TESTA: A BOOK FOR BOYS

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Testa: A Book for Boys by Paolo Mantegazza

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PAOLO MANTEGAZZA

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Trieste

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A BOOK FOR BOYS.

BY

PAOLO MANTEGAZZA. 1831 –

"Sow ideas that works may spring up."

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF THE TENTH EDITION BY
THE ITALIAN CLASS IN BANGOR, MAINE, UNDER
THE SUPERVISION OF

LUIGI D. VENTURA.

BOSTON:
D. C. HEATH & COMPANY.
1889.

RAND AVERY COMPANY,
ELECTROTYPERS AND PRINTERS,
BOSTON.

TO

EDMONDO DE AMICIS.

IT is half a century since I was a boy; yet, while reading your CUORE, I wept like a child.

From those tears this book is born.

It is not a contrast to yours, or a contradiction of it; much less is it another flame which I wish proudly to kindle beside yours.

My book is only a penumbra of your light. Kindly accept it as a modest sign of my esteem and affection for you.

May you be happy!

Your

MANTEGAZZA.

SAN MARTINO (IN CHIANTI), October 16, 1887.

Fattoria Mantegazza, S. Martino in Chianti.

FLORENCE, April 29.

DEAR VENTURA, — Your affectionate voice, coming into my little study from such a distance, has touched me, and I thank you for the pleasure you have afforded me.

Do with my "Testa" what you wish. I intrust it to you, and make you absolute master of it. When it is translated into English, have the kindness to send me a copy.

How can it be, that, in the United States, literary property is not recognized? How can it be, that, in a country which lives by thought and labor, the law does not defend the most sacred, the most legitimate, of all property? And you who are a worker with the pen, the most potent of all mechanisms, why do not you do your apostolic part, so that the country of Washington and of Franklin, of Fulton and of Longfellow, shall fill up this marshy spot in its own legislation? You would be doing a good work for science and for civilization.

Your "Peppino" is a veritable jewel. I have read it with a moved heart, and have presented it to my little Laura, who is fifteen years old, and a good child, and who will certainly weep as I have wept.

Adieu, my dear Ventura, and continue always my sincere friend.

Yours,

MANTEGAZZA.

TO THE READER.

THE good, honest book which my pupils of the Bangor Philological Club have been kind enough to translate under my guidance, bears a title which recommends it, a name which is a guaranty: it addresses itself to a special public, — to our children, — a fact which of itself should draw to it the attention of adults and educators. The critic will not fail to attack it; for although the book has filled a *lacuna* in Italian literature, it does not arrive first of its kind on the field of American education.

If the book should be taken by itself, without a glance at the circumstances which gave it birth, it might justify a severe criticism of the whole system of education which Italy is trying to adopt; for while, in America, books for children abound, — books adapted to develop their tastes, their tendencies, and their education, — in Italy, previous to the publication of De Amicis' "Cuore," and Mantegazza's "Testa," we had very little of the kind.

By these two books, worthy to be classified with Smiles's "Self Help," a new education is foreshadowed; or rather, in them may be seen to develop the education to which Italy aspires.

Formerly education in Italy was formed on the basis of clerical theories, — the miracle at the top, dogma at the foundation.

Thanks to liberty, this condition of affairs has ceased to exist; and our youth, from an education of mysticism and fear, are reaching out into the domain of rationalism and speculation.