

DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY.

TEXTS AS VARIED AND UNCERTAIN AS MANY ANCIENT CLASSICS.

More Than 600 MSS. of the Work Are Known and Registered - Dr. Moore's Comparatively Successful Investigation. In Witte's Footsteps.

Most readers of Dante little imagine upon what uncertain ground his text, as they have it, stands. Considering the immense value which was immediately put on the poem in Italy, it is strange that the poet's own copy, or copies, should have disappeared, especially as manuscripts still survive, exhibiting a text already tampered with, which seem to have been written within a score of years after the poet's death.

When, for instance, we go from our Witte or Giuliani, to the fac-simile of the Monte Cassino manuscript, or Lord Vernon's reprint of the four first printed editions of the Aldine text with its reproductions in the Sixteenth, we seem introduced to a new language—at least, to a new mode of representing it—nearer, probably, than anything of modern Italian to the usage of the poet.

What ordinary reader would guess that pericchio stands for perich' in veggiog' (Moore, v. li). But this is the least part of the variation. What words did Dante write? is the question which arises, as book after book, and manuscript after manuscript, gives a phrase, a construction, a name, a metaphor differently, making some difference, sometimes an important difference, to the sense or the beauty of the words. That is to say, that the text of the "Commedia," like the text of all ancient books, is, when minutely and carefully examined, found to be less uniformly settled than we unconsciously assume when we take up the book as we have it in our current editions. It is, of course, what any one accustomed to the critical study of classical authors would expect.

The result has been that, though there has been much talk in Italy about codici of the "Commedia," chiefly in setting forth the merits of some favorite copy, nothing was done, even toward preparing the way for the settlement of the text, till the subject was taken up by Witte. The Crusca academicians, in their edition (1855), appealed to manuscripts of the readings which they approved or condemned; but, besides that they avowedly "improved" readings, they, like most people at the time, only counted their manuscripts and did not weigh them, and were not alive to what might have seemed an obvious truth, except that the critical world was so long finding it out that there are manuscripts and manuscripts, good copies and bad. Witte broke ground in attempting a more reasonable and scholarly treatment of the thing to be done.

The work which Witte began has been taken up by Dr. Moore in a thorough and solid way, which is, in the highest degree, creditable to English scholarship. His volume of "contributions to the textual criticism" of the "Commedia" is a step in advance of anything yet said on the subject, not only in England, but in Germany. The immense mass of materials which confronts the critical editor of the "Commedia," comprising copies which go back to a time not far distant from the writer's death, makes the sifting and classification of these copies a necessity, if he would not be overwhelmed by an almost hopeless task.

Dr. Moore has made a beginning in this difficult work, though, with the caution and modesty of a scholar, he proposes it only as a beginning. Can this multitude of copies be sorted and arranged on any principle? He selects a number of passages where the readings vary—"test passages," as he calls them; and he examines and compares the readings given by as many manuscripts as he can get hold of. The number is large; he cites, mainly from his own inspection, over 200. All kinds of unaccountable anomalies present themselves; some of the most curious variations, and even blunders, occurring in some of the oldest authorities, and suggesting the possibilities of changes and corrections by the poet himself in copies made in his lifetime. It is curious that, though in many copies the dialect of the scribe—Venetian, Lombard, Tuscany—is so evident, it does not seem to supply a mark for grouping. Still, in spite of all this obscurity, Dr. Moore thinks that he finds traces of one distinct group or family, which he calls the "Vatican" family, from a famous manuscript which is its type. Witte had also thought that he could trace a Sienese family of copies, though his indications are fainter. This is the point to which the investigation has reached.

London Spectator.

CONEMAUGH BOROUGH.

Special Meeting of Council Last Night. CONEMAUGH BOROUGH, Dec. 17.—Council met in special session and was called to order by the President. Members answering to roll call were Messrs. Gerber, Kist, Matthews, Riser, Wittham and Friedhoff, President. Mr. Cudbert being absent.

Minutes of the previous regular meeting were read and approved. The President stated the object of the meeting was to consider charges on tapping sewers, and also to consider grade of Center street presented by the Borough Surveyor, and several petitions.

On motion of Mr. Matthews the rules were suspended, in order that Mr. Knorr might be heard. Mr. Knorr then stated that he was assessed and paid taxes for a whole lot and only has a part of a lot. He also asked for a refunding order for overpaid taxes.

On motion of Mr. Matthews Mr. Knorr was granted a refunding order of \$2.00 for overpaid taxes. On motion of Mr. Matthews grade was adopted as presented by the Borough Surveyor.

Petition from Mrs. Ward was read asking for a refunding order of \$25.00, which she claims she has been overcharged for tapping sewer.

On motion of Mr. Kist petition was laid over to next regular meeting. On motion of Mr. Wittham to have six electric lights, retain the three arc lights on Railroad street and place 34 incandescent lights at points designated by the Committee on Lights, Etc., was on agreed to.

On motion of Mr. Matthews Burress be instructed to enforce ordinance in regard to building permits, obstructions, etc., on streets and alleys. So ordered.

On motion of Mr. Riser meeting adjourned at half past 8 o'clock P. M.

A Defense of Dudley. Chicago News. Col. W. W. Dudley, the hero of the "blocks of five" episode, who, by a judicious use of money, saved the country last November from going to rack and ruin, is being attacked by a dangerous person who accuses the eminent statesman of bribery. This is simply disgraceful. Things have come to a pretty pass when trouble is made for a man simply because he hires some gentleman to go up to the polls and vote the right ticket. The good people are with Col. Dudley when he declares that the man who reopened this case would sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. It were the basest ingratitude if the Hoosiers did not rally to the support of the philanthropist and statesman who came down like a white-winged dove on an errand of mercy and scattered crisp two-dollar bills among citizens who were perishing for whisky.

The harsh, drastic purgatives, once deemed so indispensable, have given place to milder and more skillfully prepared laxatives—hence the great and growing demand for Ayer's Pills. Physicians everywhere recommend them for constiveness, indigestion, and liver complaints.

Senator Dolph, of Oregon, has a bill in hand which he will shortly introduce, asking for an appropriation of only four hundred and twenty-six millions for coast defenses. That will skin out the surplus and no mistake. There's nothing mean about Dolph.

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria, When she was a Child, she clung to Castoria, When she became Miss, she cried for Castoria, When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

ESTRAY.—Came to premises the of the undersigned a mule and a half from Blacklick Furnace in East Wheatland township, Indiana county, about the 1st of May, a red and white spotted steed, with white spots on the left ear and two notches in the ear. He is about two years old. The owner is requested to come prove property, pay charges and take him away or he will be disposed of according to law.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.—LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION on the estate of JOHN W. WEAVER, late of the borough of Johnstown, County of Cambria, and State of Pennsylvania, deceased, having been granted to the undersigned, all persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment, and those having claims against said estate to present them duly authenticated for settlement to

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The Best Kid Gloves, \$1.00 a pair and upwards. Blankets, Elder Down Quilts, Table Linens, Towels, Lace Curtains, Heavy Curtains, Table Covers and Upholstering.

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B. & B. The extent of the benefits of Our Great Mail Order Department

Is well put by a letter recently received from Mexico. The lady writes: "I am a regular customer of yours, if I go live 2,500 miles from Allegheny." The prices she quotes may be taken as a fair sample of the exorbitant charges made by storekeepers where there is little competition.

You needn't pay such prices. Far or near, our MAIL ORDER DEPARTMENT solicits your trade, and promises to give you goods at the lowest prices obtainable in the entire country. Write for samples and make comparisons.

If you come to the Exposition, don't fail to visit our stores. Ten minutes walk from the Exposition will bring you to our stores on Federal street, corner Park Way.

See our Great Dress Goods Departments, Silk Departments, Cashmeres (Black and Colored), Fine Cloakings, Largest Cloak Rooms in the two cities.

Finest lines Genuine Alaska Seal Goods. Lace Curtains and Portieres. Prices go for naught when you can see the goods. BOGGS & BUHL, 115, 117, 119, 121 FEDERAL STREET, ALLEGHENY, PA.

P. S.—If you cannot come, write. Idleness is a Dangerous Fault. In the kidneys. When inactive they sleepily fall into disrepair, become obstinate and fatal maladies, Bright's disease and diabetes, ensue with terrible certainty upon the inaction of the organs affected. Catarrh of the bladder, enuresis, gravel and stranguary are also comprehended from a partial paralysis of the bladder, of which weakness and stingsiness are the causes. Hostetter's stomach Bitters is a fine tonic and promoter of activity for the renal organs, and one which can be relied upon to afford them the requisite stimulus without exciting them to an effect to be feared from the unmediated alcoholic excitant of commerce. A further beneficial effect of Bitters, by renewing activity of the kidneys, is to enable them to drain from the blood in its passage them, impurities productive of rheumatism and dropsy. Nervousness, fever and age, constipation and dyspepsia are conquered by the Bitters.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.—ESTATE OF FREDERICK WILLIAM HOFFMAN, DECEASED.—Letters of Administration having been granted to the undersigned on the estate of Frederick William Hoffman, late of Conemaugh borough, Cambria county, deceased, notice is hereby given to all persons indebted to said estate to make immediate payment, and those having claims against said estate to present them duly authenticated for settlement to

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The Old Doctors

Drew blood, modern doctors cleanse it, hence the increased demand for Alteratives. It is now well known that most diseases are due, not to over-abundance, but to impurity, of the Blood; and it is equally well attested that no blood medicine is so efficacious as Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

"One of my children had a large sore break out on the leg. We applied simple remedies for a while, thinking the sore would shortly heal. But it grew worse. We sought medical advice, and were told that an alterative medicine was necessary. Ayer's Sarsaparilla being

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"Ayer's medicine continues to be the standard remedy in spite of all competition." — T. W. Richmond, Bear Lake, Mich.

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EXHAUSTED VITALITY! THE SCIENCE OF LIFE. THE SCIENCE OF LIFE, the great Medical Work of the age. Manhood, Nervous and Physical Debility, Premature Decline, Errors of Youth, and the untold miseries consequent thereon, are cured by the prescriptions for all diseases. Cloth, full gilt, only \$1.00, by mail, sealed. Illustrative sample free to all young and middle-aged men. Send now. The Good and Useful Medical Association, Address P. O. Box 1585, Boston, Mass., or Dr. W. H. PARKER, graduate of Harvard Medical College, 35 years practice in Boston, who may be consulted confidentially. Office No. 1 Bulfinch St., Specialty, Diseases of Man. Cut this out. You may never see it again.

Common Sense. In the treatment of slight ailments would save a vast amount of sickness and misery. One of Ayer's PILLS, taken after dinner, will assist Digestion; taken at night, will relieve Constipation; taken at any time, will correct irregularities of the Stomach and Bowels, stimulate the Liver, and cure Sick Headache. Ayer's Pills, as all know who use them, are a mild cathartic, pleasant to take, and always prompt and satisfactory in their results.

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