenico Milelli was born at Catanzaro in 1841, *and was at first destined by his parents for the priesthood—a vocation for which he was singularly unfitted, if we are to judge by the openly pagan character of his verses, in which reverence for Christianity is conspicuously absent. His natural tendencies were for art and literature, and in* 1864 *he published in Calabria an ode* '*to Ugo Foscolo*,' *which was translated anonymously into English, and re-translated into Italian by a writer unacquainted with its real origin. The list of his poetical works, many of which laid themselves open to criticism and attack, is a long one:* '*In giovinezza*' (1873); '*Gioconda*' *and* '*Hiemalia*' (1874); '*Odi Pagane*' *and* '*Povertà*' (1879); '*Discerpta*' (1881); '*Il rapimento di Elena*' (1882); *the* '*Canzoniere*,' *or Book of Songs* (*Rome, Sommaruga*, 1884); '*Verde Antico*' (*classical translations*) *appearing in* 1885, *as well as a book of* '*Rime*' *under the pseudonym of* '*Conte di Lara*,' *which had a large sale; and he has now several volumes in preparation, including a* '*Prometeo*.'

Of abundant facility, eclectic in his tastes, Milelli belongs to no school exclusively, though the colouring of his verse is that of the Italian south. The various literary movements of his time have all left their impress on his poetry, which is therefore to my mind somewhat wanting in character—a failing for which compensation can hardly be found in the somewhat violent and exaggerated aggressiveness which is the essential fault of the more extreme among the '*Veristi*.'

VERSES TO ARRIGO BOITO

From the East the dawn, the roseate dawn was peeping,
As through the azure waves my boat was leaping :
And the snows that filled the ways
My mountain-slopes along
Sang : 'Brief are the hours and days,
And rough is the road, and long ;'
Sang the snows that filled the ways
My mountain-slopes along.

From the East the dawn, the roseate dawn was peeping,
As through the azure waves my boat was leaping :
And the pattering sunlit showers
Sang : 'Onward ! have no fear !
Weary not, urge thy powers,
For the wished-for goal is near ;'
And the pattering sunlit showers
Sang : 'Onward ! have no fear !'

O'er the water's edge did the mounting sun aspire ;
Fire was the glowing sea, and the hills were fire.
And under my gliding prow
Sang the sea as it broke in spray :
'Look ! for the daylight now
From the East takes its wingèd way !'
Under my gliding prow
Sang the sea as it broke in spray.

O'er the water's edge did the mounting sun aspire ;
Fire was the glowing sea, and the hills were fire.
And striking my face awhile,
'Live!' spoke the sun to me :
'Bask in the joyous smile
Of Earth, that is made for thee ;'
Striking my face awhile,
'Live!' spoke the sun to me.

Now o'er the slumbrous sea the night was sleeping,
As through the darkening waves my boat was leaping ;
And the stars spoke forth in song :
'Love is alive! alive!
And all things fair and strong
In his splendour swim and strive ;'
So the stars spoke forth in song :
'Love is alive! alive!'

Now o'er the slumbrous sea the night was sleeping,
As through the darkening waves my boat was leaping ;
And 'Upward!' the snow-girt pyre
Of Etna thundered on high,
As it hurled from its cup of fire
Cinders and flame to the sky.
'Upward!' the snow-girt pyre
Of Etna thundered on high.

So o'er the slumbrous wave the night is sleeping ;
And, looming larger as the sunbeams flee,
Sicilian sentinel, her watch is keeping
Messina, risen from her sapphire sea.

(*Canzoniere*, bk. ii.)

ADA NEGRI

ADA NEGRI

The most interesting and original poetical work by a new author which has appeared in the last twelvemonth is 'Fatalità,' by Ada Negri. I regret that I have been unable to obtain much information concerning this striking writer further than what is contained in the preface (by Signora Sofia Bisi Albini) to the volume which, so far, constitutes her sole contribution to the contemporary literature of Italy.

Ada Negri has never seen the sea, the lakes, or the mountains—hardly even a hill—and till recently she had never spent one day in a great city. Growing up in poverty, at the age of eighteen she left Lodi to become schoolmistress at Motta-Visconti. There she has fought the cruel and unending, pauseless battle of poverty against the remorseless world. She is young, but the struggle has embittered her. In the 'Illustrazione popolare' and in the 'Corriere della Sera' first appeared those verses which are now collected together in 'Fatalità.' Hers is the Lombard voice of revolt, of fierce indignation, swaying between alternate hatreds and disdains. But she is strong and strenuous of work and will. In the opening poem, Misfortune appears to her in a dream, and closes a brief colloquy by warning her that only to them who suffer and, while bleeding, combat to do great things, glory will come in the end. 'Stay, then, with me,' answers the poetess. Ada Negri has force and fire; she has tenderness and passion; hers is a great promise. She has recently been promoted to a post at Milan.

THOU ASKEST?

THOU askest who I am?—Child, thou shalt hear.
I am a strong-winged bird by fate restrained,
Condemned to languish in a prison drear.
I pine for splendours of the sunlit sphere,
And here I beat my wings, in torture chained.
My fair child, thou shalt hear.

I dream the wedding rites of sylvan flowers
In centuried shadows of the woodland vale:
I dream the loves of beasts in tropical bowers,
Or stretched on torrid sands: the burning showers
Of fervent sunlight: fury of the gale:
Sunlight, and storms, and flowers.

And sometimes, markest thou? forgetting fear,
I struggle, cursing, as through tears I call.
The world goes on and laughs, and doth not hear.
While, raging for the freedom held so dear,
I break my wings against the iron wall,
The great world doth not hear!

O who will break these bars wherein I lie?
O who will give me light and the boundless day?
Who will unclose the gates that ope to the sky?
I must, I will go forth, and singing fly,
In the delirious sunlight caught away—
Freedom! or I shall die.

(*Fatalità.*)

ENRICO NENCIONI

ENRICO NENCIONI

Born at Florence in 1840, *Enrico Nencioni was educated in that city, where he still resides. In his youth he belonged to the group of young men of letters who were known as 'gli amici pedanti,' and of which Chiarini and Ottaviano Targioni-Tozzetti were also members. In* 1878 *he published his 'Poesie,' but he has as a rule given himself up entirely to education and to criticism.*

Belonging to the generation which gave Carducci to Italy, Nencioni in his verse, which was chiefly the product of his earlier years, took part in the revolt against that Romanticism which the great master was finally to overthrow. His poetry is rich and harmonious, of rare expressiveness and accurate form, and the slenderness of its volume is a loss to Italian literature. But for this loss there has been a splendid compensation. As a critic, Nencioni stands at the head of the art. He is the Sainte-Beuve of Italy: and Sainte-Beuve was more—much more—than Joseph Delorme, his dead young poet-self. Among his many services to literature, that which is most interesting to us is his study of our own moderns. For the Italian public, he is the discoverer of Browning, of Tennyson, and of Swinburne.

TO A NIGHTINGALE

O NIGHTINGALE, that in the wood, alone,
Pour'st forth such harmony from yonder bower,
And to the nearest, saddest star mak'st known
Thy secret love in song, thy glorious dower ;

I, like to thee, await the quiet hour
Which re-illumes the saddened fires o'erthrown,
And 'neath the stars my thought, with new-born
power,
Soars into song, a joy that is mine own :

Joy out of infinite sorrow rising pale,
Colleagued with hope, and with oblivion,
With virtue, mystery, and natural prayer.

Ah ! let us keep, harmonious nightingale,
This gift of joy, together singing on,
Till the sky fills with stars, and Night is fair !

(*Poesie.*)

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

I

ON the white head of the old man divine
The sun in torrents falls—the August sun—
In the fields the yellow grasses smoke with heat :
He from his place upon the pillar's height
A living statue stands, an iron form,
Yet animated by the breath of God.

II

In Sagittarius is the sun. From heaven
Upon the desolate earth, naked and bare
Like some poor mendicant's hand, in large white
flakes
Falls the abundant snow. All things that breathe
Seek shelter, and the polar bear alone
Wanders—yet still upon the column's height
The sacred figure of the old man stands.

III

Now in the unending rain each field becomes
A lake, and every furrow is a stream.
From the monotonous grey sky pour down,
Continuous, the waters obstinate.
Drenched, like a solitary tree aloft
Still on the fatal column dost thou stand,
O King of Saints and Martyrs, Simeon!

IV

O Saint, I tremble at the thought of thee.
And well I deem the Sun, and all the stars,
The wandering birds who now for forty years
Have contemplated in the fields of air
Thy meagre profile pale, and all the winds
Who shook in storms thy venerable beard,
White, hoary like the foam o' the sea, and all
Nature, have trembled as they looked on thee.

(*Poesie.*)

ENRICO PANZACCHI

ENRICO PANZACCHI

Enrico Panzacchi was born at Bologna in 1841, *and studied at the University of that town, where he became Doctor of Laws, and at Pisa, where he took the degree of Doctor of Letters in* 1865. *After teaching history at Sassari and philosophy at the Liceo of Bologna, he became in* 1871 *Professor of the History of the Fine Arts at the Academy of Bologna, of which he is also President. He was for some time the editor of various political and literary periodicals. His poetical works are* '*Lyrica*' (*Bologna, Zanichelli, 2nd ed.* 1878), '*Vecchio Ideale*' (*Ravenna, David*), '*Racconti e Liriche*' (*Bologna, Zanichelli,* 1882), *and* '*Nuove Liriche*' (*Milan, Fratelli Treves*). *He has published, moreover, several volumes of criticism and some novels and stories, and has produced for the stage a drama entitled* '*Villa Giulia.*' *A new edition of his poems, in two volumes, is in preparation* (*Zanichelli*).

Panzacchi, who has been compared to Coppée, is one of the most charming and graceful Italian poets of the day, among whom he holds the second or third place, and he has achieved great and merited popularity. His style is original and elegant, varying greatly from that of most of his contemporaries; he combines depth of feeling with a very unusual gift of poetic inspiration, and deserves a far wider recognition in this country than has yet been accorded to him.

DREAMING

In the air was the scent abiding
Of roses withered and dead,
As I wandered by Lethe, gliding
O'er her songless and silent bed.

Far down in the clear cold river
I could see while the wave passed by
The trees on the green bank shiver
Mid the shivering stars of the sky.

O'er the night a deep silence weighing
Made the world veil its slumbrous head,
As the silent waters, swaying,
Passed on in their silent bed.

Then over the tide out-ringing
That slowly swept on to the sea,
There came a sweet sound of singing,
Borne forth on the breezes to me.

'Twas Ophelia pale, reclining
On the widening waters fair,
The river-weeds round her, entwining
With wild flowers caught in her hair.

'On the river-depths cypress-shaded,
Where never the sun shall rise,
I am borne like a leaf that is faded
To a dwelling beyond surmise.

'And nameless and shapeless shadows
Glide after, and sweep through the air,
Like the mists from the dew-dank meadows
That gather and cling in my hair.

'Sweet is oblivion! the pæan
Is mute, and the requiem rolls;
O come to my depths Lethean,
Ye weary-winged, wandering souls!

'All that life longs for of treasure,
And all that love lists of in sleep,
Is not worth the Olympian pleasure
Of my slumber divine and deep.'

So sounded her voice, over-winging
The water-ways, echoed on high;
And my soul was chained to her singing
Till she and her song passed by.

In the air was the perfume, growing
Still sweeter, of roses dead;
And the silent waters flowing
Passed over her silent head.

(*Racconti e Liriche.*)

TO PIETRO COSSA

THE vision of great Rome did ever brood,
Piero, within thine eyes ; that vision clear
Of haloed head and godlike eyes austere
Which made e'en Cæsar pause, what time he stood

By Rubicon, and feared what heroes fear ;
Vision which held the mighty world subdued
With fatal sway, and hath e'en now imbued
Our bitter age with hopes that reappear :

Hopes of reconquered rights and deeds that ring,
Making it seem intolerable shame
That Rome is now so slight and vile a thing ;

Poet ! meseems that Shade of ancient might,
That glorious Memory of sovran fame,
With thee hath passed into the endless night.

(*Racconti e Liriche.*)

PISA

FAIR Arno, while to me the mournful sound
Of vespers floats from all the Pisan bells,
And turn by turn my contemplation dwells
On silent hills and shores with quiet crowned,

My heart with thousand thoughts of glory swells—
Thine ancient glories which through Time resound,
When thine ensanguined tide ran blood, renowned
Through discords of the Tuscan citadels.

When I compare those first and loftier days
Of souls austere and true, to what I see
In this dull age that laughs, disdains, delays;

Better, I cry, thy movement fierce and free,
Than this vile tedium of our baser ways,
O free and fortunate Thirteenth Century!

(*Racconti e Liriche.*)

AN UNSEEN SINGER

Thy voice is borne to me
Over the sundering wall so damp and grey;
Through the warm air thy carolling song of glee
Soars like a lark to greet the sun of May.

Here through the daylight glides
A delicate scent that doth the air perfume,
Where o'er the wall that me from thee divides
An almond-tree sends forth its boughs in bloom.

Ne'er have I seen thy face;
I know not whether I am sad or gay;
But in thy song that fills the severing space
I listening know thee beautiful as day.

Were I that almond-tree,
Transformed one hour by some enchanter's ring,
My fairest blossoms I would shower o'er thee,
To grace thy lovely head while thou shouldst sing.

(*Racconti e Liriche.*)

FAR AWAY

THOU wandering roamest still from place to place,
Far, very far from me—
I sit alone beside the old fireplace,
And talk to it of thee.

And while thou wanderest so in lands remote,
My sighs pursue thee, Dear;
Thy voice upon the nightly breeze afloat
From far I seem to hear:

I hear thy voice that cries, 'O fatherland!
O dear love far away!
How fate renews thy wounds with heavy hand,
While dreams my heart o'ersway!'

Hoarsely the winter blows upon my face,
Whilst here I dream of thee—
Thou wandering roamest still from place to place,
Far, very far from me.

(*Racconti e Liriche.*)

NOCTURNE

SWEET are the meadows near
With scent of mint and broom.
The sky's resplendent gloom
Shines o'er the highway clear.

And the fond hearts' loving doom
Arrests my footsteps here—
Dost thou know that 'neath thy room
I am at thy window, Dear?

And my kisses of furtive love,
Hast thou felt them, sent from hence
To thy trancèd sleep above,

Passing from lips to heart
With an infinite saddened sense
Of love's desirous smart?

GIOVANNI PASCOLI

GIOVANNI PASCOLI

Although many of his poems have long been current among his friends, and occasionally given to the public, it was not till 1892 *that Giovanni Pascoli published a volume of verse* ('*Myricæ*,' *Leghorn, Giusti*): *poems which, he says, are merely windfalls: he has not as yet cared to gather fruit from the tree. He disclaims all ambition; he is in no haste to be famous. Yet he was already sufficiently well known, as a poet who had influenced others of his generation, so that his book was eagerly looked for by the initiated. On the whole, it has not disappointed expectation. If these be indeed windfalls, we have much to look for when he thinks fit to give us the ripened fruit.*

Giovanni Pascoli was born at S. Mauro in Romagna, not far from Rimini, on the closing day of the year 1855 ; *and he passed his early youth in the country, whence he drew his accurate and loving observation of nature. He lost his parents at an early age—a tragedy which has to some extent overshadowed his life: his father was, without apparent cause or reason, murdered on the high road by assassins whose identity remains even now a mystery; and his mother died soon after of a broken heart. He was educated at Urbino, at Rimini, at Florence, and at the University of Bologna, where, still young, he won an entrance scholarship. There, for some time, he studied nothing—except literature, and Carducci especially.*

Severino Ferrari was of his friends, and Guido Mazzoni has written the pleasant and lazy literary record of those times. It was difficult to induce him to publish anything, though he was the recognised head of a group of young poets, and he refused a favourable offer from the well-known 'elzevirian' publisher Zanichelli. Nevertheless, pieces of his crept into 'I Nuovi Goliardi' and the 'Cronaca Bizantina.' At last he took his degree, in 1881, *and he is now Professor of Greek and Latin literature in the royal Liceo at Leghorn.*

Pascoli's work is one of many which prove that, in such cases as are worthy of notice, the school of Carducci leaves full freedom for each disciple to follow his own bent. He resembles Ferrari, for instance, only in the studied brevity of his expression in song. But Ferrari writes short songs because he has bound himself to certain models: Pascoli, because he loves to realise in verse the impression of a moment. In this art he is almost a master. When he has given in ten or twelve terse and pregnant lines the effect of a sunset-scene, the result is that we all see it, miles thence and years afterwards; and this, in its limited sphere, is surely a triumph. For, since this is done, it is (necessarily) accomplished by purely artistic means. One does not at midday see a sunset because it is described well or even eloquently; one sees it because it is fitly and suggestively described.

But there is more than this in Pascoli: the 'fundamental brainwork' is not wanting when he chooses to employ it. And over and above the artistic capacity of representation, he has a rare knowledge and observation of external nature.

THE WEDDING

Old Madam Frog gave wife to her son one day.
Now since the little tadpoles cannot sing,
She begged a neighbouring songster for his lay.

He sang : the jocund ballad by-and-bye
Seemed like a melody of stars that ring
A-tinkle-tinkle in the evening sky.

The bell-like song made sweet the wasted wold
And the black forests vague with mists of gold :
τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ τιὸ
τοροτοροτοροτοροτίξ
τοροτοροτοροτοροτολιλιλίξ

And now 'tis night : still in a dawn of snow
Like a sparkling fount upsprings the ringing rhyme.
But when the Frog inquired, 'What do I owe?

'Two or three little snails, to eat your fill?
Or parsley, or a sprig of odorous thyme?
Or—well! a kiss or two?—or what you will?'

'Oh, nothing for his song the Nightingale
Accepts in barter,' so the singer spoke :
'He has it free ; his song is not for sale :
Hear it : 'tis all he asks : and do not croak.

Then in the moonlight every bull-frog cried,
Croaking his best : 'What insolence! what pride!'

(*Myricæ.*)

THE BANQUET

GUEST at Life's banquet, rise ! 'tis eventide.
Let thou the wine-cups shine in roseate eve ;
No more desirous, yet unsatisfied,
The banquet leave.

And tho' with golden light the lamps may gleam
While thyme and roses scatter scent the while,
Tho' round the board thou mark'st as in a dream
The dear ones smile,

Rise thou ! and—Sadly doth the night invade
The banquet-chamber whence all light hath passed ;
O sad it is to wander in the shade
Alone, and last.

(*Myricæ.*)

THE POET

' ROSES to the garden, swallows to their eaves ! '
He speaks, and the air to his melodious glee
Rustles with wings o'er flowering shrubs withdrawn.
The wise might do aught else : naught else will he ;
Enough are the songful skies, the scented lawn ;
He hurls his music to his native dawn,
And crowns fair heads with flowers and laurel leaves.

(*Myricæ.*)

ARMANDO PEROTTI

ARMANDO PEROTTI

Armando Perotti is a Southern by birth, and first saw the light at Bari in 1865; *he is therefore one of the younger poets of the day. Educated at the University of Rome, he took his degree as Doctor of Laws in* 1886, *but has devoted himself to literature, journalism, and education. His sonnets 'Sul Trasimeno' first appeared in* 1887; *an enlarged edition of his poetry is the 'Libro dei Canti'* (*Trani, Vecchi,* 1890).

Perotti has a gift of flowing and easy versification, by means of which he expresses that mystical sympathy for Nature which is one of the great qualities of recent Italian verse. With Man, too, he has a sympathy often acute and clothed in elegant form. At times he insists loudly upon the dignity of the poet's mission, as in these lines, somewhat freely rendered:

'Ah, let the poets dream! we live by dreams indeed;
Then let us dream, unstirred.
The poet stands in need
Of all things that are useless to the vulgar herd.

. . . . . .

The poet calls the dreams, holds them, and makes them live.
And what a work sublime,
O phantoms fugitive,
Is that of shaping you into immortal rhyme!'

But he returns often to earth and to our common humanity, which reasserts itself in 'In mezzo al mar':

'Amidst of the sea is an island
Full of roses in flower:
'Tis said, in that fair bower
Love hath no entrance ever.

'Thither, alone, with the slender
Book of my songs, oversea,
Full oft were I fain to flee—
But, ah! I can leave Thee never!'

SONNET

TRAGIC, erect where sands o'er waters rise,
A woman stretches out her white arms bare ;
The wet wind beats upon her face and hair
With sling-like sound, and, hissing, onward flies.

Through the dark depths of night o'er sea and skies
No human voice, no trace of man is there ;
To tears and threats and to the voice of prayer
The infernal laughter of the wave replies.

A crowd of weeping women on their knees
Send hymns unto the Lord who hears no more ;
No prayer to God's bright skies its way hath won

The mother, midmost of the rolling seas,
Shouts her fierce cry into the whirlwind's roar :
'Give me my son ! give, give me back my son !'

(*Il Libro dei Canti : Sul Trasimeno*, viii.)

RICCARDO PITTERI

RICCARDO PITTERI

Born in 1853 *at Trieste, Riccardo Pitteri studied at the Universities of Trieste and of Gratz. He is the author of* '*L'Ozio*' (1878); '*Prime incertezze*' (1880); '*In Campagna*' (1889, *Trieste, Caprin*); '*Versi*' (1884, *Bologna, Zanichelli*); '*Sistiliano*' (1885); '*L'Arte*' (1887); '*Tibulliana*' (1887); '*Fiabe*' (1890); '*Reminiscenze di Scuola*' (1891); '*Cristoforo Colombo*' *and* '*Nel Golfo di Trieste*' (1892).

In the '*Tibulliana*' *and* '*Sistiliano*' *the classical element predominates, and it reappears at times in the rest of his work; in such cases the language and style, necessarily, do not widely differ from those of the Carduccian school. But elsewhere, as for instance in his* '*Fables*' *and in much of his last volume, Pitteri gives evidence of possessing a distinct and melodious, if not a very powerful, note of his own. Here, and even in some of his earlier verse, he is more or less in revolt against the classicism of the modern style: his poems respond in their simple language, in their neat and elegant Italian forms, to the demands of those who complain that they have to turn to their dictionaries in order to understand Carducci s*

'*Torcesi un' evia su'l nevoso Edone,*'

or who are weary of realism.

FLOW on, my songs ! let your harmonious rhyme
Like mountain waters sparkling fall in spray ;
Let green leaves shake in joyous pantomime,
And pleasant maidens dance along the way.

Flow on, my songs ! I, like the cricket, chime
Deafened by mine own noise. At times, to play
The fool, is wise : the pistil fades in time,
And the enamoured pollen floats away.

So e'en the drunkard flings to the breeze his song
Hoarsely, besotted, blinded by the sheen
Of lucent stars, as he slips in mire along.

Flow on, my rhymes ! in the ancient faith serene,
Laughter of verse leaps up to the starry throng ;
Deep in the breast laments the heart unseen.

(*Versi*, i, 1.)

THE PEN AND THE PAPER

(*Preface to a volume of verse*)

THE pen, from work averse,
Thought, ' If I spoil the sheet,
Or faulty are the feet,
My time is lost—and worse.

But the paper white and terse,
With utterance indiscreet,
Asked, sneering bitter-sweet,
'Well? how about that verse?'

And the pen, in conscious pride,
Said, 'Here is the verse, full-hatched!'
And straight began to glide.

So, under no decree
Save of caprice, it scratched
The lines which now you see.

(*Fiabe*, Prologue.)

PATIENCE

STILL increasing,
Ebbing, turning,
With unceasing
Equal shock,

Doth the ocean,
Crushing, churning,
Slow in motion,
Grind the rock;

Still rapacious,
Rising, fuming,
With tenacious
Strong command

Breaks and shatters,
Fierce, consuming,
Till she scatters
It in sand.

(*Nel Golfo di Trieste.*)

MARIO RAPISARDI

MARIO RAPISARDI

Essentially a Sicilian poet, Mario Rapisardi has placed himself latterly in violent opposition to the literary movements of Northern and Central Italy, and apparently poses as the head of a Sicilian school.

Born at Catania in 1843, *he pursued his studies in that city, where he has been since* 1875 *Professor of Italian Literature in the University. His first notable work was* '*Palingenesi*' (*Florence, Le Monnier*, 1868), *in which he looked forward to a new religious ideal: it was followed in* 1872 *by a volume of verse entitled* '*Ricordanze*' (*Pisa, Nistri*); *but his great effort was* '*Lucifero*' (*Milan, Brigola*, 1877) *which was violently attacked, by some on account of its anti-Christian tone, by others because of its open or scarcely veiled personal attacks and criticisms. One of these latter drew him into a polemical controversy with Carducci, out of which he cannot be said to have emerged victoriously. It was followed by* '*Giustizia*,' *a volume of Socialist verses, and in* 1884 *by* '*Giobbe*,' *in which the patriarch stands for suffering humanity. It was extensively parodied and ridiculed, especially in* '*Giobbe, Serena Concezione di Marco Balossardi*,' *which is attributed by rumour to Olindo Guerrini* ('*Stecchetti*') *and Corrado Ricci. In* 1887 *appeared his* '*Poesie Religiose*.' *He has also published translations from Catullus and Lucretius, besides other verse. A selection from his poetry, made and corrected by himself, was published some years ago.*

Rapisardi has eloquence and facility, together with the fire and indignant vigour which one looks for in a Sicilian poet, and which cannot well be lacking in a revolutionary and socialistic writer. He is apt, however, to become rhetorical and verbose; and when he attacked what he chose to call (very incorrectly) the 'Bologna school,' he assumed a rôle for which he was unfitted. I do not care to re-write the unprofitable record of these literary controversies; suffice it to say that Professor Rapisardi has many admirers, who are possibly justified in ascribing to his verse certain qualities which give it a value of its own.

TORMENT

I KNOW a cavern hidden from the sun,
Which looks down on the sea from masses grey.
Above, a shaggy hill towers o'er the bay,
And o'er the hill the clouded sky is dun.

Within, dread skeleton forms peer one by one ;
Without, a band of crows conceals the day ;
And a great Sphinx in dull oblivion,
White, rigid, moveless, bears its lofty sway.

There war the tawny waves and winds irate ;
And as their threatening cries and moans are heard,
The Dead crowd in on every side, and wait.

And there my thoughts o'er-proud, and sovereign Fate,
Striving to make it speak one single word,
Have bound my undaunted heart, and closed the gate.

(*Versi scelti.*)

LORENZO STECCHETTI

(OLINDO GUERRINI)

LORENZO STECCHETTI

(OLINDO GUERRINI)

Olindo Guerrini was born in 1845 *at Forli, of a Ravenna family, and was educated at the Municipal College of Ravenna, at the National College of Turin, and at the University of Bologna, of which he ultimately became librarian. He has written several prose works of criticism and bibliography, and brought out many editions of Italian authors.*

It was in 1877 *that he published, in a small volume entitled 'Postuma,' the scattered verses left by his lamented cousin Lorenzo Stecchetti, prefacing them by an obituary notice. Their mothers were sisters, they had studied together and grown up inseparable companions; and when Lorenzo fell into a consumption, and died at the age of thirty, Guerrini was inconsolable. In a few eloquent and pathetic pages he dwells on the progress of the fatal disease, and with words of touching simplicity describes the death-bed scenes. Fully resigned to his lot, and refusing the consolations of religion, Lorenzo Stecchetti passed quietly away with the word 'Finis' upon his lips. 'He is buried in the graveyard of his native village, under the fifth cypress on the left-hand side as you go in. The tombstone bears only the names and dates. He left all his property to charitable institutions.'*

The book had an instantaneous, an enormous success; and, for all I know, enthusiastic pilgrims may have thronged to Fiumana to see that tombstone under the fifth cypress on the left. I cannot say whether they found it; but all the world knows to-day that no such person as Lorenzo Stecchetti ever existed.

I am not going to discuss the ethics of this little piece of 'supercherie'; but I may observe in passing that it was not original. Sainte-Beuve, for instance, had had recourse to it. Guerrini, writing in 1877, *may have read M. Hippolyte Babou's remarks on the publication of the 'Poésies de Joseph Delorme'* (*Crépet, 'Les Poètes Français,' vol. iv.*, 1863): *'C'était un malade, un mort! ses chants interrompus n'étaient que le vague écho d'une voix d'outre-tombe; il avait vécu dans l'obscurité . . . un ami venait de recueillir les tristes reliques . . . Mais pendant qu'on psalmodiait le "de Profundis" sur le cercueil entr'ouvert, on s'aperçut que le cercueil était vide, que le mort était ressuscité, qu'il assistait à ses propres funérailles, et même qu'il en avait très-largement payé les frais. Mise en scène savante d'un talent modeste et fier qui jouait au moribond pour conquérir sans danger le droit de vivre!'*

The last sentence I have quoted (*save for the word 'modeste'*) *is the explanation, perhaps the justification, of Guerrini's literary trick. His generation had refused to listen to him alive: therefore he killed himself, in a metaphor, and lived in very fact to see 'Postuma' run through many editions* (*I have the seventeenth before me*). *More than that: it founded a school.*

In Italy, literary controversy runs ever into extremes. I shall not do more than touch upon the furious and embittered civil war to which the publication of 'Postuma' gave rise: let those who care for such amenities read

Guerrini's 'Nova Polemica,' which, like its predecessor, is to be purchased of Zanichelli of Bologna for the sum of tenpence sterling. They will not find a copy at the British Museum.

'Stecchetti and Praga, with many others,' wrote the late Dr. Francis Hueffer in the 'Fortnightly Review' of April 188[illegible] (*an article reprinted in 'Italian and other Studies,' Elliot Stock*, 1883), *'represent, as it were, the extreme left of the "Veristi." They are Bohemians by profession, and irreconcilable enemies to literary proprieties.' He points out, in another passage, that they had been most savagely attacked by the 'respectable' critics, and that 'their natural retort was the assumption of an exaggerated cynicism and Bohemianism.' This at least is the case with Stecchetti.*

Stecchetti (the pseudonym is too well established to be replaced by the name of the real author) and his school are part of the general revolt against Manzonianism. Notwithstanding the undoubted genius of the author of the world-famed 'Promessi Sposi,' the tendencies of the Romanticists in general, and Manzoni's sacred hymns in especial, were in direct opposition to the taste of the time. The result was that poetry ceased to be, or at least that the public ceased to read it. There had to be a new departure; hence the 'Veristi.' Among the realists, Carducci has sought inspiration in Greece and Rome; Stecchetti studied Byron, Musset, and Heine, and threw himself into the modern French movement. He has the exquisite workmanship, the eager and yet patient love of his art, the beauty and delicacy of form, which he has learnt from his great models. And he has made poetry popular.

His faults are the faults of youth, and those of revolt: yet he has not proceeded to conquer them. Perhaps there

is no morality in matters of art: but that is not the question. That the classic Muse should go naked may be strictly proper: but Stecchetti's Muse is not naked. She is, on the contrary, attired in a modern, suggestive, and 'décolleté' costume; she is rouged and perfumed, and ogles one from behind the coquettish oscillations of her fan. And as to the attitude that this school has taken up against Christianity (I am not speaking of Stecchetti alone but of his imitators), it is not convincing. Their creed seems to be, 'There is no God, and He is the cause of all the evil in the world.' That may be the logic of beings who live in space of four dimensions: here it sounds insincere. Now, insincerity is not of true art.

Stecchetti has produced beautiful verse, and he has helped largely to give new life to Italian literature. Appealing to a wider public than Carducci, he has had a more instant and general effect. Yet it is not probable that he will have an enduring influence. The success of 'Postuma' was followed by a flood of Stecchettists, but the heads that are now emerging are not those of his literary descendants. The onward movement must have its eddies and its whirlpools; now at last I believe it to be settling into deeper and calmer channels.

PRELUDE

POOR rhymes of mine which to the wind I throw,
Sweet memories of youth now long gone by;
Poor rhymes of mine, O whither will ye go,
Each with your joyous or lamenting cry?

Ah! flee the world which aimed so many a blow
At one who loved it not; urge where ye fly
My artless speech sincere, and whisper low
My secret love, O modest rhymes and shy.

And if ye meet my Lady by-and-by,
For whose sweet sake death's agonies I know,
O ye who hear my spirit's inmost sigh,

Ye who have seen my lengthening death and slow,
How much I loved her, tell her ere I die,
Poor rhymes of mine which to the wind I throw!

(*Postuma*, i.)

WHEN the leaves fall in autumn, and you go
To seek the cross that marks my lonely grave,
In that far corner where they laid me low
The nodding wild-flowers o'er my bones shall wave.

O pluck you then, to deck your golden hair,
The flowers born of my heart which blossom there:

They are the songs I dreamed, but ne'er have sung,
The words of love you heard not on my tongue.

(*Postuma*, xiv.)

SONNET

SEATED one night to breathe the evening air
Beneath the tremulous stars with silver ray,
Thou once shalt hear thro' night from far away
A failing cry that calls thee, O most fair :

And 'mid the flowers where first I saw thee, there
A tear shall fall beside thee on thy way,
And thou shalt think it dew, and pluck in play
The flower whereon it fell, to deck thy hair.

No, 'tis no dewdrop that doth thus appear
As the white sunlight on quicksilver lies,
But the remembrance of a fallen tear ;

That sound is not the mournful wind that cries,
But it is I who dying send thee, Dear,
My last long kiss and my lamenting sighs.

(*Postuma*, liv.)

LADY, I fain would die, but die consoled
By thy pure and honest flame ;
Know myself loved, and hear love's story told,
Once at least, untouched by shame.

Ah ! could I give to thee the days unshed
Of my youth now almost o'er,
On thy sweet bosom lay my weary head,
Slumber, and awake no more !

(*Postuma*, lxxxiii.)

G. TARGIONI-TOZZETTI

AND

G. MENASCI

G. TARGIONI-TOZZETTI

AND

G. MENASCI

These are the libretto-writers for Mascagni's well-known operas, 'Cavalleria Rusticana,' 'L'Amico Fritz,' and 'I Rantzau.' Their work is far superior to what is usually to be met with in this field of literature, and I have therefore thought it worth while to reproduce a melodious piece which opens the third act of 'I Rantzau.'

CHORUS OF WOMEN

LIMPID wave that sparkling brightly
Leapest lightly,
Chatterer gay and unrepenting ;
Thou whose voice from mountain-valleys
Breaks and rallies,
Scattering echoes self-tormenting :

Hast thou found upon the mountain,
At thy fountain,
My lost shepherd-love lamenting ?
O sweet water, rippling, singing,
Art thou bringing
His dear kiss to me relenting ?

(*I Rantzau*, iii. 1.)

ANNIE VIVANTI

ANNIE VIVANTI

The literary sensation of 1890, *in Italy, was the publication of* '*Lirica*' (*Milan, Galli*), *with a prefatory letter by Carducci—an unusual honour, and as such a sure title at least to consideration, if not to fame.* '*In my poetical creed,*' *he begins,* '*it is written that priests and women may not write verse.*' *But he revokes this judgment in her favour—not in that of the priests. He goes on to say that hers is certainly poetry, and poetry such as* '*must almost fatally break forth from the temperament of a lyrical woman* (*a most rare case*).' *It lacks* '*what is with pedantic neologism called "form,"*' *but it has pure expression, power of representation, colouring, passion.*

To Carducci's somewhat qualified praise it must be added that this young poetess—she was born in London in 1868—*allows herself some freedom in her amatory verses, and that her fervour of passionate expression is calculated to give offence. But she is, nevertheless, a brilliant and eloquent writer, and so early and splendid a promise as is given in* '*Lirica*' *entitles us to hope for better and maturer work from so facile a pen. Englishmen who can refer to the original will note with amusement her vehement denunciation, in* '*Ave Albion!*' *of the country in which she had the misfortune to be born. I am the more encouraged in refusing to take the flagellation seriously, as the Italian postal authorities have only just now, with delightful vagueness, reported her present address to be* '*London.*'

WHITE VIOLETS

I SEND you violets, violets dim and white ;
Fragrance and brilliant hues they cannot claim,
Yet keep they of their scented sisters bright
The semblance and the name.

Such is the love that lingers sad and pale
Within the heart, though conquered by the will ;
Love that by kiss and smile tells not its tale,
Yet ever love, love still !

(*Lirica.*)

THE DEAD CHILD

HER wings were hidden still, and we forgot
That she might fly away ;
So sweet her laughing eyes,
We thought not she was homesick all her day
For Paradise.

Angel she seemed to be, yet we forgot
That one day she might die ;
For, in her childlike fear,
We thought not she would ever wish to fly
And leave us here.

We loved her, ah ! so much ! yet we forgot,
So sweet she was and gay,
That she might hear God call,
And spread her airy wings and fly away
Beyond recall.

(*Lirica.*)

ANTONIO ZARDO

ANTONIO ZARDO

A Venetian poet. Born in 1850 *at Padua, in the University of which town he studied law, Zardo has devoted himself to an educational career, and occupies a chair of 'belles-lettres.' His 'Versi' were published in* 1879 (*Venice, Segrè*), *and he is the author of many versions from the German, besides other works.*

THE DAISY

SHY, modest flower! if thee her eyes shall greet
When cruel fear her tender heart o'erpowers,
Though she disdain to see thy sister flowers,
The maid shall pause to pluck thee at her feet.

She plucks thee from the turf, diviner sweet
Of love's sweet secrets in the dubious hours,
And bends her blushing face in leafy bowers,
While thy pale leaves her coming fate repeat.

Ah! well for her, bright flower whose day is done,
That unto thee she turned i' the heart's distress!
For thou complainest not, when one by one

Thy silver petals fall to her joy and grief:
Thou diest pitying her—'He loves thee, yes!'
Thou answerest with thy last remaining leaf.

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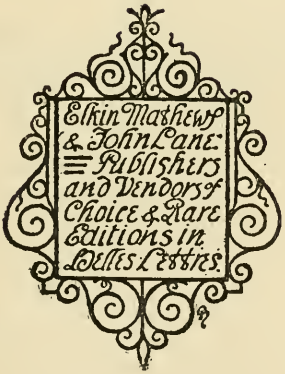

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