Hall Caine's Latest and Best Work, "The Eternal City."

FOR about three years Hall Caine has been hard at work in Rome collecting material and writing the greatest of all his books, "The Eternal City," just published by D. Appleton & Co. of New York.

His time has not been wasted for "The Eternal City" will compare favorably with the greatest works in fiction of many seasons. Mr. Caine has written with a purpose and what he has to say regarding the problem of his novel is printed on this page, but the book will appeal to the great mass of readers for its story alone. In fact his writing is so powerfully human in its interest that probably not one in a thousand will think of "problems" or "purposes" when devouring the pages of "The Eternal City."

Like other books from Mr. Caine's pen this is decidedly somber in color, almost morbid, in fact, and as far as the characters are concerned things could not turn out much worse. The reader has the rather poor consolation of knowing that right for the multitude has come out of the wrongs of individuals, but it is hard to cheer for the good of mankind at large with a lump in your throat and tears in your eyes over the cruel fates of those you have learned to know and love—even if they are only passing figures in fiction.

This new novel is over 300,000 words in length. From that fact alone it is evident that the author has allowed himself no limit in making his descriptions full or in carrying out the intricacies of his plots and counterplots. The work is daring and undoubtedly will awaken considerable comment. It deals with the Rome of to-day or to-morrow.

It is easy to imagine characters in the book taken from those in real life, for Mr. Caine does not hesitate to introduce most prominently a Pope of Rome, a King and for his villain a most remarkable Prime Minister, and in lesser light appear the British and American Ministers.

In a brief prologue is shown a glimpse of life twenty years before the actual beginning of the events that form the main story.

Dr. Roselli, an exile from Italy living under an assumed name, saves the life of a poor little Italian sufferer of the padrone system in London—a little chap who only knows that his name is David Leone, that he is from Italy and that he is a beggar.

David lives with the Rosellis and becomes as a brother to Roma, the daughter, and also a firm believer in the doctor's ideas for saving his country from the political oppression that threatens it. Twenty years later we find that the doctor finally went to Italy on the false representations of his kinsman. He even left his motherless little daughter in London that he might further the good of the cause for mankind. This kinsman, the Baron Bonelli, easily compasses the downfall of the good doctor and manages his life imprisonment—all because he wishes the estates and is politically ambitious.

Before the doctor dies he sends a phonograph cylinder to David, and this proves of the utmost importance as the plot develops.

Meantime Roma Roselli has been taken by the Baron and brought up as his ward. She is in Rome and is known by her true name of Roma Volonna. David Leone is also in Rome, and now, under his mother's name of Rossi, is a member of the Chamber of Deputies and a leader of the extreme Left. He is regarded by the Government as an anarchist of the most dangerous sort, but in reality is a man of peace and a believer in a government of the people ruled by the people.

At the time of the Pope's Jubilee, when Rossi addresses the people, neither Roma nor David has any idea of the identity of the other. Already Roma's name has been scandalously linked with that of the Baron, and so in his speech directed at the Government and its real head, the Prime Minister, Rossi uses that point to say:

"And who in Rome cannot point to the Ministers who allow their mistresses to meddle in public affairs and enrich themselves by the ruin of all around?"

Baron Bonelli has the man promptly arrested on pretense of exciting a riot, but Roma asks that he be left to her that she may take her own revenge. She wishes to humiliate him by becoming his friend and then betraying him after she has finally wormed all of his secrets out of him and can catch him in some conspiracy of importance. To this end she says to the Baron:

"You say there is a mystery about David Rossi, and you want to know who he is, who his father was and where he spent the years he was away from Rome."

"I would certainly give a good deal to know it."

"You want to know what vile refugee in London filled him with his fancies, what conspiracies he is hatching, what secret societies he belongs to, and, above all, what his plans and schemes are, and whether he is in league with the Vatican."

She spoke so rapidly that the words sputtered out of her quivering lips.

"Well?"

"Well, I will find it all out for you."

"My dear Roma!"

"Leave him to me, and within a month you shall know"—she laughed, a little ashamed—"the inmost secrets of his soul."

She was walking to and fro again to prevent the Baron from looking into her face, which was now red over its white, like a rose moon in a stormy sky.

The Baron thought. "She is going to humble the man by her charms—to draw him on and then fling him away, and thus pay him back for what he has done to-day. So much the better for me if I may stand by and do nothing. A strong Minister should be unmoved by personal attacks. He should appear to regard them with contempt."

He looked at her, and the brilliancy of her eyes set his heart on fire. The terrible attraction of her face at that moment stirred in him the only love he had for her. At the same time it awakened the first spasm of jealousy.

"I understand you, Roma," he said. "You are splendid! You are irresistible! But remember—the man is one of the incorruptible."

She laughed.

"No woman who has yet crossed his path seems to have touched him, and it is the pride of all such men that no woman ever can."

"I've seen him," she said.

"Take care! As you say, he is young and handsome."

She tossed her head and laughed again.

The Baron thought: "Certainly he has wounded her in a way no woman can forgive." * * *

"You wish me to liberate David Rossi and leave you to deal with him?"

"I do! Oh, for the day when I can turn the laugh against him as he turned the laugh against me! At the top of his hopes, at the height of his ambitions at the moment when he says to himself, 'It is done'—he shall fall."

The Baron touched the bell. "Very well!" he said. "One can sometimes catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with a hogshead of vinegar." We shall see.

Roma at once proceeds to carry out her plan. She is a sculptress and decides to ask Rossi to sit for her as a model for one of the figures on a fountain that she is doing for the municipality. This is to be the first strand in the net with which she intends to drown him.

In the meantime Rossi has learned something about Donna Roma and his fears are confirmed when he hears the phonographic cylinder which has reached him with the dying words of the beloved guardian of his youth. So his course is easily taken when Roma calls.

"I am doing a very unusual thing in coming to see you," she said, "but you have forced me to it, and I am quite helpless.

"I heard your speech in the piazza this morning. It would be useless to disguise the fact that some of its references were meant for me.

"If I were a man, I suppose I should challenge you. Being a woman, I can only come to you and tell you that you are wrong."

"Wrong?"

"Cruelly, terribly, shamefully wrong."

"You mean to tell me"——

He was stammering in a husky voice, but she said quite calmly:

"I mean to tell you that in substance and in fact what you implied was false."

"If—if"—his voice was thick and indistinct—"if you tell me that I have done you an injury"——

"You have—a terrible injury.

She could hear his breathing but she dared not look up, lest he should see something in her face.

"Perhaps you think it strange," she said, "that I should ask you to accept my assurance only. But though you have done me a great wrong I believe you will accept it. Even your enemies speak of you as a just man. You are known everywhere as a defender of women. Wherever a woman is wronged by cruel and selfish men there your name rings out as her friend and champion. Shall it be said that in your own person you have made an innocent woman suffer?"

"If . . . if you give me your solemn word of honor that what I said—what I implied—was false, that rumor and report have slandered you, that it is all a cruel and baseless calumny"—

She raised her head, looked him full in the face, and without a quiver in her voice:

"I do give it," she said.

"Then I do believe you," he answered. "With all my heart and soul I believe you."

He had been thinking. "It is she! The sweetness of childhood and of girlish innocence a little faded, a little depraved a little changed, but it is she!"

"This man is a child," she thought. "He will believe anything I tell him." And then she dropped her eyes again, and turning with her thumb an opal ring on her finger, she began to use the blandishments which had never failed with other men.

"I do not say that I am altogether without blame," she said. "I may have lived a thoughtless life amid scenes of poverty and sorrow. If so, perhaps it has been partly the fault of the men about me. When is a woman anything but what the men around her have made her?"

She dropped her voice almost to a whisper, and added, "You are the first man who has not praised and flattered me."

"I was not thinking of you," he said. "I was thinking of another, and perhaps of the poor working women who, in a world of luxury, have to struggle and starve."

She looked up, and a half smile crossed her face. It was like the smile of the fowler, when the bird on the tree answers to the decoy in the grass.

"I honor you for that," she said. "And perhaps if I had earlier met a man like you my life might have been different. I used to hope for such things long ago—that a man of high aims and noble purposes would come to meet me at the gate of life. Perhaps you have felt like that—that some woman, strong and true, would stand beside you for good or for ill, in your hour of danger and your hour of joy."

Her voice was not quite steady—she hardly knew why.

"A dream! We all have our dreams," he said.

"A dream indeed! Men came—he was not among them. They pampered every wish, indulged every folly, loaded me with luxuries, but my dream was dispelled. I respected few of them and reverenced none. They were my pastime, my playthings. And they have revenged themselves by saying in secret—what you said in public this morning."

He was looking at her constantly with his great wistful eyes, the eyes of a child, and through all the joy of her success she was conscious of a spasm of pain at the expression of his sad face and the sound of his tremulous voice.

"We men are much to blame," he said. "In the battle of man with man we deal out blows and think we are fighting fair, but we forget that behind our foe there is often a woman—a wife, a mother, a sister, a friend—and, God forgive us, we have struck her, too."

The half smile that had gleamed on Roma's throat was wiped out of it by these words, and an emotion she did not understand began to surge in her throat.

"You speak of poor women who struggle and starve," she said. "Would it surprise you to hear that I know what it is to do that? Yes, and to be friendless and alone—quite, quite alone in a cruel and wicked city?"

She had lost herself for a moment, and the dry glitter in her eyes had given way to a moistness and a solemn expression. But at the next instant she had regained her self-control, and went on speaking to avoid a painful silence.

"I have never spoken of this to another man," she said. "I don't know why I should mention it to you—to you of all men."

He found no treachery in her fascinations. He only saw his little Roma, the child who lived in her still, her innocent sister who lay sleeping within.

She had risen to her feet, and he stepped up to her, and looking straight into her eyes, he said:

"Have you ever seen me before?"

"Never," she answered.

"Sit down," he said. "I have something to say to you."

She sat down, and a peculiar expression, almost a crafty one, came into her face.

"You have told me a little of your life," he said: "let me tell you something of mine."

She smiled again, and it was with difficulty that she concealed the glow of triumph in her cheeks. These big children called men were almost to be pitied. She had expected a fight, but the man had thrown up the sponge from the outset, and now he was going to give himself into her hands. Only for that pathetic look in his eyes and that searching tone in his voice she could have found it in her heart to laugh.

"You are the daughter of an ancient family," he said, "older than the house it lived in and prouder than a line of kings. And whatever sorrows you may have seen, you knew what it was to have a mother who nursed you and a father who loved you and a home that was your own. Can you realize what it is to have known neither father nor mother, to be homeless, nameless and alone?"

She looked up—a deep furrow had crossed his brow which she had not seen there before.

"Yes. My earliest memory is of being put out to nurse at a farmstead in the Campagna. It was the time of revolution; the treasury of the Pope was not yet replaced by the treasury of the King, the nuns at Santo Spirito had no money with which to pay their pensions and I was like a child forsaken by its own, a fledgling in a foreign nest."

"Oh!"

"Those were the days when scoundrels established abroad traded in the white slavery of poor Italian boys. They scoured the country, gathered them up, put them in railway trucks like cattle and dispatched them to foreign countries. My foster parents parted with me for money, and I was sent to London."

Roma's bosom was heaving and tears were gathering in her eyes.

"My next memory is of living in a large, half-empty house in Soho—fifty foreign boys crowded together.

Roma's eyes were filling frankly, and she was allowing the tears to flow.

"Thank God, I have another memory," he continued. "It is of a good man, a saint among men, an Italian refugee, giving his life to the poor, especially to the poor of his own people."

"What was his name?"

"They called him Joseph Roselli."

Roma half rose from her seat, then sank back, and the lace handkerchief dropped from her hand.

"But I heard afterward—long afterward—that he was a Roman noble; one of the fearless few who had taken up poverty and exile in an unknown name for the sake of liberty and justice."

"Well?"

"He was enticed from England to Italy; an English Minister violated his correspondence with a friend and communicated its contents to the Italian Government; he was betrayed into the hands of the police and deported without trial."

Roma was clutching at the bodice of her dress as if to keep down a cry.

"Was he never heard of again?"

"Once—only once—by the friend I speak about."

"Who was the friend?" she asked.

"One of his poor waifs—a boy who owed everything to him and loved and revered him as a father—loves and reveres him still, and tries to follow in the path he trod."

"What—what was his name?"

"David Leone."

She looked at him for a moment without being able to speak. Then she said:

"What became of him?"

"He went to America."

"Did he ever return?"

"Yes. Love of home in him, as in all homeless ones, was a consuming passion, and he came back to Italy."

"Where—where is he now?"

David Rossi stepped up to her and said:

"In this room."

She rose—

"Then you are David Leone?"

"David Leone is dead!"

"I understand. David Leone is dead, but David Rossi is alive."

He did not speak, but his head was held up and his face was shining.

"Are you not afraid to tell me this?"

"No."

"You insulted and humiliated me in public this morning, yet you think I will keep your secret?"

"I know you will."

"May I—may I shake hands with you?" she said.

There was a moment of hesitation and then their hands seemed to leap at each other and clasp with a clasp of fire.

At the next instant he had lifted her hand to his lips and was kissing it again and again.

A sensation of triumphant joy flashed through her, and instantly died away. She wished to cry out, to confess, to say something, she knew not what. But David Leone is dead rang in her ears, and at the same moment she remembered what the impulse had been which brought her to that house.

Then her eyes began to swim and her heart to fall, and she wanted to fly away without uttering another word. She could not speak, he could not speak; they stood together on a precipice where only by silence could they hold their heads.

"Let me go home," she said in a breaking voice, and with downcast head and trembling limbs she stepped to the door.

After that David redeems his promise of acting as a model and Roma sees him quite frequently in her studio. To both of them the past becomes clearer and clearer, and one day at a little country inn circumstances arise that bring the matter to a turning point, and they admit that each has recognized the other.

Their eyes met, their hands clasped, their pent-up secret was out, and in the dim-lit catacombs of love two souls stood face to face.

"How long have you known it?" she whispered.

"Since the night you came to the Piazza Navona. And you?"

"Since the moment I heard your voice." And then she shuddered and laughed.

When they left the house of silence a blessed hush had fallen on them, a great wonder which they had never known before, the wonder of the everlasting miracle of human hearts.

David soon finds that he is falling seriously in love with the adorable Roma. He has sworn to devote his life to the cause of humanity and has always said that if he ever found himself in such a position he should run from the object of his affection before it was too late. For this reason he ceases his visits. Roma soon finds out the cause. She begins to love the man, for she realizes his greatness when he is willing to atone for his slurring of her character by being seen with her at the theater and when he accepts the innuendos of her society friends without retort. Their studio talks, too, have brought them very close together, and she decides that she cannot give him up.

Already she regrets information she has unwittingly given the Baron, which he is putting to good use, so she tries to keep her own counsel on subsequent interviews with Rossi. As he does not come she decides to go to him.

He is alone in his room when Roma arrives.

"I have come for a minute only," she said. "You received my letter?"

Rossi bent his head.

"David, I want the fulfillment of your promise."

"What promise?"

"The promise to come to me when I stand in need of you. I need you now. My fountain is practically finished, and to-morrow afternoon I am to have a reception to exhibit it. Everybody will be there, and I want you to be present also."

"Is that necessary?" he asked.

"For my purposes, yes. Don't ask me why. Don't question me at all. Only trust me and come."

"Very well, I will be there."

"That's all. I might have written, but I was afraid you might object, and I wished to make quite certain. Adieu!"

"Roma," he said, in a voice that sounded choked.

She stopped, but did not speak, and he felt himself growing hot all over.

"I'm relieved—so much relieved—to hear that you agree with what I said in my letter."

"The last—in which you wish me to forget you?"

"It is better so—far better. I am one of those who think that if either party to a marriage"—he was talking in a constrained way—"entertains beforehand any rational doubt about it, he is wiser to withdraw, even at the church door, rather than set out on a lifelong voyage under doubtful auspices."

"Ah, well," she said, taking a long breath and turning a little way.

"But don't think I shall not suffer in parting from you, Roma. Thy will be done. There are moments in life when it isn't easy to say that. At least I can pray that you may be happy—and perhaps in eternity"——

"Didn't we promise not to speak of this?" she said impatiently. Then their eyes met for a moment and he knew that he was false to himself and that his talk of renunciation was a mockery.

"Roma," he said again, "if you want me in the future you must write."

Her face clouded over.

"For your own sake, you know"——

"Oh, that! That's nothing at all—nothing now."

"But people are insulting me about you and"——

"Well, and you?"

The color rushed to his cheeks and he smote the back of a chair with his clenched fist.

"I tell them"——

"I understand," she said, and her eyes began to shine again. But she only turned away, saying: "I'm sorry you are angry that I came."

"Angry!" he cried, and at the sound of his voice as he said the word their love for each other went thrilling through and through them.

The rain had begun to fall and it was beating with smart strokes on the window panes.

"You can't go now," he said, "and since you are never to come here again there is something you ought to hear."

He went to the bureau drawer by the wall and took out a small round packet.

"Do you remember your father's voice?" he asked.

"That is all I do remember about my father. Why?"

"It is here in this cylinder."

She rose quickly and then slowly sat down again.

"Tell me," she said.

"When your father was deported to the island of Elba he was a prisoner at large, without personal restraint, but under police supervision."

"Did he ever hear of me?"

"Yes, and of myself as well. A prisoner brought him news of one David Rossi, and under that name and the opinions attached to it he recognized David Leone, the boy he had brought up and educated. He wished to send me a message."

"Was it about"—

"Yes. The letters of prisoners are read and copied, and to smuggle out by hand a written document is difficult or impossible. But at length a way was discovered. Some one sent a phonograph and a box of cylinders to one of the prisoners, and the little colony of exiled ones used to meet at your father's home to hear the music. Among the cylinders were certain blank ones. Your father spoke onto one of them and when the time came for the owner of the phonograph to leave Elba, he brought the cylinder back with him. This is the cylinder your father spoke onto."

"And this contains my father's voice," she said.

"His last message."

"He is dead—two years dead—and yet"—

"Can you bear to hear it?"

"Go on," she said, hardly audibly.

He took back the cylinder, put it on the phonograph, wound up the instrument and touched the lever.

Then through the sound of the rain and of the phonograph there came a clear, full voice:

"David Leone—your old friend Doctor Roselli sends you his dying message"—

The hand on Rossi's arm clutched it convulsively, and, in a choking whisper, Roma said:

"Wait! Give me one moment."

She was looking around the darkening room as if almost expecting a ghostly presence.

She bowed her head. Her breath came quick and fast.

"I am better now. Go on," she said.

The whirring noise began again and after a moment the clear voice came as before:

"My son, the promise I made when we parted in London I fulfilled faithfully, but the letter I wrote to you never came to your hands. It was meant to tell you who I was, and why I changed my name. That is too long a story now, and I must be brief. I am Prospero Volonna. My father was the last prince of that name. Except the authorities and their spies nobody in Italy knows me as Roselli and nobody in England as Volonna—nobody but one, my poor dear child, my daughter Roma."

The hand tightened on Rossi's arm and his head began to swim.

"Little by little, in this grave of a living man, I have heard what has happened since I was banished from the world. The treacherous letter which called me back to Italy and decoyed me into the hands of the police was the work of the man who now holds my estates as the payment for his treachery."

"The Baron?"

Rossi had stopped the phonograph.

"Can you bear it?" he said.

The pale young face flushed with resolution.

"Go on," she said.

When the voice from the phonograph began again it was more tremulous and husky than before.

"After he had betrayed the father, what impulse of fear or humanity prompted him to take charge of the child God alone, who reads all hearts, can say. He went to England to look for her, found her in the streets to which she had been abandoned by the faithlessness of the guardians to whom I left her, and shut their mouths by buying them to the perjury of burying the unknown body of an unfortunate being in the name of my beloved child."

The hand on Rossi's arm trembled feebly and slipped down to his own hand. It was cold as ice. The voice from the phonograph was growing faint.

"She is now in Rome, living in the name that was mine in Italy, amid an atmosphere of danger and perhaps of shame. My son, save her from it. The man who betrayed the father may betray the daughter also. Take her from him. Rescue her. It is my dying prayer."

The voice ceased, the whirring of the instrument came to an end, and an invisible spirit seemed to fade into the air. The pattering of the rain had stopped, and there was the crackle of cab wheels on the pavement below. Roma had dropped Rossi's hand and was leaning forward on her knees, with both hands over her face. After a moment she wiped her eyes with her handkerchief and began to put on her hat.

"How long is it since you received this message?" she said.

"On the night you came here first."

"And when I asked you to come to my house on that—that useless errand you were thinking of—of my father's request as well?"

"Yes."

"You have known all this about the Baron for a month, yet you have said nothing. Why have you said nothing?"

"You wouldn't have believed me at first, whatever I had said against him."

"But afterward?"

"Afterward I had another reason."

"Did it concern me?"

"Yes."

"And now?"

"Now that I have to part from you I am compelled to tell you what it is."

"But if you had known that all this time he has been trying to use somebody against you——"

"That would have made no difference."

She lifted her head and a look of fire, almost of fierceness, came into her face, but she only said, with a little hysterical cry, as if her throat were swelling:

"Come to me to-morrow, David! Be sure you come! If you don't come I shall never, never forgive you. But you will come! You will! You will!"

And then, as if afraid of breaking out into sobs, she turned quickly and hurried away.

"She can never fall into that man's hands now," he thought. And then he lit his lamp and sat down to his work, but the light was gone and the night had fallen on him.

In Roma's studio the next day she surprises all her fine friends, brings ridicule on the head of the Baron and partially atones for her first efforts to betray Rossi. They are all assembled to look at the statuary Roma has been working upon for the municipal fountain.

"Superb!" they exclaimed, one after another. "Superb! Superb!"

"But surely this is 'Hamlet' without the Prince," said the Baron. "You set out to make a fountain representing Christ and his twelve apostles, and the only figure you leave unfinished is Christ himself!"

He pointed to the central figure above the dish, which was merely shaped out and indicated.

"Not only one, your Excellency," said Don Camillo. "Here is another unfinished figure—intended for Judas, apparently."

"I left them to the last on purpose," said Roma. "They were so important and so difficult. But I have studies for both of them in the boudoir, and you shall give me your advice and opinion.

"It was so difficult to do justice to the Christ that I am almost sorry I made the attempt. But it came easier when I began to think of some one who was being reviled and humiliated and degraded because he was poor and wasn't ashamed of it, and who was always standing up for the weak and the down-trodden, and never returning anybody's insult, however shameful and false and wicked, because he wasn't thinking of himself at all. So I got the best model I could in real life and this is the result."

With that she pulled off the muslin veil and revealed the sculptured head of David Rossi, in a snow-white plaster cast. The features expressed pure nobility, and every touch was a touch of sympathy and love.

A moment of chilling silence was followed by an underbreath of gossip. "Who is it?" "Christ, of course." "Oh, certainly; but it reminds me of some one." "Who can it be?" "The Pope?" "Why, no; don't you see who it is?" "Is it, really?" "How shameful!" "How blasphemous!"

Roma stood looking on with a face lighted up by two flaming eyes. "I'm afraid you don't think I've done justice to my model," she said. "That's quite true. But perhaps my Judas will please you better," and she stepped up to the bust that was covered by the wet cloth.

"I found this a difficult subject also, and it was not until yesterday evening that I felt able to begin on it."

Then, with a hand that trembled visibly, she took from the wall the portrait of her father, and offering it to the Minister, she said:

"Some one told me a story of duplicity and treachery—it was about this poor old gentleman, Baron—and then I knew what sort of a person it was who betrayed his friend and master for thirty pieces of silver, and listened to the hypocrisy, the flattery, and lying of the miserable group of parasites who crowded round him because he was a traitor, and because he kept the purse."

With that she threw off the damp cloth, and revealed the clay model of a head. The face was unmistakable, but it expressed every baseness—cunning, arrogance, cruelty and sensuality.

The silence was freezing, and the company began to turn away and to mutter among themselves, in order to cover their confusion. "It's the Baron!" "No?" "Yes!" "Disgraceful!" "Disgusting!" "Shocking!" "A scarecrow!"

Roma watched them for a moment, and then said: "You don't like my Judas! Neither do I. You're right—it is disgusting."

And taking up in both hands a piece of thin wire, she cut the clay across, and the upper part of it fell face downward with a thud on the floor.

When they were all gone she shut the door with a bang, and then turning to David Rossi, who alone remained, she burst into a flood of hysterical tears, and threw herself on her knees at his feet.

"David!" she cried.

"Don't do that. Get up," he answered.

"Roma," he began, but her tears and passion bore down everything.

"House, furniture, presents, carriages, horses, everything will go soon, and I shall have loved nothing whatever! No matter! You said a woman loved ease and wealth and luxury. Is that all a woman loves? Is there nothing else in the world for any of us? Aren't you satisfied with me at last?"

"Roma," he answered, breathing hard, "don't talk like that. I cannot bear it."

But she did not listen. "You taunted me with being a woman," she said through a fresh burst of tears. "A woman was incapable of friendship and sacrifices. She was intended to be a man's plaything. Do you think I want to be my husband's mistress? I want to be his wife, to share his fate, whatever it may be, for good or bad, for better or worse."

"For God's sake, Roma!" he cried. But she broke in on him again.

"You taunted me with the dangers you had to go through, as if a woman must needs be an impediment to her husband, and try to keep him back. Do you think I want my husband to do nothing? If he were content with that he would not be the man I had loved, and I should despise him and leave him."

"Roma!"

"Then you taunted me with the death that hangs over you. When you were gone I should be left to the mercy of the world. But that can never happen. Never! Do you think a woman can outlive the man she loves as I love you? There! I've said it. You've shamed me into it."

He could not speak now. His words were choking in his throat, and she went on in a torrent of tears:

"The death that threatens you comes from no fault of yours, but only from your fidelity to my father. Therefore I have a right to share it, and I will not live when you are dead."

"If I give way now," he thought, "all is over."

And clenching his hands behind his back to keep himself from throwing his arms around her he began in a low voice:

"Roma, you have broken your promise to me."

"I don't care," she interrupted. "I would break ten thousand promises. I deceived you. I confess it. I pretended to be reconciled to your will, and I was not reconciled. I wanted you to see me strip myself of all I had, that you might have no answer and excuse. Well, you have seen me do it, and now—what are you going to do now?"

"Roma," he began again, trembling all over, "there have been two men in me all this time, and one of them has been trying to protect you from the world and from yourself, while the other—the other has been wanting you to despise all his objections and trample them under your feet. If I could only believe that you know all you are doing, all the risk you are running and the fate you are willing to share—but no, it is impossible."

"David," she cried, "you love me! If you didn't love me I should know it now—at this moment. But I am braver than you are."

"Let me go. I cannot answer for myself."

"I am braver than you are, for I have not only stripped myself of all my possessions and of all my friends—I have even compromised myself again and again, and been daring and audacious and rude to everybody for your sake. I, a woman, while you, a man, you are afraid, yes, afraid; you are a coward—that's it, a coward! No, no, no! What am I saying? David Leone!"

And with a cry of passion and remorse she flung both arms about his neck.

He had stood, during this fierce struggle of love and pain, holding himself in until his throbbing nerves could bear the strain no longer.

"Come to me, then—come to me," he cried and at the moment when she threw herself upon him he stretched out his arms to receive her.

"You do love me?" she said.

"Indeed, yes! And you?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

He clasped her in his arms with redoubled ardor and pressed her to his breast and kissed her. The love so long pent up was bursting out like a liberated cataract that sweeps the snow and the ice before it.

"You will never think the worse of me?" she faltered.

"The worse of you! For loving me?"

"For telling you so and forcing myself into your life?"

"My darling, no!"

"But tell me," he said, "are you sure—quite sure? Do you know what is before you?"

"I only know I love you."

From this time on Bonelli begins to take a more active part. He realizes his wrong step in turning over the betrayal of Rossi to Roma, but he has already learned enough through her and by the additional assistance of a miserable police spy, Charles Minghelli, to know that David Rossi and David Leone are one and the same person.

A sentence of death hangs over David Leone for the part he took in the conspiracy with Dr. Roselli, and the Baron merely needs the last connecting link of identification of Rossi with Leone to enable him to have Rossi convicted and thereby rid himself of a dangerous political rival. Baron Bonelli now sees in Rossi also a rival in the affections of the young woman he loves, so his incentive to get Rossi out of the way has been doubled. He tries to get Roma to help him, but, of course, she now refuses absolutely to have anything to do with any scheme that will jeopardize the life of the man she loves.

Roma warns David of the Baron's plotting, and finally David sees that for the good of the cause he must go away and seek aid in foreign countries. Before he leaves Roma and he are married by a priest, although such a marriage is not recognized by the laws of the country, but there is not sufficient time for them to publish the banns of a civil marriage.

From Rossi's letters Roma is led to believe that he contemplates assassinating the King upon his return to Rome. The Baron gets an inkling that Roma knows this and goes deliberately to work to have her betray her husband. First he tries to get her to give Rossi up by referring to the past relations between themselves and threatening her.

"I can tell him that, according to the law of nature and of reason, you belong to me," said the Baron.

"Very well. It will be your word against mine, will it not?"

"I can tell him," continued the Baron, "that before God I am your husband, and if he comes between us it will be only as your lover and your paramour."

Although there is some truth in what the Baron has to say, still Roma has not been to blame, and so she writes to Rossi and confesses all. The letters fail to reach him until after he has returned to Rome and many things have happened.

Failing in this point, Bonelli claims to have evidence that Rossi expects to kill the King, and tells Roma that if she will tell all she knows Rossi will be arrested on another charge, saved from the crime of regicide and then allowed to go free with banishment. Otherwise he will be taken and undoubtedly sentenced to death.

She consents and signs a paper of identification that makes Rossi's arrest possible.

David returns to Rome but is arrested on the frontier and comes in as a prisoner. At the railway station in Rome his brother anarchists rescue him and he escapes in the crowd.

He goes straight to the room of Roma. The Baron is already there and trying to persuade Roma to go with him. Their conversation has been long and excited. Roma has a revolver in her hand and has made up her mind to kill Bonelli when she hears the voice of Rossi.

Roma, who had forgotten all about the Baron, was rooted to the spot on which she stood. The Baron, who had understood everything, was also transfixed.

Then came a quick vibrating voice, "Roma!"

Roma made a faint cry and dropped the revolver out of her graspless hand. The Baron picked it up instantly. He was the first to recover himself.

"Hush!" he said in a whisper. "Let him come in. I will go into this room. I mean no harm to any one; but if he should follow me—if you should reveal my presence—remember what I said before about a challenge. And if I challenge him his shrift will have to be swift and sure."

The Baron stepped into the bedroom. Then the emotional voice came again, "Roma! Roma!"

Roma staggered to the door and opened it.

Rossi accuses Roma of betraying him. He has received none of her letters, and so, of course, is not informed on all that has happened. She has a difficult part to play, for she realizes the presence of the Baron in the next room and fears the consequences. She throws herself on his mercy and craves forgiveness.

"It is not your fault if the love you brought home to me is dead. I hoped that before you came I might die too. I think my soul must be dead already, and here I lay it at your feet. I dare not hope for pardon, but if your great heart could pardon me——"

He felt his soul fill with love and forgiveness.

"But I know very well it is impossible——"

"Nothing is impossible, Roma. We are all children in God's hand, erring little children; and if the light of his love which lights up the book of life could shine on two more unfortunate ones——"

She felt a sensation of swelling in her throbbing heart, and rose up with shining eyes.

"Roma, I confess that when I escaped from the police I came here to avenge myself. They are following me, and I shall inevitably be taken. But if you tell me that it was only your love that led you to denounce me—your love and nothing but your love—though I am bestrayed and fallen and may be banished or condemned to death—still—"

"I do say so! I do! I do!"

"Swear it, Roma."

"I swear—"

"The woman lies," said a voice behind them.

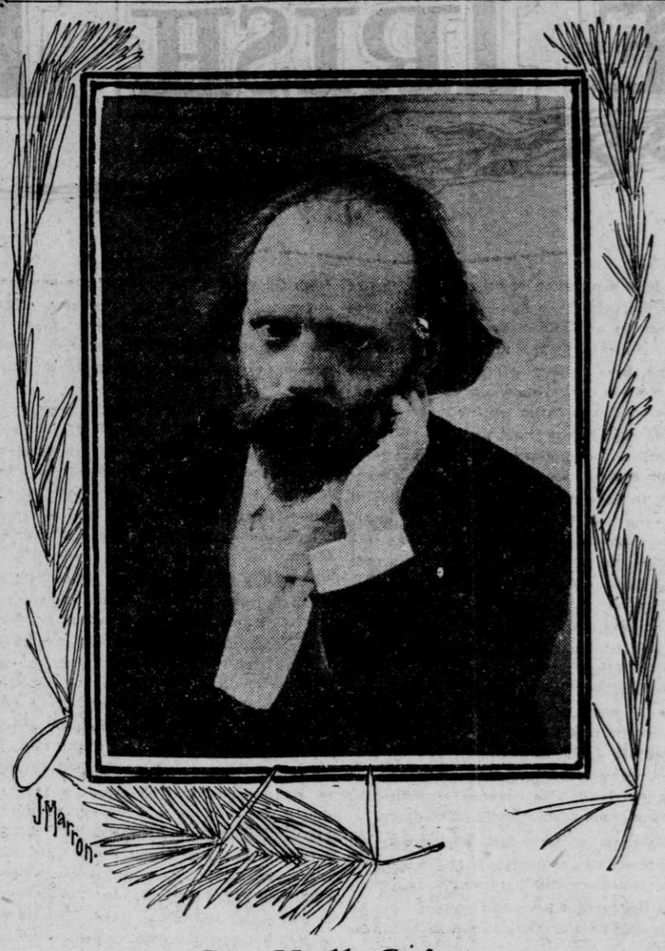
The Baron stood in the bedroom doorway.

A terrible scene ensues, one of the strongest in the book, in which the Baron succeeds in convincing Rossi that Roma has purposely betrayed him and that she has really been the mistress of Bonelli. Rossi, in his mad fury, kills the Prime Minister and then seeks safety in the sanctity of the Vatican.

The Pope admits David to the sanctuary, where he is free from arrest and knows nothing of what is going on in the outer world. He does not know that Roma has accepted the blame of the murder, has been tried and sentenced to life imprisonment.

In the meantime a bloodless revolution has taken place and the King has abdicated his throne. David finally learns of the heroic sacrifice of Roma and also of her innocence, for the letters that she had sent to him abroad reach him at the Vatican and explain all. He rushes to the Chamber of Deputies to give himself up, but the members refuse to take any action against him, and his name is mentioned as the new President of the republic. He finds Roma on her deathbed, but happy in his forgiveness, and they have a brief reunion of a week before she dies. Rossi is elected President, but he feels that his work is over, so he leaves Italy and is heard of no more.

PURPOSE OF "THE ETERNAL CITY"



By Hall Caine.

CHRISTIAN democracy has, I think, a great part to play against Christian absolutism in the century upon which we have just entered. His Holiness the Pope has done wisely in grappling with that inevitable problem in the Encyclical that has just been issued. The church has to make terms with this Christian democratic movement, which is perhaps the greatest movement in the world at present. If the church cannot go on with the people, depend upon it the people will go on without the church.

In order to justify and explain the title of my story, I would say that it seems to me almost certain that in that great future which is to witness the breakdown of so many barriers dividing man from man and man from God, and in the new methods of settling internal and international disputes, which will take the place of the brutal and barbarous conflicts of war, as well as the cruel and fratricidal struggles of trade, the old Mother City of the Pagan and the Christian worlds will have her rightful rank. Her geographical position, her religious and historical interest, her artistic charm, and, above all, the mystery of eternal life which attaches to her, seem to me to point to Rome as the seat of the great court of appeal in the congress of humanity which (as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow) the future will see established.

If all this seems to be too large a problem to discuss in a novel, let me at once make confession of the limitation of the vehicle in my hands, and say that, although this great question occupied my mind, I am very conscious that all that the public expects of me as a story-teller is that above everything else I should tell a simple human story.

That I have tried my best to do, and if in the sequel it should appear that I have in any measure retained the good will of the public of American readers, so dear to me, I shall be abundantly satisfied and happy.

Books Received.

PITFALLS OF THE BALLROOM—By George F. Hall. Laird & Lee, Chicago. In paper 25 cents.

COALS OF FIRE—By Frances Hanford Delanoy. The Abbey Press, New York. $1.

SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS—By Frances Hanford Delanoy. The Abbey Press, New York. $1.

GRAUSTARK—By George Barr McCutcheon. Herbert S. Stone & Co., Chicago.

BLENNERHASSETT—By Charles Felton Pidgin. C. M. Clarke Publishing Company, Boston. $1 50.

"WORTH READING."

FOR THE BLUE AND GOLD

A Tale of Life at the University of California.

By JOY LICHTENSTEIN

$1.50 Net.

"A rattling good story of undergraduate life, its work and its play. There are scores of healthy, plucky, fun-loving, sturdy young Americans who keep the interest at a glow from start to finish. It is a book that should be read by all college graduates, by all in college, and by those intending to enter college."
—New Orleans Picayune.

A. M. ROBERTSON, Publisher,
126 Post Street,
San Francisco, Cal.